

# GoLife100 | Lesson 25

## Discerning Worldviews

BY DR. PAUL JEHL



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**THIS LESSON FOCUSES ON** how we can best discuss our beliefs with people who hold a different worldview. It will address how to apply specific biblical principles to everyday situations.

**THIS LESSON IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE** we must be instructed by Scripture to be equipped to share our faith with others. We must be trained how to address the prevailing worldviews of our time with the truth of the Gospel in a manner that is both relevant and uncompromising.

### *Key Ideas:*

- Worldview
- Discernment
- Premises
- Reason
- Debate
- Character

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### I. The art of discernment:

- A. We are made in the image of God (*logos*). The ability to reason logically is unique to mankind.
- B. The Bible tells us that discernment is a mark of maturity in believers (Hebrews 5:12-14). We are to be transformed by the renewing of our mind (Romans 12:2) and renewed in the spirit of our mind (Ephesians 4:23).
- C. The meanings of “discernment” and “discussion”:
  1. “DISCERNMENT” DEFINITION (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words): *From the Greek, anakrino (ἀνακρίνω, 350), meaning “to distinguish, or separate out so as to investigate (krino) by looking throughout (ana intensive) objects or particulars,” hence signifies “to examine, scrutinize, question, to hold a preliminary judicial examination preceding the trial proper” (this first examination, implying more to follow, is often present in the nonlegal uses of the word).*
  2. “DISCUSS” DEFINITION (Webster’s 1828 Dictionary): *Literally, to drive; to beat or to shake in pieces; to separate by beating or shaking.  
—To disperse; to scatter; to dissolve; to repel; as, to discuss a tumor; a medical use of the word.  
—To debate; to agitate by argument; to clear of objections and difficulties, with a view to find or illustrate truth; to sift; to examine by disputation; to ventilate; to reason on, for the purpose of separating truth from falsehood. We discuss a subject, a point, a problem, a question, the propriety, expedience or justice of a measure, etc.*
  3. The Parable of the Mustard Seed in Matthew 13:31-32 presents a picture of discernment and discussion:
    - a. The mustard seed is the least of all the seeds in comparison to its influence; it is *greater* than herbs (individual).
    - b. The birds of the air come and nest in its branches; all ideas are sheltered.
- D. Judgment and condemnation (Matthew 7:1-5):
  1. We must judge ideas in Scripture and not approach people in condemnation.
  2. A mark of liberty is freedom of thought. The Bible tells us to respect another’s freedom of thought (Romans 2; 1 Corinthians 10:29) and not answer another according to their argument (their premise) (Proverbs 26:4-5).

**A believer should not be intimidated by false ideas but should instead welcome discussion, aiming to influence others with the truth.**

## II. Discerning worldviews:

- A. CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW is applying biblical truth to every area of life. Everyone has a worldview—whether they are aware of it or not!
- B. A WORLDVIEW consists of:
1. PREMISES: the basic assumptions we make, whether understood or not.
  2. SYLLOGISMS: the “due process of reasoning” from a premise to a conclusion.
  3. CONCLUSIONS: the effect of reasoning from presuppositions consistently
- C. NON-BIBLICAL WORLDVIEWS: faulty premises and conclusions (**see the Summit Worldview Chart**).
1. No worldview can sustain itself consistently without borrowing from the Bible.
  2. All worldviews have a religious premise and a form of government (**see the Summit Worldview Chart**).
- D. LOGICAL FALLACIES and false reasoning: The enemy corrupts logic to deceive us. All faulty fallacies in reasoning always hide premises.
1. AD HOMINEM TACTIC: Attacking your opponent instead of disproving their argument.
    - a. “Has God said?” (Genesis 3:1) - The devil uses a loaded question to hide the premise.
  2. GENETIC FALLACY: Condemning where, how, or who began the argument to avoid disproving it.
    - a. “You shall not surely die” (Genesis 3:4) - The devil produces a false conclusion to reject God.
  3. STRAW MAN TECHNIQUE: Exaggerating an opponent’s position or argument to make it easier to refute.
    - a. “You will be as gods” (Genesis 3:5) - The devil distorts the reasoning.
  4. The devil borrows from God’s worldview. He distorts; he does not create.
- E. TOOLS for discerning worldviews (2 Corinthians 10):
1. Listen to others with grace (giving the benefit of the doubt) and truth (timely boldness).
    - a. If the premise is fallacious, we can reason properly but still come to the wrong conclusion.
    - b. Many believers do not have a biblical worldview and simply let others reason for them.
    - c. “Inadequate worldviews produce unfulfilled lives.”  
—Dudley Hall
    - d. This is why it is good to *ask questions* of the other person’s worldview.
  2. *Reason* in love. Share but don’t preach or condescend others.
    - a. Don’t manipulate and use fallacies yourself (moving in the flesh).
    - b. The Holy Spirit will always give you a pathway to the heart of the person.

### Summit Ministries Worldview Chart:



**The Holy Spirit will always give you a pathway to the heart of the person.**

3. Avoid *judging* by outward appearances; we must discern heart motives.
4. The duration of your discussion will be in proportion to the relationship you have with the individual.

F. ATTITUDES for discerning worldviews:

*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.*

—1 Peter 3:15

1. It begins with a SANCTIFIED HEART. *Do you have a pure attitude to help another?*
2. Be READY (prepared). *Are you truly willing to study another's point of view?*
3. Have you been INVITED to discuss it? *"To all who ask" implies a relationship.*
4. Are you discussing in MEEKNESS? *Can you admit you are also learning?*
5. Are you discussing with the REVERENCE for God? *Are you listening to Him?*
6. Do you have a PURE CONSCIENCE? *Are you right with God and the other person?*

G. An EXAMPLE of reasoning: The Apostle Paul on Mars Hill (Acts 17:22-32)

1. He acknowledged their religion: *I noticed your monument to an "unknown God."*
2. The nature of GOD (creator): *He is the one you really long for but can be known.*
3. The nature of TRUTH (sovereign): *God doesn't need anything but is Lord of all.*
4. The nature of MAN (seek God): *Your own poets have said man is in need of God.*
5. The nature of HISTORY (providential): *God pre-determined times and boundaries.*
6. The nature of SIN (repentance): *God's grace allows man time to repent*
7. The nature of JUDGMENT (account): *There is a day coming where all will be judged.*
8. Jesus and the RESURRECTION (gospel): *He raised Christ from the dead!*

**You don't  
have to win  
the argument  
to win the  
person.**

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***Memory Verse:***

*"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."*

—1 Peter 3:15

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### *Homework:*

- 1. Describe a time when you either used one of the tools for discerning worldviews from the lesson outline to engage in healthy dialogue with someone who holds a different worldview OR found yourself using a logical fallacy during a conversation. What was the outcome, and what did you learn from the experience?**
  
- 2. Reflect on the quote, “You don’t have to win the argument to win the person.” What does this reveal about the deeper purpose of dialogue, especially when engaging with someone who holds a non-biblical worldview?**

### *Listening Test:*

- 1. Everyone has a worldview.**
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
- 2. The Bible tells us that discernment is:**
  - a. only required of pastors and leaders
  - b. something we can only hope to attain
  - c. a mark of maturity in believers
  
- 3. Inadequate worldviews produce:**
  - a. unfulfilled lives
  - b. confusion
  - c. inadequate answers