

Why One Way? (Part 1 of 4)

Serendipity Class — April 7, 2002

Study Guide: “*Why One Way?*” by John MacArthur (available at Christian Words & Works)

Lesson Plan Outline:

- ◆ April 7: Introduction and The Church vs. the World (Chapter 1)
- ◆ April 14: Objectivity (Chapter 2) and Rationality (Chapter 3)
- ◆ April 21: Veracity (Chapter 4) and Authority (Chapter 5)
- ◆ May 5: Incompatibility (Chapter 6) and Integrity (Chapter 7)

Lesson 1: Introduction and The Church vs. the World

Key Points

- ◆ The term “worldview” describes a philosophical system of thinking by which we evaluate ourselves and the world around us
- ◆ Worldviews can be examined on the basis of how they answer the following three questions: (1) *Creation*—Who are we and where did we come from? (2) *The Fall*—What has gone wrong with the world? (3) *Redemption*—What can we do to fix it?
- ◆ *Modernism* maintains that only objective science can explain reality; it patently denies any reality beyond the physical/temporal realm (only that which can be observed is real)
- ◆ *Postmodernism* holds that there is no such thing as absolute, objective, universal truth (reality is only in the mind of the beholder)
- ◆ Both modernism and postmodernism are subsets of *nihilism* (“nothingness”)—a worldview which states that we *came* from nothing, we will *return* to nothing, and that all existence in between is *meaningless*
- ◆ Embracing a nihilistic worldview unavoidably strips life of all intrinsic significance; people are no more important than gnats; all cosmic events are random (including the creation of the universe, the appearance of life, and human intelligence); suffering is pointless; concern for the plight of humanity is a waste of emotion
- ◆ We live in a culture that freely embraces many aspects of modernism and postmodernism, even though both worldviews conflict with the notion of a transcendent, spiritual Creator
- ◆ Darwin’s theory of evolution emerged from the modernistic mind set of the 19th century and prevails in scientific circles today—even in the absence of any credible empirical evidence
- ◆ Science (the systematic pursuit of ultimate truth) has given way to naturalism—a belief that nature is all we need to explain everything that exists
- ◆ Postmodernism masquerades as virtue with regard to tolerance of differing ideas; all viewpoints are necessarily declared equally valid (the result is *moral relativism*)
- ◆ Postmodernism is incompatible with the notion of true virtue; all kinds of immorality are “normalized” and perversion is seen as an expression of individuality
- ◆ Postmodernism “tolerates” every claim to truth except that which declares an exclusive,

universal point-of-view that applies to everyone

- ◆ Modernism and postmodernism are set in opposition to Christ, who affirmed the existence of a vast unseen spiritual realm and taught of a single, objective, universal truth which applies to all people in all time and all places

Discussion Questions

- ◆ What are some examples of postmodern values as seen in daily life?
- ◆ What is lost when we dilute the Gospel in order not to “offend” anyone? How is this an act of unfaithfulness? Unbelief? How did the apostles win converts?
- ◆ What has been the effect of “modern marketing” on the church?
- ◆ What has resulted from the outcries for tolerance and political correctness, both within and outside the church?
- ◆ How does the postmodern concept of tolerance differ from the biblical mandate to love our neighbors?

Take Home

- ◆ We must first and foremost hold fast to biblical truth and strive to think and act “Christianly”
- ◆ Our charge from Christ is to declare the truth of the Gospel to our fallen world
- ◆ We can model a Christian worldview to the secular world without “forcing” Christianity onto an individual or an organization
- ◆ Our duty as Christians is to do more than simply spread the Gospel to the unsaved; it is to fulfill the biblical mandate to subdue the earth by applying biblical principles to all areas of life — in the church, in the home, at work, at school, and in our leisure time

Supporting Scripture Verses

- ◆ John 3:18 — there is no condemnation for those who trust in Jesus
- ◆ Matthew 10:32-36 — Jesus bears a sword which has the power to divide families
- ◆ Luke 6:26 — Jesus condemns those who seek the world’s approval
- ◆ Romans 12:2 — be transformed by the renewing of your mind
- ◆ Philippians 4:8 — think about things which are good and praiseworthy

References

- ◆ Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey — How Now Shall We Live?
- ◆ Os Guinness — Time for Truth
- ◆ R.C. Sproul — Lifeviews