INTRODUCTION TO WORLDVIEWS
SEEING THE WORLD THROUGH THE LENS OF SCRIPTURE

Pre-Game
It is sometimes quipped that certain people see the world through ‘rose-colored glasses.’ What does this mean? It typically means that someone interprets and understands everything in the world according to one foundational truth - in this case, optimism. The reality is, everyone sees the world through a certain tint of glasses which are colored by strongly held beliefs. For some, it is optimism; for others, pessimism. For some, it is a belief in God. For others, it could be naturalism, Marxism, feminism, pragmatism or relativism. The development of a worldview based on Scripture is essential to our growth and development as Christians. Having a Christian worldview consists of more than just thinking about Christian things, like heaven, Jesus and sin. Rather, it enables us to think Christianly about everything in the world, from sport to academics to culture. In this study, we will explore how and why to develop the foundations for a Christian worldview.

Theme
Being a Christian involves more than just looking to God to save us from our sins. Rather, it involves a new way of seeing and understanding the entire world around us through the lens of Scripture.

Practice
Because we are to develop a Christian worldview, we should see everything in the world from sport to academics to culture in light of biblical truths.

Symbol Key

- Indicates discussion questions

- Indicates Biblical passages to look up

- Indicates application questions to be discussed
I. WORLDVIEWS - THE WAY WE SEE THE WORLD

When looking at a beautiful sunset or a complex strand of DNA, what leads one person to see God’s intelligent design and creativity and another person to see only matter, motion and chance?

Each one of us has a worldview – a way in which we see, interpret and understand everything around us. Our worldview can lead us to either acknowledge God or find the world a godless place.

The concept of a worldview can be compared to seeing the world through a pair of sunglasses. The tint of our particular pair of sunglasses shades the way we see everything around us. Each of us develops a tint to our own glasses through our family, cultural heritage, education and religious experiences.

Read Romans 1:18-23
- Do you think anyone sees the world through clear lenses?
- How do non-Christian lenses distort the world?

No one sees the world through an unbiased, clear lens. Worldviews act as feedback systems in which cultural, philosophical and religious ideas influence how we interpret what we observe in the world. These interpretations lead us to conclusions that then reinforce our worldviews.

What are some worldviews that may be detrimental to belief in the gospel and what types of gospel-essential beliefs do they block out?

II. ESTABLISHING A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW - TAKING EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE

Being a Christian involves more than just being saved from the punishment of hell. It involves submitting our whole view of the world to the Lordship of Christ and judging truth by his standard. We are not just to think about Christian things - like Jesus, sin, heaven and hell - but we must think Christianly about everything in the world.

Read Colossians 2:8 and 2 Corinthians 10:5
- In what sense can a non-Christian worldview influence our thoughts and take us ‘captive’?
- What would it look like to take all of our thoughts captive to Christ?
How do we make sure we are seeing the world in a Christian way? On what basis do we construct a Christian worldview?

John Calvin referred to Scripture as the spectacles through which we should see the world. In 2 Timothy 3, Paul exhorts us to avoid godless ideas by submitting our view of the world to the authority of Scripture to “teach, correct, rebuke and train” our thoughts according to its truth. Our worldview must be shaped by Scripture as opposed to our understanding of Scripture being shaped by our view of the world.

How would your view of art, sport, pop culture or the media change if you began to think Christianly about it? What would this look like?

III. DEMONSTRATING THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW - MOVIES AND CULTURE

One useful grid the Bible gives us for seeing the world are the themes of creation, fall, redemption, restoration. These 4 themes paint the outlines of the Biblical story and frame the history of the relationship between God and man. We can think Christianly about the world by examining it in light of these 4 biblical truths.

As a case study, here’s how the creation-fall-redemption-restoration grid could help us think Christianly about movies and pop culture.

**Creation**

One of the over-arching themes of all of Scripture is that God is sovereign and has created the whole world to bring himself praise and glory. All truth - from nature to art to history to science - must be examined in light of God’s existence and purpose in all of creation.

The movie *Contact*, focuses on the US space program, SETI (search for extra-terrestrial intelligence). The leading character (Jodi Foster), is convinced that life beyond this planet must exist. She believes “If there is nothing else out there, it [the universe] is sure a whole lot of wasted space.”

As a Christian, how would you analyze and respond to the worldview that is behind this statement?

**Fall**

It has been said that the doctrine of original sin is the only philosophy empirically validated by thirty-five centuries of recorded human history. Since Adam and Eve, man has been plagued not only by the penalty of sin, but its continued power and presence. Though we are created in the image of God, this image is marred by the effects of the fall on our hearts, minds and actions.

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”
- Genesis 1:1

“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities...have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made”
- Romans 1:20

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
- Romans 3:23

“The wages of sin is death.”
- Romans 6:23
In the 2001 box-office hit, *Spiderman*, Norman Osborne (Willem Dafoe) struggles with his diabolical alter ego, the Green Goblin. In one scene, the voice of the alter ego convinces Osborne to seek control and revenge through his powers as the Green Goblin. His thirst for power leads to his own destruction.

- Analyze the Osborne / Green Goblin dynamic. What truths does it reflect about the Biblical concept of sin and human nature? Is it inadequate in any way?

**Redemption**

The central drama of the Bible - how we are made right with God - is played out in Christ’s sacrificial work on the cross. It is through this alone that we are redeemed and receive not only a new record before God, but a new nature (freedom from the power of sin) and a new hope (future freedom from the presence of sin).

The *Shawshank Redemption* is a moving commentary on the ability of the prison system to rehabilitate inmates. One character, Brooks, is release from Shawshank after serving out his sentence. However, Brooks struggles in his freedom because he lives as if he still were inside the prison walls. Though tasting freedom, he is still in bondage and ultimately takes his own life.

- How does Brooks’ experience reveal our need for a Savior? How could you use this film to highlight the good news of Christianity to others?

**Restoration**

The good news of Christianity is that we have hope not only for this life, but for an even better life to come. Christ will come again to reign as King over a new heaven and a new earth. There will no longer be any evil, loneliness, sin or death as we live in perfect harmony with Christ. All of the goodness and beauty of God’s creation will be restored.

The third installment of The Lord of the Rings trilogy, *The Return of the Kings*, gives us a glimpse of this coming restoration. In one of the last scenes, Aragorn is crowned King and is united with Arwen, the elfin princess. Peace, order and harmony is restored to the Kingdom.

- Throughout the whole story of *The Lord of the Rings*, how does hope for this restoration influence the characters and the journey that they are on? How should our hope for a future restoration influence our lives today?

**IV. POST-GAME**

As we develop a biblically informed Christian worldview, we can begin to understand the world around us in new ways. In doing so, all of culture and creation become proper objects of study for the Christian seeking to love God with all their minds and to grow in their understanding of and commitment to his Lordship.