

# Six worldviews you're competing against

by Rick Warren

Worldview matters. Clarifying worldviews is not an academic exercise, intellectual theory, or a philosophical concept. A worldview is an integral part of the lives of those you minister to on a weekly basis. It determines their relationships. It determines their successes and failure. It determines their goals and motivations. If you want to see someone change their lives, they'll have to change how they look at the world first.

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Every week as you stand before your people to share God's Word, they're bringing different worldviews into the room. What are some of these worldviews?

## 1. The one with the most toys wins.

This is the worldview of materialism – and it can be summed up with one word, more. Materialism says that the only thing that really matters in life is acquiring things. Those who subscribe to this worldview live mostly to collect things.

**The Bible's answer:** Jesus said this in Luke 12, "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (NIV). He tells us not to judge our lives by how much we've got. The greatest things in life aren't things.

## 2. I've got to think of me first.

We live in a "me first," serve-yourself world that says it's all about you. Commercial slogans cater to this viewpoint. Slogans like, "have it your way," "we do it all for you," "obey your thirst," "you've got to think of what's best for yourself," and "You deserve it."

For the last 40 years, the Baby Boomer generation has been called the "Me Generation." This "me first" idea has infected entire communities. It has torn up marriages ("I don't care how divorce impacts my spouse or children; it's all about me"), destroyed workplaces ("I don't care how my laziness impacts my co-workers; it's all about me") and even ruined churches ("Serve my needs first, forget about the lost").

It's a self-centered, individualistic way of life that says we should ignore the community and other people.

**The Bible's answer:** Jesus says, "If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me, you will find true life" (Matt. 16:25 NLT). Jesus says you only begin to live when you give your life away. Significance in life does not come from serving yourself; it comes from serving God and others.

## 3. Do what feels good.

This is hedonism – the belief that the most important thing in life is how we feel. The number one goal of a hedonist is to feel good, be comfortable, and have fun.

It's the worldview that Hugh Hefner founded Playboy magazine on. He willingly acknowledges he is a hedonist.

It's not just playboys who are hedonists, though. In fact, someone who lives for the goal of retirement is a hedonist. If the whole goal of a person's life is to simply do nothing, live a self centered life, and make no contribution to the world, that's hedonism.

The Bible's answer: "Are you addicted to thrills? What an empty life! The pursuit of pleasure is never satisfied" (Prov 21:17 Msg). Mick Jagger's been singing: "I can't get no satisfaction" for 40 years. Why? The pursuit of pleasure is never satisfied.

#### **4. Whatever works for you.**

This worldview says it doesn't matter if it's right or wrong. It doesn't matter if it hurts anybody or not. If it works for you, fine. As that great theologian Sly Stone says, "Different strokes for different folks."

In our multi-cultural, pluralistic world, this is a very popular worldview. Nobody wants to tell someone else that what they are doing is wrong. In fact that's the only way you can be wrong in our society today – if you tell someone else they're wrong.

**The Bible's answer:** The Bible says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death" (Prov. 14:12 NIV). Our ideas may seem right, but in the end our ideas lead to death. "Whatever works for you" leads to death. You don't break God's universal laws; they break you.

#### **5. God doesn't exist.**

This worldview is naturalism or atheism. Naturalists believe that everything in life is a result of random chance. We're all accidents of nature. There is no grand creator or grand design. God either doesn't exist or he doesn't matter.

If there is no God, there's no plan or purpose for life. If there is no purpose, than your life doesn't really matter. Your only value comes from the fact that God loves you, created you, and thought you up. For naturalists, life has no value, meaning, or purpose.

It takes more faith to be an atheist than it does to believe in God. When you look at creation and how the world is set on an axis, it proves the existence of God to me. If it were one degree one way, we'd freeze up. If it were one degree the other way, we'd burn up.

**The Bible's answer:** Paul says in Romans 1:25 (NIV), "From the beginning of creation, God has shown what he is like by all he has made. That's why those people don't have any excuse. They know about God, but they don't honor him or even thank him...They claim to be wise, but they are fools." In other words, we can look at nature and see a lot about God. We know God is creative, powerful, organized, and likes diversity. There are lots of things we know about God just by looking at nature.

#### **6. You are your own God.**

This worldview, otherwise known as humanism, is very popular in the Western world. It says we are the mastermind of our own fate, the determiner of our destiny. You'll hear this in the new age movement as well: "You're divine. You're a god."

It's ironic. God wired us to worship something. And if we don't worship God, we end up worshipping ourselves. The self-made man usually worships his maker.

**The Bible's answer:** Paul says in Rom. 1:25 (NIV): "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped created things rather than the Creator." You can go all around the world and find people worshipping little idols that they made – stone idols, rock idols, crystals, and wooden idols. They're worshipping something that they created themselves or somebody else created. In America we have our own idols – they're called cars, homes, and status symbols. The Bible is clear that God is God, and we're not.

All of these worldviews have consequences. Every day we're affected and influenced by them. We're often not even aware of it. These worldviews affect the happiness and success of the people to whom you minister. They matter greatly.

There's only one worldview that is consistent with the Bible. The biblical worldview says God made us for his purposes. It says that we exist for his pleasure. It's 180 degrees different from the other worldviews above.

Want to change the hearts of those listening to your sermons each week? Change their minds – and their worldviews – first.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rick".