

2009

# Worldviews and Values Influence Our Actions (Blog Seventeen of Christianity Alive: Faith. Love. Action.

Christopher P. Meade

*George Fox University*, [cmeade@georgefox.edu](mailto:cmeade@georgefox.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/gfsb>



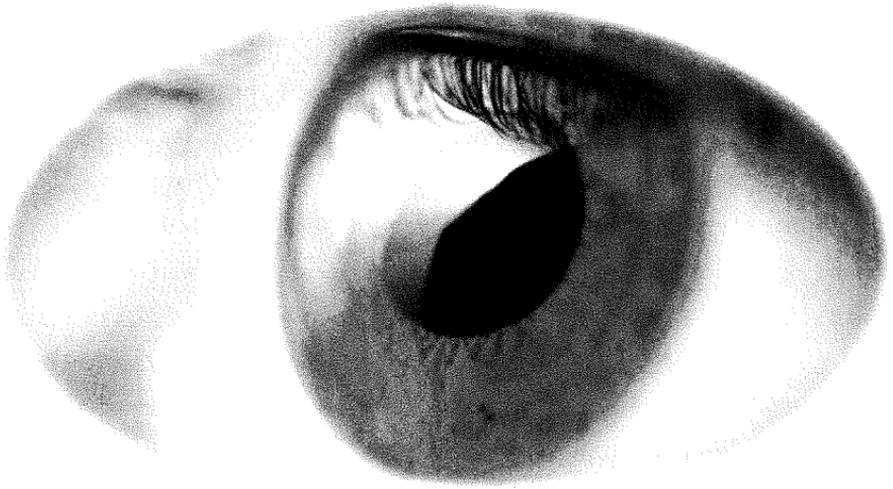
Part of the [Business Commons](#), and the [Christianity Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Meade, Christopher P., "Worldviews and Values Influence Our Actions (Blog Seventeen of Christianity Alive: Faith. Love. Action." (2009). *Faculty Publications - School of Business*. 102.  
<https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/gfsb/102>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Business at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications - School of Business by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact [arolf@georgefox.edu](mailto:arolf@georgefox.edu).



blog seventeen

# Worldviews and Values Influence Our Actions

*As a man thinks within himself so he is.*

*Proverbs 23:7*

## Interconnectedness

Putting key information to melody is an age-old memorization technique. One poem-like song that we used to recite as kids was the old spiritual, “Dem Dry Bones.” The melody has been credited to American educator and early Civil Rights activist, James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938).

It goes like this:

The head-bone’s connected to the neck-bone, the neck-bone’s connected to the back-bone, the back-bone’s connected to the thigh-bone, the thigh-bone’s connected to the knee-bone, the knee-bone’s connected to the leg-bone, the leg-bone’s connected to the foot-bone, oh hear the word of the Lord!

**“Not everyone ascribes to a formal religion, but every person I know possesses a worldview, even if they don’t think that they do.”**

Ezekiel

The song continues on and on and on! Although the lyrics were based on the Book of Ezekiel (chapter 37), I remember it because it was a way to understand basic human anatomy. It depicted how all the bones are individual, yet interconnected: Bones, muscles, and tissues are glued together by the *fascia* that binds it all together as one working unit. This principle of interconnectedness is also true when it comes to understanding how human beings think and act.

## Worldviews

Not everyone ascribes to a formal religion, but every person I know possesses a worldview, even if they don’t think that they do. A person’s

worldview helps construct his moral base (rights and wrongs). Worldviews are like a type of scaffolding that serves to support one’s personal value system, which in turn, both consciously and subconsciously, influence behaviors, actions, and decision-making.

The average person makes close to 300 decisions a day. Some decisions are not a big deal, like “what shirt will I wear today?” Others are more serious, like “should I run the red light while my car is in the intersection in order not to be late for work?” Other decisions are not as blatant, yet they are potentially just as life-altering in their consequences.

Our worldview influences our actions in a more profound and far-reaching way than most people realize. In some ways, a person’s worldview is a moral compass that guides their daily journey through life, both in the public and private arenas.

## Truth

Values and morals are tethered to interpretations of truth, reality, and perception. What’s amazing about human beings is that even if what they perceive as “true” is not true at all, but they are convinced that it is, this “perceived truth” still sways their thinking, values, and behaviors. Jesus said that out of a person’s heart (inside), their mouth speaks (outside). Words and actions have a relationship to thoughts and perceptions, even if those perceptions are not founded upon reality, but rather “perceived reality.”

Proverbs 4:23 says, “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for out of it flows all the issues of life.” In essence, this means that our decisions and actions in life are tethered to the way we perceive things inside our hearts and minds. The head-bone is connected to the hand-bone!

**“Perception matters. It generates consequences both good and bad.”**

## Perception

Perception matters. It generates consequences, both good and bad. Some of those consequences are immediate. Others are time-delayed, and have not yet come to fruition. Other consequences happen outside our sphere of perception and we never see its full affects. Nevertheless, perceptions have consequences.

Our view of God (or a lack thereof), the perspective we have of the world around us, the outlook we hold concerning ourselves as human beings (who we are, where we came from, and what we are doing here on

Earth), the personal panorama we embrace concerning our roles and responsibilities to others and society at large, all of these have tangible and concrete residual out-workings associated with them.

**“This worldview holds the belief that God is eternal, alive, triune, self-existent, and is the creator of the universe.”**

## The Eye

In Matthew 6:22-23, Jesus said, “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” Jesus wasn’t referring to our eyeball. He was saying that our perceptions, and the lens in which we view truth, influence our whole life. When things aren’t working well for us, a good starting place to resolve problems is to begin with our own view of things, beginning from the inside with our mental models and perceptions of truth.

Jesus was explaining a relationship between perception (true reality or perceived reality), worldviews, values, actions, and decision-making. It’s all interconnected. In the Western world, we have learned to be dualistic and compartmentalize parts of our humanity, rather than see life as a holistic

whole, which is biblical.

Americans ascribe to many different worldviews. As we better understand these various worldviews, we will better understand ourselves and others. I’ll list four for brevity’s sake.

## FOUR WORLDVIEWS:

### 1. Biblical Christian

This worldview holds the belief that God is eternal, alive, triune (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), self-existent, and the creator of the universe. He is a personal God and He is verbal. He speaks to humanity through the created universe, through the person of Jesus Christ, and the Bible (Romans 1; Hebrews 1).

Christian morals and values are derived from this “God who speaks” and what He says. These values and morals are clearly expressed in the scriptures; therefore, morals, values, and behaviors are contained in the word of God, written by various human authors who were divinely inspired. These morals, value systems, and behaviors were written so that human beings would embrace them and obey them. Where certain issues are not exhaustively defined, Christians are instructed to use their conscience (which is a finite gift from an infinite God) and other biblical principles to resolve them.

### 2. Deist

This view holds the perspective that God is not personal or verbal nor involved in the affairs of human beings. Rather, He is distant and disengaged from the universe, humanity, and history. This worldview is very popular in today’s emerging culture. Although Deists agree that there is a god who exists, and that he created the universe, they do not mean the God of the Judeo-Christian worldview. Rather, they believe “God” to

be more of a divine force, spirit, cause, energy, matter, or designer. This particular worldview convolutes the meaning of the word “God.” Often, it must be unpacked in conversation to derive its true definition. Deists believe this deity created a closed universe but left it on its own to run like a giant clock.

Deists believe that although God is impersonal, human beings are personal. Deists place special value on human beings and believe that they are wired with creativity, rational thinking, and intelligence, but that those human attributes are not anchored in the character of God. Deists do not embrace the concepts of a fallen world or humanity’s sinful nature as first introduced in Genesis.

**“This view holds the perspective that God is not personal or verbal nor involved in the affairs of human beings.”**

They believe human beings are responsible for making the best society they can create by using their own intellect and reasoning. Since God has left the world alone, human beings cannot resource God’s laws and principles (i.e., the Bible) as absolute truths in regards to morals, values, and ethics, because special revelation does not exist. Humanity is autonomous unto itself. Therefore, humanity must make sense of it’s own destiny, and thereby create its own set of guiding morals and values. Because Deists do not believe in a personal God who speaks, they are then free to do what they think is rational and ethical for society at large.

This worldview is one of the most difficult from which to construct a concrete and logical ethical framework. The concepts of good and evil are often in the eyes of the beholder, which makes differentiating between good and evil (right and wrong) either non-existent or relative.

### 3. Secular Humanist

Many other worldviews (including Biblical Christians and Deists) categorize themselves as humanists, those who value human beings and humanitarian causes. As we explore this worldview, I’m not referring to humanism in this general sense, but rather in a more specific, sub-category of humanism called *Secular Humanism*.

Secular Humanism perceives “God” as the greater society at large. In essence, Secular Humanists believe that if there is a god, he is not personal and does not speak through the Bible. Most Secular Humanists believe man is the focal point, the “final authority,” and the ultimate decision-maker of what is true.

The notion of relativism is foundational to Secular Humanists. Absolute truths (although most Secular Humanists who embrace this philosophy would disagree that they ascribe to absolutes) would be influenced by the cultural average. In essence, 51% of society’s opinion on a particular issue becomes the new and improved benchmark of “truth.” The cultural norm is the gatekeeper to societal mores, values, and morals.

Conclusions regarding morality, behavior, and public policy are decided on by what groups of human beings believe is best for them as a whole. It is dynamic and subject to change. Secular Humanism relies on a mosaic of thought that seeks input from specific cultural circumstances, geographic locations, popular consensus, technological advancements, and affluence (just to name a few).

### 4. Hedonist

This group usually views themselves as God, although most people who hold this view of life and of God would be uncomfortable even using

**“In essence, 51% of society’s opinion on a particular issue becomes the new and improved benchmark of ‘truth.’”**

the word “God.” Some others might view God as a Force, or even Nature, but whoever or whatever “God” is, it is not the God of the Bible. Morals, behaviors, and life pursuits are focused around that particular individual’s comforts, goals, wants, and desires. There is no outside moral force or ethical guiding principle. This worldview derives its morals and values (which influence behavior) from the individual and that person’s personal choice and preference. Generating and sustaining personal pleasure is the highest value within this worldview or lens of life.

**“Generating and sustaining personal pleasure is the highest value within this worldview or lens of life.”**

### Integrating Theology and Practice

I realize that some of us can also ascribe theologically or philosophically to a mental construct (e.g., Christian worldview). We can adhere to a particular worldview in theory, yet in practice, our lives align with a completely different worldview. It’s like we say one thing and live a different way (e.g., Christian in theory, but a Hedonist in practice).

Mental health professionals say that living an un-integrated life is one of the main causes of stress. The minimum consequence of living in an un-aligned or disintegrated fashion is to experience increased personal stress. The maximum consequence of living with a mind in one worldview and a lifestyle in another is personal deception (which I think is worse). If a person does not possess acute self-awareness, then he can’t honestly know who he is. If a person does not know who he is, he can’t know how he is really doing in life and how to get better if, of course, that’s even what he wants to do.

We owe it to ourselves and to those we love to be aligned in thought and practice. As Jesus said, if there seem to be shadows and dark places

in our thinking, or incongruencies in our actions, then start as any good detective would, and “retrace your steps,” assessing the accuracy of your perceptions, and examining your worldviews honestly.

### A Taste of Texas

When I lived in east Texas many years ago, my brother Mike and I were at a backyard BBQ where our guests felt we needed some Texas-style hazing. At this dinner gathering, Mike and I were each handed a stick and a brown paper bag from a couple of guys. We were encouraged to go out into the woods and scare the “snipes” out from behind the rocks and valleys and into the open light of the campfire. They must have all been actors, because no one broke a grin. What a sight! Two well-intentioned, college-aged guys, walking into the dark woods, beating brown paper bags with sticks, calling out to snipes! The only problem is that there are no such things as snipes. It was a way to share a laugh with friends. (I think that’s what they told us.) I have met many well-intentioned men and women holding on to “snipe-like” misconceptions of reality and truth.

Our worldview matters. What we believe about truth affects our lives. Our worldview colors our personality and influences everything about us. My prayer for us is that we would honestly “evaluate” in order that we might better “integrate” who we are with what we believe, so that our lives will take on even greater joy, meaning, and effectiveness.

**“Mental health professionals say that living an un-integrated life is one of the main causes of stress.”**