

Worldview ~ Part 1

Introduction and Philosophy

by Steve & Carol Ryerson

Think about it: you find out you're going to have a baby. You're excited about it, to say the least. You plan and dream about many things. You choose the decorating scheme for the bedroom. You look at sales on baby clothes, not to buy yet, but to start getting an idea as to what is available and what they cost. You are attracted to the toy advertisements as never before. You start looking at the Sunday school teachers as never before...they're not just teachers in general, but they're potential teachers for my child who, of course, is different from other children. Instantly, it seems, the whole world is different because you are starting to view everything from the perspective of a parent.

Of course you want him to be saved. Of course you want your child to be taught Bible stories. Of course you want him to be involved in the life of the church. But for your child, you want more. God is dealing with you about much more. Through a variety of circumstances, the Lord shows you that home education is the best way to put God's best into the head and heart of your precious bundle. So, well before day one of "school," you are asking yourself many questions about how to home school effectively. Of course you start thinking about curriculum. You do a little looking and quickly find out that there is a mountain of possibilities. Then you hear from some really radical folks, the Ryersons, who tell you that home schooling is not fundamentally about books, it's about discipleship. Not about books? How could

that be?

In these chapters on applying worldview studies in the home school, we want to answer one part of that question. Part of discipling our children is teaching them to think like Christians. That means we need to understand what a Christian worldview ~ a Biblical way of thinking about everything ~ is.

Think about these definitions of worldview:

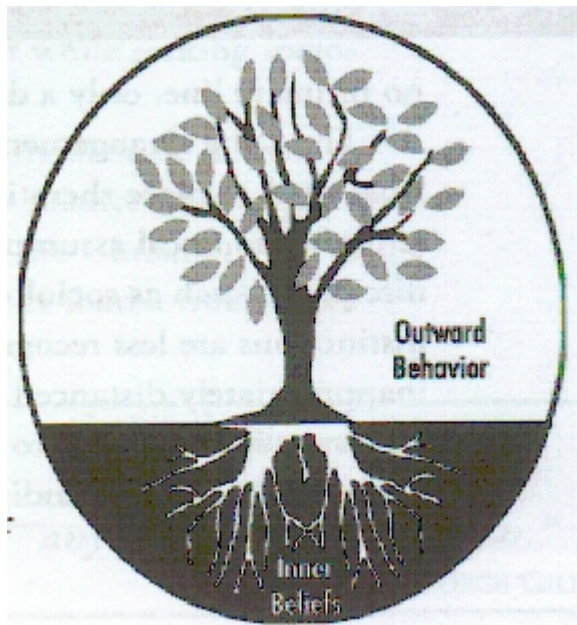
"A worldview is a way of viewing and interpreting all of reality. It is an interpretive framework through which or by which one makes sense of the data of life and the world." (Geisler & Watkins, as quoted in *Thinking Like a Christian* by David Noebel; Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2002, page 4)

"A worldview is like a map. It tells you where you are and how you can get to where you want to go. This process relates to answering questions such as Who am I? Where am I from? Where am I going?" (David & Shirley Quine, *Let Us Highly Resolve*; Cornerstone Curriculum, Richardson Texas, 1996, page 23)

"A person's worldview is the collection of his presuppositions or convictions about reality which represent his total outlook on life." (W. Andrew Hoffecker, as quoted by Israel Wayne in *Homeschooling From a Biblical Worldview*, page 4)

A simple way to say it is that it is the sum total of how we look at life. If Jesus Christ and His Word are not directing all of that, then you do not have a Biblical worldview. In this series of articles, we want to show you why this is important and how you can begin to train your children in this vital process.

Consider the following diagram taken from *Thinking Like a Christian*, by David Noebel:



The inner beliefs a person has form his “root system.” You see as you look at the diagram that the root system has two main branches. These represent a person’s beliefs in the areas of theology (what he believes about God) and philosophy (how he decides what is real and what is true). From these inner beliefs spring the persons outward behavior.

Proverbs 23:7 says, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...” Jesus said, “Out of the heart proceedeth evil thoughts...” (Matthew 15:19). The principle is simply that which the diagram shows:

what is on the inside determines what will be on the outside.

If our ideas about God and our decisions about what is true and right come from the Bible, then we have a Christian worldview. If they do not, then we don’t. Thinking Biblically does not happen accidentally. We must get the Word of God into our hearts and use it as a filter in all our reading and thinking about what is happening in the world.

Let’s start to focus some and look at philosophy—the way we know something is true. Many Scriptures could be used here, but let’s look at just two.

II Corinthians 10:4-5 ~ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, (NKJV)

By the help of the Spirit and by standing on the Word of God, we defeat the reasoning and self-centeredness of man.

Notice that the Scripture says that we take the worldly thoughts captive; they don’t take us captive. That means we need to be on guard. We need to think about the things we hear in the world and the philosophies behind them. If someone says that a woman should have the right to an abortion because it might be too difficult for her to raise a child in the current circumstances of her life, we need to realize that that thought comes from a philosophy saying, “My own comfort is more highly valued than the life of the child.” That places man higher than God in determining what is right and true. Of course, we must have compassion on a young woman in difficult circumstances, but moral

decisions—in God’s Word—are not made on the basis of personal comfort. The arguments of man are often deceptive in the way that they play upon feelings.

The second verse we will mention to help you understand Biblical philosophy is: Colossians 2:8 ~ Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. (NKJV)

We have to beware. We must realize that the traditions of men are deceptive. We have to realize that the world wants to displace Christ as the foundation for truth.

This deception is sometimes seen in the things that critics of Christianity who attempt to be scientific will say. They will talk about the drastic difference between religion and science. They may talk about how they want to live life on the basis of scientific principles, not on hollow opinions handed down by some preacher. While there is a difference between faith and science, the Christian on the defensive may forget that it was a belief in the God of the Bible what spawned modern science. Paganism by nature is superstitious. Pagans don’t believe in an orderly God Who reaches out to man in an orderly way; Christians do. That’s why men became scientific. They expected a God of law to have created a universe of laws, so they set about to discover those laws. Professor Stanley L. Jaki argues strongly for this position in a book called *The Origin of Science*.

As you are talking with your children about the world around them, you can teach them to think Biblically by taking note of the things people say and pointing out to them how those things are based on philosophies that are opposed to the Bible.

It’s a process to teach them how a statement someone makes is sitting on a foundation. This kind of reasoning develops in children around age ten, eleven, or twelve. Sometimes this is called “reading between the lines.” This is difficult for some, but just by talking about the issues of the day, you can teach them many things.

We have a religion column in our local newspaper in which a reader writes in a question on some spiritual issue and the columnist responds. Recently a woman who is a former lesbian wrote in and was talking about how God had changed her life. She talked about how the Lord had delivered her from the unnatural desires and had given her a wonderful family. She was excited about what God had done. The columnist showed some happiness over the woman’s joy, but she said that God loves all people, including those who are gay. She then referred readers to an “expert” authority who agreed with her. This is an example of the need to show your children how to get through the superficial to the basic—the philosophical. Of course God loves people who are practicing homosexuality, but that doesn’t mean they are justified in continuing a behavior the Bible specifically condemns. Regarding the “expert”: does having an advanced degree qualify someone to countermand God’s Word? This is an assumption some people make.

Consider an example that would be more likely to happen with younger children. Your eight year old boy Sammy is out playing in the yard and a neighbor boy comes over bringing with him the latest in fantasy, action-figure related items: “The Hulk: Hulk Hands With Electronic Sounds.” You look outside and see the neighbor boy pounding Sammy with these huge green fists. You hear “crashing sounds

and guttural screams that [seemed to] emulate those of the Hulk himself” (quotes from the Amazon.com website) coming from the front yard and you are taken aback. You race outside to see what is going on, but by the time you get there, the boys’ laughter causes you to slow down and wonder whether this is just a “boy thing” and whether you should say anything. You realize that the green “fists” are large foam gloves made to look like the hands of the Hulk (a mutant comic book figure who is green, large, and muscular as the result of gamma ray radiation).

Do you say anything or not? You have taught your son that he is to be kind at all times. You have steered away from most of the action figures because of the way that they use fantasy to stir up emotions that could lead to some ungodly actions. You have also pointed out some of the occult overtones that many of the figures have, but you’re not familiar with the Hulk, and the “fists” are covered with foam, so no one is going to get physically hurt. Your mind is racing, and you think about what traits and values you and your husband are trying to instill in your son. Being overly muscular and being able to intimidate people is not one of them. But, on the other hand, the boys are laughing so much and having such a good time. You back off and decide to discuss it with your husband when he gets home.

Your husband comes home, and you have a normal dinner as you talk about the events of the day. You are trying to avoid the topic of the Hulk Hands because you want to talk it over with your husband before he finds out from your son. Sammy senses your uncertainty and decides to push the matter. He says, “Dad, guess what I want for my birthday! I want a pair of Hulk Hands!”

Your husband, a little baffled, says, “A pair of what?”

“Hulk Hands! They’re huge! They’re green, and I can smash people all I want, and they won’t get hurt.”

“Hulk Hands?” Dad replies as he looks back and forth between the two of you.

You begin to relate what you saw and heard, and you tell your husband that you were going to discuss it after dinner. Your husband senses your ill-ease about Hulk Hands, and he tries to think about the bigger picture of what the two of you are trying to teach Sammy about life and what would be pleasing to the Lord.

Dad asks Sammy an interesting question. “Sam, do you think that the Hulk is stronger than Jesus?”

Sheepishly, Sammy replies, “Well...uh...no, but what do you mean, Dad?”

Dad continues, “Let’s think about this, son. When you put the Hulk Hands on, in your imagination, who are you?”

“Uh...I guess I’m the Hulk.”

“And who is the Hulk?”

“Well, he’s the strongest guy around.”

“Stronger than Jesus?”

“Aw Dad....it’s just...”

“Just what, son?”

“Well, just a game.”

“Sammy, the games we play must not dishonor the Lord.”

“Dad, how would I be dishonoring Jesus?”

“If you want to pretend to be someone who is stronger than Jesus, you are dishonoring Jesus.”

From there, you have a good family conversation about meaning that is behind the things we see. You talk about the hidden agenda that the Evil One has to take people’s minds off of the Lord. You talk about looking past the surface to the deeper meaning. You talk about how the things we believe inside ourselves about God and about right and wrong really affect how we live. You talk about how every part of our lives belong to God, not just what we do on Sunday. You talk about how we have to go beyond just knowing Acts 2:38, and into everyday life.

You show Sammy what real strength is. You show him what it means to bring every thought into captivity. You show him that walking with God affects every part of life. You give him a powerful lesson in Christian worldview.