

**Lecture 3:  
Introduction to  
Worldview Thinking**

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# Lecture 3: Introduction to Worldview

## Thinking: Know Thy Self.

- Four factors that have generated a post-Christian Culture in our Western society:

Factor 1: Death of God Movement;

Factor 2: Celebration of the Sensual;

Factor 3: Religion's Shift to the Mystical;

Factor 4: Educational Shift to the Skeptical.

See full chart at [www.prshockley.org](http://www.prshockley.org) under tab "worldview." Chart includes bibliography of sources consulted.

Is there purpose to my life?

Where am I going?

What am I?

Who am I?

What is truth?

Where did I come from?

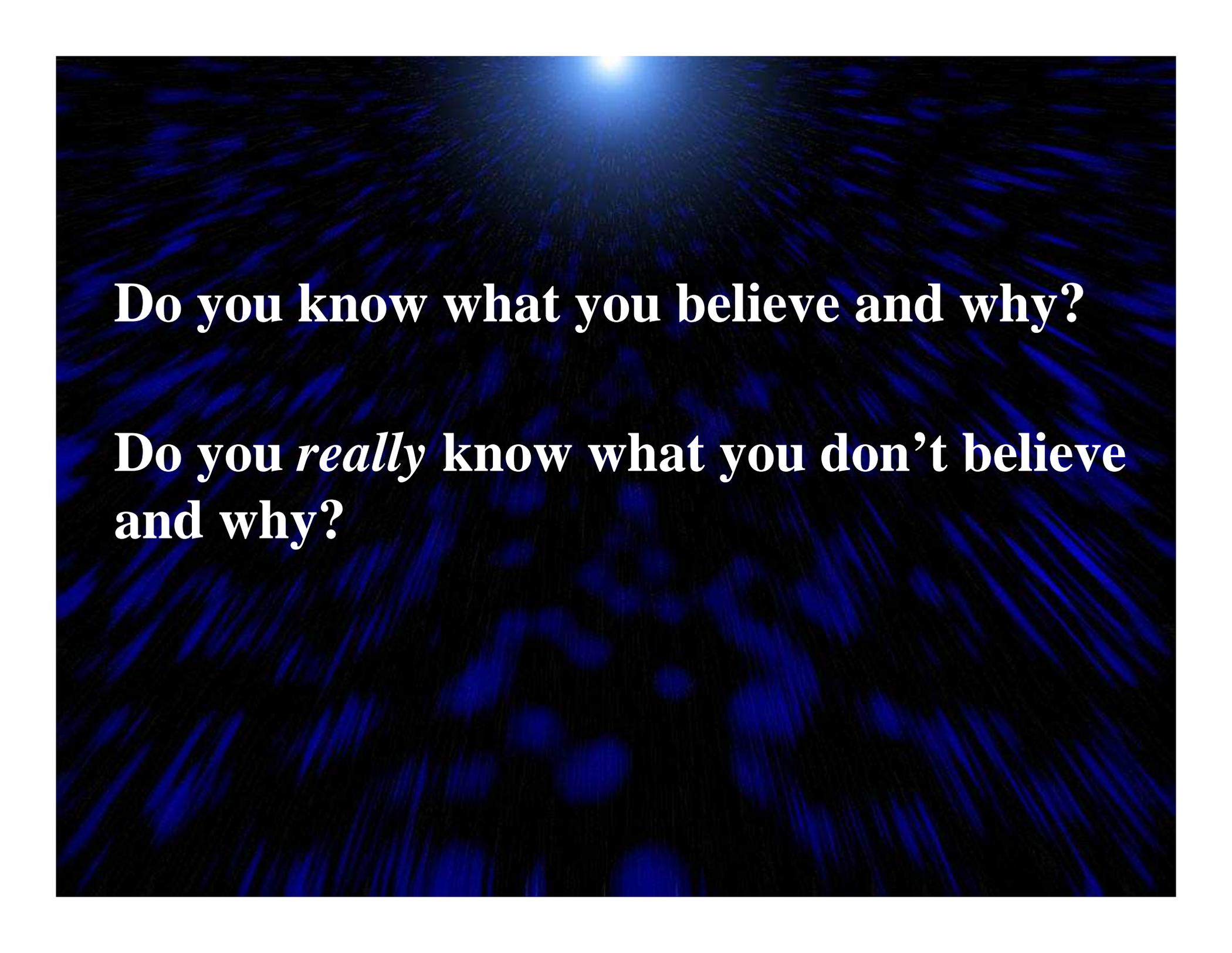
What's gone wrong with the world?

Why do we exist?

Do I have value?

How do we know what is right from wrong?

God? Are you there?



**Do you know what you believe and why?**

**Do you *really* know what you don't believe  
and why?**

# **Why is studying worldview issues important?**

**“A person’s actual worldview from which he lives and moves and has his being is the most important fact about that person.”**

**~ J.P. Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle*, p. 34.**

# What is a worldview?

“A worldview is simply the sum-total of our beliefs about the world, the ‘big picture’ that directs our daily decisions and actions.”

~ Chuck Colson & Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?*

# What is a worldview?

*“Our ground-floor assumptions-ones that are so basic that none more basic can be conceived-compose our worldview.”*

*~ James Sire, Naming the Elephant*

# What is a worldview?

*“A worldview is a conceptual theme by which we consciously or unconsciously place or fit everything we believe and by which we interpret.”*

*~ Ronald Nash, Faith and Reason*

# What is a worldview?



*“A worldview is the lenses, glasses, framework, or grid through which you look at the world and every issue and aspect of life...Your worldview is the foundation of your ideas and values and your ideas and values is the foundation of your conduct”*

*Branson S. Howse, “National Test Reveals Christian Students Lack a Christian Worldview.”*



## What is a worldview?

*“A person’s worldview contains two important features. First, it includes the set of beliefs the person accepts, especially those about important matters such as reality, God, value, knowledge, and so on. But a worldview is more than just a set of beliefs....a worldview includes the rational structure that occurs among the set of beliefs that constitute it. Some beliefs are central and basic, while others are relatively peripheral.”*



## What is a worldview?

*“In general, the more central a belief is, the greater would be the change in one’s worldview if the belief were abandoned. Central beliefs support and give justification to more peripheral ones. Belief in the reality of God, the faithfulness and reliability of the Bible, and the deity and humanity of Christ are central to a Christian worldview.”*

*J.P. Moreland, Kingdom Triangle, 33.*

# What is a worldview?



*“Less central are beliefs about local church structure, the nature of spiritual gifts, and so on. In understanding a worldview, it is important to grasp the relevant set of ideas along with the various support relations that take place among them.”*

*J.P. Moreland, Kingdom Triangle, 33.*

# At this point...

- You should be able to define what a worldview is.
- You should be able to explain the importance of having a biblical worldview.

Now let's explore the formation and components of a worldview.

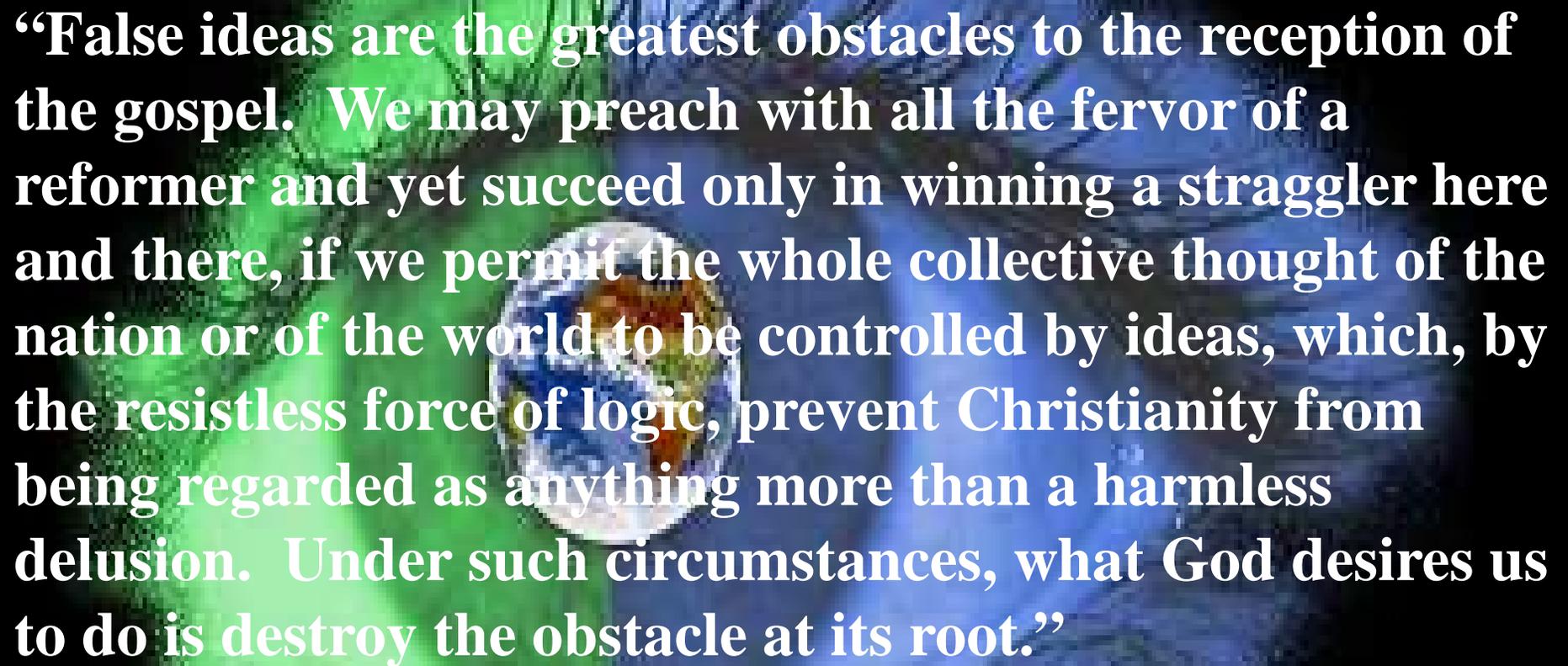
# The Formation of a Worldview



# Consider the following quote:

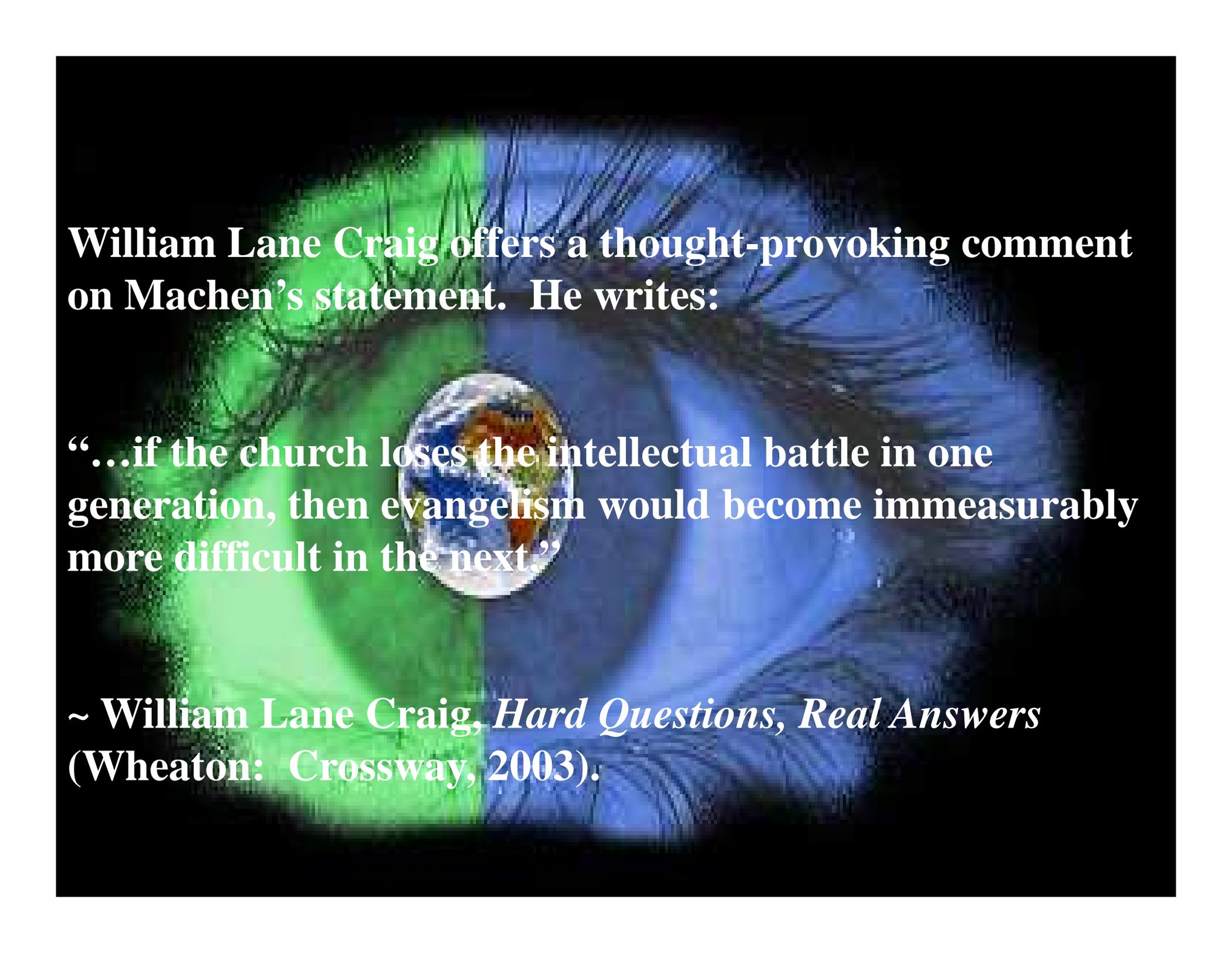
"Christians today need a lot more courage and confidence that what they offer is true, reasonable, and critical for a wide range of issues at the center of the public square. For too long we have looked for ways to insert a word about Jesus into cultural discourse that is largely secular, and we often lack the courage needed to speak up about our views without coming off as defensive on the one hand and arrogant on the other....by understanding just how powerful and pervasive a Christian worldview is, we Christians can gain an attractive sort of confidence needed to bring honor to the Lord we love so much."

~ J. P. Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 39.

A glowing green and blue nebula with a small globe of Earth in the center. The text is overlaid on this background.

**“False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas, which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion. Under such circumstances, what God desires us to do is destroy the obstacle at its root.”**

**~ J. Gresham Machen, “Christianity and Culture,” *Princeton Theological Review* 11 (1913): 7.**



**William Lane Craig offers a thought-provoking comment on Machen's statement. He writes:**

**“...if the church loses the intellectual battle in one generation, then evangelism would become immeasurably more difficult in the next.”**

**~ William Lane Craig, *Hard Questions, Real Answers* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2003).**

# For Review: What is a worldview?

**A worldview is the sum-total of our foundational assumptions/beliefs you have, especially those about important matters such as God, truth, reality, knowledge, humanity, ethics, & evil.**

# What is a worldview?

**Some ground-level assumptions are crucial whereas others are peripheral. But a worldview is more than just fundamental assumptions/beliefs-they function as a set of habits, directing your daily decisions & behavior. Now let us explore some significant factors that formulate your worldview assumptions.**



1. A worldview is formed informally.
2. A worldview is formed uncritically.
3. A worldview is formed inter-generationally.
4. A worldview is formed intra-generationally.
5. A worldview is formed over time.
6. A worldview is formed by habits.

Our worldview is impacted by the following:

1. Presuppositions;
2. Preunderstandings;
3. Noetic Effects of Sin;
4. Contextual Setting;
5. Providential Events.



**God uses our  
personal  
backgrounds,  
disappointments,  
triumphs, and  
beliefs to mold us  
as He directs  
history for His  
purposes.**



▪  
**Ravi Zacharias, *The Grand Weaver: How God Shapes Us Through the Events of Our lives* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 11.**

“We must recognize that divine intervention is nowhere near as simple a thing as we might imagine. For it to sustain us and give us staying power-to help us remain firm and see God’s hand at every stage of our lives-it must look different from what we usually prescribe for ourselves. It cannot be only a journey of unmistakable blessing and a path of ease.”

**Ravi Zacharias, *The Grand Weaver: How God Shapes Us Through the Events of Our lives* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 11.**

“To allow God to be God we must follow him for who he is and what he intends, and not for what we want or what we prefer. That’s what this book is about: seeing the designing hand of God and his intervention in our lives in such a way that we know he has a specific purpose for each of us and that he will carry us through until we meet him face-to-face and know ourselves completely.”

# What are the elements of your worldview:

Your view of God

Your view of truth

Your view of reality

Your view of knowledge

Your view of ethics

Your view of humanity

Your view of evil



Here's how to evaluate the worldview of others:

What are we?

Where did we come from?

What's gone wrong with the world?

What can we do to fix it?



Moreland states that there are 5 important questions we should put to any worldview:

What is real?

What are the nature & limits of knowledge?

Who is well-off? What is the good life?

Who is really a good person?

How does one become a good person?



A worldview is a habituated way of seeing,  
directing your daily decisions & actions.

Like J. P. Moreland states, a **worldview is a *habituated* way of directing our daily decisions & actions.** But the question becomes, is your worldview biblically-theologically accurate, coherent & consistent? In other words, is it God-honoring? One way to determine if your worldview truly glorifies God is to examine the way you live, what you take pleasure or delight in, and how you respond to both inconveniences & wrongs done to you.

J. P. Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle*, 33.

# How Should We Then Live?

1. Begin at an early age in equipping believers systematically and comprehensively to biblically respond to the ideas and practices that will confront them by the world, flesh, and devil.
2. We must strategically equip young people with the goal that they have a comprehensive biblical worldview before they leave our parental care as young adults.

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# How Should We Then Live?

- a. Can our young people define and defend truth?
- b. Can our young people define and defend God's existence?
- c. Can our young people think critically?
- d. Can our young people think logically?
- e. Can our young people think and communicate biblically?
- f. Can our young people define and defend evil?
- g. Can our young people define and defend the reliability of the Bible?

# How Should We Then Live?

- h. Can our young people define and defend the historical fact that Jesus rose bodily from the dead?
- i. Can our young people define and defend God's purpose for the local church?
- j. Can our young people define and defend their responsibilities?

# How Should We Then Live?

- k. Can our young people define and articulate a God-honoring response to societal issues such as Euthanasia, Capital Punishment, Just War, Homosexuality, Divorce/Remarriage; Genetic Engineering; Economics; Government; Entertainment; Aesthetics; Social Welfare; Abortion; Infanticide.
- l. Can our young people articulate the nature, manifestation, and implications of other worldviews and ideas such as secular humanism, relativism, postmodernism, and communism?

# How Should We Then Live?

- I. Regularly evaluate the justification of our own beliefs. In other words why do we believe what we believe? Is the justification of our beliefs based upon sociological reasons (e.g., sub-culture, peer pressure), psychological reasons (e.g., inner feelings, identity) religious reasons (e.g., pastor, priest, tradition, ritual), philosophical reasons (e.g., consistency, completeness), or biblical truth (accurate exegesis and biblical/theological systematic coherence).

# How Should We Then Live?

- m. Teach our young people how to engage apologetically from an early age.
- n. Pray earnestly for the intellectual, physical, and emotional development of our young people.
- o. Begin early: teach them the Scriptures, the importance of the church & community, and prayer.

# How Should We Then Live?

- p. Always guard ourselves and our young people against indifference, irrationalism, ignorance, cowardice, and arrogant and intellectual vanity.
- q. Remember that is the primary responsibility of parents to prepare children to think, know, practice, and respond with a biblical worldview.

# Final Thought:

***Never exchange the important for the unimportant!  
Never give up what is best for what is good.***

*Interested in knowing more about worldview thinking? I recommend first reading Nancy Pearcey's Total Truth, and secondly, Nancy Pearcey's latest work, Saving Leonardo.*