

WORLDVIEW ACADEMY

KEY CONCEPTS IN THE CURRICULUM

This list outlines the key concepts we hope to communicate at Worldview Academy Leadership Camps. The list is not an index of lectures; rather, it inventories the ideas the various lectures touch on, directly or indirectly.

PART 1: GOOD DISTINCTIONS, BAD DICHOTOMIES

Two Essential Distinctions

1.1 THE CREATOR/CREATURE DISTINCTION

God is the creator and we are part of his creation. As a result, we are in no position to judge His actions. He reveals Himself to us, and we have an obligation to love and obey Him.

1.2 THE "IN THE WORLD/NOT OF THE WORLD" DISTINCTION

Christians must not be conformed to the philosophies and behavior of the surrounding world. At the same time, we are placed in this world to live and speak.

Two Dangerous Dichotomies

1.3 THE SECULAR/SACRED DICHOTOMY

God is relevant to every aspect of reality. We resist the urge—both in the larger culture and the church—to divide the world into distinct religious and non-religious zones. In the culture, this manifests itself as a public/private dichotomy, the idea being that religious commitments are private and do not belong in the public arena. In the church, it expresses itself as an absolute division between ministry and laity.

1.4 THE FAITH/REASON DICHOTOMY

We believe in order to understand, but reject the idea that faith and reason are at opposite ends of a spectrum. The culture wants us to believe that science is rational and faith irrational, and that the two are diametrically opposed. Sometimes the church embraces this dichotomy, too, making the most of the irrational "leap of faith." Instead we value both revelation and our God-given reason.

PART 2: GOD, MAN, AND THE WORLD

The Christian View of God

2.1 TRINITY

The God revealed in Scripture consists of three persons in one unity. Far from an abstract doctrine, the orthodox concept of the Trinity helps account for the world of unity and diversity we see around us.

2.2 INCARNATION

In the person of Jesus Christ, God took on flesh and dwelled among us. The fact that he could do this and yet be without sin teaches us that the physical world is not bad or abhorrent. Instead, it is God's good creation, created as a place for us to dwell. Just as Christ rose again physically, we will be physically resurrected. Our eternity will be embodied.

2.3 GOD'S HOLINESS AND GRACE

God is perfectly holy and gracious. He chose to save us out of love, not obligation. We respond to his grace with love and a desire to be conformed to the perfect image of Christ.

2.4 GOD AS CREATOR

The first thing God reveals about himself in the Bible is that he is the creator. All subsequent Christian doctrine is based on this fact. But creation itself is under attack, as is the trustworthiness of scripture (whether via naturalism or old-earth models that elevate science over scripture).

The Christian View of Man

2.5 MAN IS CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

Every individual is created in God's image, and as an image-bearer deserves respect and value. God teaches us to serve him by serving those made in his image. This is why we believe that every person matters and reject the idea that wealth or resources are more valuable than people, or that individuals should be valued according to their merit or ability to produce.

2.6 MAN IS INHERENTLY FALLEN

Because of sin, every individual is fallen. The image of God in us is shattered, and in need of restoration. When he redeems us, God restores his image in us through the process of sanctification (though we do not achieve perfection in this life). Because of

sin, we reject the idea that man in his current condition is basically good and his environment is to blame.

The Christian View of Scripture

2.7 RELIABILITY OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is God's Word, a trustworthy revelation of God to man. As a text, it is the best-attested manuscript in the ancient world. When interpreted properly, the Bible is utterly reliable on every matter it addresses.

2.8 CHRISTIANS ARE "PEOPLE OF THE BOOK"

Because God revealed himself in writing, Christians ground themselves in his word. We also value reading in general, both as an end and as a means to embracing and articulating good ideas.

2.9 THE BIBLE SHOULD BE READ IN CONTEXT

It's important to read the Bible, not read into it. So we emphasize the importance of reading Scripture in context, focusing on the chapters and paragraphs, the overall structure of argument or narrative, and not just the sentence or proof text. We want to train good, careful readers.

The Christian View of Knowledge

2.10 ANTITHESIS AND COMMON GRACE

The truth belongs to God. There are no "neutral" facts. Having said that, God is at work in the world, not just the church, making his influence felt on believer and unbeliever alike. God restrains evil and showers kindness on us all. As a result, we cannot assume believers are always right and unbelievers always wrong. Instead, we learn from many sources and are open to whatever means God uses to reveal truth.

2.11 THE STARTING POINT FOR EPISTEMOLOGY

Unlike all other worldviews, which start with man as the basis for knowing, Christians ground their knowledge on a loving God revealing his truth to us through his word. Our confidence is not in ourselves, but in Christ.

2.12 MORAL ABSOLUTES

The very existence of morality depends on a holy, living, eternal, unchanging God. Because ultimate morality is derived from an absolute source, not constructed by individuals or societies, we know that there is right and wrong, even when we are not able to discern them perfectly.

2.13 THE IMPORTANCE OF BEAUTY

Like goodness and truth, beauty is real, a reflection of God's character. As Christians, we take aesthetic pleasure both in creation and the act of creating. Both creation and incarnation teach us the value God places on the physical world, inviting us to be stewards in the realm of aesthetics as well as ideas and action.

PART 3: IDEAS AND ACTION

How the Christian Thinks

3.1 IDEAS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

It matters how you think, because good ideas have good consequences and bad ideas have bad consequences. As stewards of creation, God uses real men and women to make things better in the here and now.

3.2 EVERYONE HAS A WORLDVIEW

We all start from prior assumptions and faith commitments. Worldviews are formed in response to the way the world challenges us. It's important for Christians to embrace a biblical worldview, and helpful to understand how other people's assumptions influence their thinking.

3.3 TRUE AUTHORITY

All political, ecclesial, and familial authority derives from God. As Christians, we respect those in authority over us. At the same time, when lesser authorities command what God forbids, or forbid what God commands, we know that we ought to obey God rather than man.

3.4 ROOTS OF ORDER

God has established authority in society so that it functions in independent spheres of family, church, and state. These jurisdictions function differently and ought not to usurp one another's roles in the individual's life.

How the Christian Lives

3.5 THE PRINCIPLE OF SURRENDER

As Christians, we must be willing to sacrifice everything to God. As his stewards, he entrusts us with whatever we have. Therefore we must give of our wealth, time, and gifts with an open hand to minister to others and further his kingdom.

3.6 THE LEADER AS SERVANT

Taking Christ as our model, Christians lead through service rather than by taking and wielding power. The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves (Luke 22).

3.7 SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE: QUIET TIMES

Devoting time to prayer and Scripture reading is an essential discipline for spiritual growth. We encourage students to set aside a daily time for quiet prayer and devotion.

3.8 CHRISTIAN LIFE IS ABOUT ENDURING HARDSHIP, NOT FUN

Christ calls us to take up the cross and follow him. Often, we are called on to endure hardship for his sake. This is a hard calling, and we refuse to dress it up as a life of fun. We must die to self, not surrender to self-indulgence.

3.9 THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF VOCATION

Because we are committed to the priesthood of believers, we embrace a robust view of vocation. Whatever work God calls us to do, we pursue it to the best of our ability to his honor and glory. There is honor and value in a job well done, whether it is "spiritual" work or not.

3.10 THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF LEISURE

God has given us bodies, given us the capacity for pleasure, and placed us in a beautiful world. He clearly intends for us to delight in these gifts. We enjoy them while guarding against the dangers of utilitarianism on the one hand and sloth on the other.

How the Christian Speaks

3.11 SHARING OUR FAITH

As Christians, we want to take our faith out into the world, both in word and deed. We equip others to share their faith and answer questions they are likely to encounter. Through training and encouragement we build confidence.

3.12 APOLOGETICS THROUGH QUESTION-ASKING

We want to provoke others to question their false assumptions, so the style of apologetics we teach is based on asking questions. This method allows us to learn from those we speak with and at the same time direct them toward the shortcomings in their perspectives.

3.13 CHRISTIANS AS CULTURAL CONTRIBUTORS

We are all influenced by our culture, but as cultural contributors, Christians can influence others for the good. We encourage scholarship, good works, and the arts as ways to minister to the surrounding world while pointing them toward truth.

The Bankruptcy of Other Ideologies

3.14 ATHEISM

They want to position themselves as neutral observers, rational thinkers who hold their views because there is no convincing evidence to the contrary. But atheism itself is a faith commitment, as evidenced by the proselytizing of its proponents.

3.15 NEW AGE

The syncretistic spirituality so common to our time is not as tolerant or harmless as it pretends to be. In an age when inconsistency is no longer a bad thing, the New Age movement offers a case study in dealing with people whose commitment to logic is merely provisional.

3.16 ISLAM

Given the world situation, an enormous pressure exists to de-emphasize the objectionable elements of Islam and perpetuate a gentler, multi-cultural impression. While we value Muslims as fellow image-bearers, it behooves us as Christians to oppose the error of the ideology, especially since it borrows from Christian sources.

3.17 POPULAR CULTS

A variety of pseudo-Christian cults have taken advantage of our multi-cultural society to assert their equality with Christianity. Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, want more and more to be seen as Christian denominations rather than departures from orthodoxy. So it is important to highlight what these groups actually believe and how it differs from Christianity.



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