

A 15 min. History of Worldliness

A Postmodernism Primer

Spiritual Warfare -A war of ideas and truth in the battlefield of the mind

^{ESV} **2 Corinthians 10:3** For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy **strongholds**. ⁵ We destroy **arguments** and every lofty **opinion** raised against the **knowledge** of God, and take every **thought** captive to obey Christ,

Quick History of Worldly Thought*

Pre-modern (~2500 yrs)	Modern (~250 yrs)	Postmodern (25 yrs?)
Objective, ultimate truth	Objective, ultimate truth	Objective, ultimate truth is unknowable
supernatural	non-supernatural	mystical
authority of God	authority from science and human reason	no ultimate authority--self only

*From Phil Johnson's Teaching: *You Can't Handle the Truth—Addressing the tolerance of postmodernism*

Postmodernism - The current version of worldliness

Postmodernism is the dominant culture in which we live. It influences everything you watch, everything you read, it is the very air that you breathe today. As ambassadors for Christ, it is important that we understand the world we are called to reach. In the same way you wouldn't send a missionary to a foreign country without some knowledge of the language and culture, we need to know and understand the language and culture of where God has placed us. **Postmodernism is a radical reaction to the failure of modernism.**

Four Essentials of the Christian Worldview that Postmodernists cannot stomach:

- Objectivity --postmodernists believe **all truth is subjective**, relative
 - Objective Truth—always true no matter who believes it (multiplication tables ...)
 - Subjective Truth—depends on the person (personal taste... etc.)
- Clarity -postmodernists believe meaning is determined by reader/hearer rather than author. It's completely self-absorbed, the author's intent is irrelevant. (*can you see danger here for a church influenced by this culture? – Ouiji Bible hermeneutics*)
- Authority -postmodernists insist there are no foundations for knowledge, all opinions are equally valid.
- Certainty -post modernists believe you can't know anything for sure and consider you arrogant if you claim to know anything for sure.

Postmodernism is also affecting the church. -Emerging church movement (not all bad)

- Rejection of the doctrine and theology for "story or narrative"
 - *While the Bible is more than an encyclopedia of truths, it is definitely **not** less*

- *While we can't comprehend God exhaustively, we can know some things for certain... effectively turning doubt into a Christian virtue.*
 - **Ouija Hermeneutics → Biblical illiteracy**
 - *People know only a few verses, and those out of context*
 - *Which is easier, looking for personal messages or diligent study?*
 - **Rejection of Biblical leadership/authority**
 - *Biblical church discipline is almost non-existent.*
 - *Since Biblical meaning is my own interpretation, who needs teachers/mentors?*
 - **Rejection of Biblical model in *decision making**
 - *Turn to Christianized superstition looking for God's leading*
 - *Hint: Why would God include so much wisdom literature along with exhortations to pursue wisdom if all we were to do was look for signs and warm fuzzies?*
- *This is the topic of another Sunday Seminar. You can find the notes at objectivegospel.org under "Training"

The Language Barrier

- **Truth** – as we mentioned before, to the postmodernist, what is true for you is not necessarily true for them. All truth is relative. For you to say “unless you believe in Jesus Christ, you will go to hell” is taken to be the same as “unless you like my favorite flavor of ice cream, you are going to hell”
- **Faith** – *Believing something without regard for the facts, or in spite of the facts. Strong faith means believing what you believe may not be so, and the strongest faith is believing what you are pretty sure isn't so.*

The church shares a lot of the blame for this word losing its meaning. Now it is too easily paired with “leap of” and “blind.” Biblical faith is *to put ones trust in* something and is not irrational. You exercise faith in an airline when you actually get on the plane. Do you have good reason to believe that you will arrive safely? Did you believe it would get you there (rationally) before you got on?

- **Humility**– *Realizing that you don't really know anything for sure*

This is actually arrogance in disguise. To claim that we cannot know what is clearly revealed by God is to make Him a liar. Real humility is to submit to the truth that we are sinners deserving of judgment and anything short of hell is by God's grace; and that we are limited in our understanding of the truth. True humility remains teachable and hungry to learn.

- **Tolerance & Inclusiveness** –*The chief virtues of postmodernism*

The post-modern world has completely redefined tolerance. In its real meaning “putting up with someone with whom you disagree, dislike, of differing views...” Postmoderns redefine tolerance to disallow disagreement at all (or at least to express it—the only allowable expression of disagreement is to claim someone else is intolerant...). Scripture teaches the opposite of worldly tolerance:

- Appropriate intolerance is praised:

^{ESV} **Revelation 2:2** "I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.

- Inappropriate tolerance is rebuked (false teaching).

^{ESV} **Revelation 2:20** But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

^{ESV} **2 Corinthians 11:4** For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.

- Inappropriate tolerance is rebuked (immorality).

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 5:1** It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife.

True tolerance is amply described in the fruits of the Spirit and exhortations to put other's interests ahead of our own.

- The gospel is *inclusive* (all called to repent) and *exclusive* (Jesus is the only way). It is important to express that this is not *your* teaching, but Gods. You may not be able to convince the person that this is True, but you can certainly demonstrate that it is what Jesus and the apostles taught. Are the following Scriptures inclusive or exclusive in nature?

^{ESV} **John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

^{ESV} **1 Timothy 2:5** For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

^{ESV} **Luke 12:8** "And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God,⁹ but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

^{ESV} **1 John 2:23** No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.

^{ESV} **1 John 5:11** And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

^{ESV} **Luke 10:16** "The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 6:9-11** Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

^{ESV} **Acts 4:11** This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."