

Sift week 1

Intro

Prospecting for Gold (https://youtube.com/shorts/Hent0kkRItA?si=BHIqMDIE5nN_I5ig)

Let's talk about sifting gold for a minute. To be a true prospector, you have to go down to a river and sift through a bunch of rocks and dirt to get to the gold! People used to leave everything they had to move to where gold was found in search of their fortune.

However, there is a specific type of rock that they had to be aware of, Pyrite also called fools gold. (Show a picture of the two side by side) Real gold is valuable, however pyrite is essentially worthless, but it found much easier than gold.

In the 19th century, the California Gold Rush was in full swing. Many people up and left for the West Coast, hoping to get rich quick. At first, it seemed a profitable opportunity. However, most were sorely disappointed. As it turns out, pyrite looks a lot like gold. Many miners and mine operators thought they had the gold mother load when they struck pyrite. Plenty took out loans and such, moving their whole families and taking loans to build houses, using their "gold" as collateral. It wasn't until later that they figured out it was false gold. Unfortunately these people were left with nothing. It's easy to understand how some of the harsher people would call them and their wares fool and fool's gold respectively.

Throughout this new series that we are starting today, we are going to be looking at the book of 2 Peter.

2 Peter 2:1 pg. 590

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

Here is why I think we need to be prospectors again; not sifting for literal gold but sifting for the truth because there are "false teachers" among us.

- In your life, you are going to have to decide what you believe and why because there are a lot of rocks and dirt in the "stream" of our culture today.
- You need better reasons for why you follow Jesus than,
 - "I feel God"
 - "I had an experience"
 - "people I respect believe it."
 - Those aren't bad things; they are just shaky ground.

Algorithms, news outlets, certain educational systems, things we used to think we could trust, subtly and not-so-subtly, are trying to change our worldview and turn it away from the Bible.

I'm not talking about conspiracy theories; I'm talking about the sinful nature of humanity. The world is trying to talk us out of living God's way. *This is not a new thing.* It's been happening since sin hit the scene.

You hear things at school and on TV. You see things on social media. You have friends who live their lives and make decisions based on a different set of assumptions, perceptions, and experiences than you.

You have teachers who operate out of a certain way of thinking. Some of you are from non-Christian families, and your parents have a different moral compass than you.

Don't be offended on this one: some of you claim to be Christians, and yet you have unknowingly adopted beliefs and language and ways of thinking that are influenced by other religions and spiritual systems.

What is a Worldview?

All of this is about what we call "worldview." The definition of worldview according to the dictionary is: **"The overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world."** It's your story about reality. We all are living out of a certain worldview.

And statistically speaking, religion in American is not on the decline or dying out, but having a biblical worldview is declining.

- Less than 3% of Generation Z (you) sees the world and lives their life based on what God has laid out in the Bible.
- When polled on what they believe, an increasing number of people will claim "none." They won't pick a specific religion. They are creating their own worldview by mixing the things they like from different belief systems.^[1]

I don't think this way of living and believing is causing people to flourish. It's not the way we were created to worship. We have walked away from the authority of God and the Bible.

I'm not saying you can't ask hard questions—in fact, the opposite. I want this series to make you wrestle with what you believe like never before. I want you to think, struggle, pray, and discover together with your small group why you believe what you do.

Matthew 13:44 pg. 478

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Jesus is not fool's gold. He's the real thing.

- Following Jesus, thinking God's thoughts, and living God's way is worth giving everything else up to embrace.
- It's not easy or popular. You will likely get cancelled. But He is the treasure in the field.
- If it's true that Jesus is who He claimed to be, then our hearts will be empty until we worship Him alone. If He is the way, the truth, and the life, then we simply must give everything else up to gain Him.

You must train your brains to SIFT all the junk you are seeing and hearing and experiencing to make sure you are basing your life around truth and not getting swindled into fool's gold.

Why we need a biblical worldview

There is an onslaught of opinions from every person on Earth giving you their opinions every day. We cannot just accept what everyone else is feeding us, even if it sounds logical or feels good or keeps you in other's good graces.

We need to clean house in our hearts, and really filter out the junk—the lies, the sin, the false narratives that have made their home in our bed without us knowing it.

We need to replace the world's distorted version of reality with sure and stable footing: the Bible. We need a rational faith that will stand up to false teachers. And, with great love need to take back any ground that the enemy has tried to steal.

Questions To Ask When Sifting for a biblical worldview

- Is this a worldly saying or concept or is it Biblical?
- Are my feelings and desires in this moment going to be my boss or is God?
- Am I avoiding a confrontation because I don't want to be persecuted?
- Am I living God's way in humility, compassion, and love towards others? Or, am I pridefully showing off my holiness?
- Am I resting in my identity as God's son or daughter or am I striving to be a good person and do good things?

A worldview answers the Big Questions

We all have big questions:

- Who am I?
- Am I loved?
- Will everything be ok?
- Does my life matter? What is my purpose?
- Why are things broken and how do I fix them?
- Who are my people?
- How can I be happy?
- How can I make sense of my reality?
- What is true?
- Who can I believe?

These are our big questions. And what I'm saying is that no one can give you the answers except for Jesus.

Your identity is not determined by who your friends are, what you are good at, where you are from, the way you look, or to whom you are sexually or physically attracted. Your identity is not even determined by you.

And that will most likely make you a little uneasy or mad even. That's because we have been conditioned by our culture to determine our own reality. To be our own god. We don't like authority.

As Christians, we are not just claiming that Jesus is the Savior of our sins (although He is) but also, we declare as Christians that He is our Lord. The one who calls the shots and sets reality in stone.

- Reality is not moving. Truth is not moving. God doesn't change. His love for you does not change.
- We need to come back to the beginning, strip away all the confusion you have grown up immersed in, and submit ourselves again to the authority that is Jesus.
- You don't have to get cleaned up to come to God; come as you are! Jesus died for you on your worst day. But Jesus will also demand your full allegiance.

Landing

I think of the movie "The Truman Show." If you haven't seen it, I'm about to ruin it for you. Essentially, Truman is born and immediately put in a reality TV show. His parents are actors, his friends are actors, everything about his life is scripted. He lives his entire life on a TV set. Here's the kicker: he doesn't know it. And when He realizes he has been lied to his entire life, he is out of there!

<https://youtu.be/dlnmQbPGuls?si=yofGke92BaGnWJhf>

The way that Truman sees the world changes after he realized he had believed that the fool's gold was real; that the "truth" he was living in was a counterfeit all along. His worldview changed.

To a lesser extent, we have been immersed in a culture of fake thinking.

- We've been brainwashed. But Jesus is the truth. He is loving. He is worth submitting to. But he's got a list of the ways to do things that work best.
- They aren't the keys to heaven. We cannot be good enough or earn God's acceptance. Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross is the only way to be saved.
- No other way is going to cut it. We need to sift the things we see and hear and think and feel and experience, so we can get to the real gold. The gold is Him. Jesus is the gold. He's the best.

So how do we know what's true and what is a counterfeit? Like Peter said in **2 Peter 2:1**, "**there will be false teachers among you.**"

We need to SIFT our beliefs and decisions through a Biblical worldview. Everything that comes in through your ears and eyes first goes through the sieve that is the Bible.

We are masters at selfishness. Instead of "me-ology" we need to know our "theology." That's the study of God and who He is and how He wants to save everyone from the destructive path we are going down.

Over the next five weeks, we are going to look at some big "theological" (God) concepts as we dismantle some false truth bombs that you probably have started saying or living.

- Next week we will talk about "living your truth."
- Week three will be about "sending positive vibes."
- Week four we'll consider "the hustle"
- Week five will be about "self-love."
- And the final week, we'll focus on "living your best life now."

You aren't going to want to miss a single week. I want you to ask hard questions and sift. We want your small group to be the safest place on Earth to wrestle with why you believe what you believe. We also want it to be a place for you to realize that following Jesus intellectually makes sense and is the most fulfilling way you could live. We also want you to be able to communicate the good news of Jesus with your friends whose worldview may be based more on feelings or cultural norms than actual truth. We want to sift for the truth.

You are loved, friends. It's not because you don't do all the bad things. It's not because you do all the good things you should do. You are loved because Jesus made you. He has made a way for you to be let off the hook for all the ways you blow it every single day. Walk out today with your sieve ready. The Holy Spirit is with you. See you next week!

[\[1\] https://www.arizonachristian.edu/category/crc/awvi/](https://www.arizonachristian.edu/category/crc/awvi/)

Small Group Material

Series Goal: In this series, we want to help students learn to sift through our culture's distorted version of reality to uncover the truth. Addressing commonly held beliefs of our day, we will challenge students to use the Bible as their sieve, as they build their worldview. We do all of this in love, welcoming questions and doubts as they take steps to own their faith. Our heart is to also encourage students to love others well, even as they disagree with their friend's conclusions. This is a worldview, theology, apologetics, and identity series wrapped into one; addressing hard to talk about topics in a way that is both faithful to a high view of Scripture, but also with the winsomeness necessarily to reach the lost.

Small Group Questions:

- In your own words what does worldview mean? How do think a worldview developed?
- What was the most challenging thing for you from the message today?
- In what areas of your life have you subconsciously formed your worldview based on feelings, cultural interpretation, desires, friendship or dating relationships instead of God's Word?
- Which of the "big life questions" do you still struggle to answer the most?
- What would it look like for you to sift the information you are taking in daily in search of the truth?
- Are there any orthodox Christian views are most difficult for you to accept? Why?
- What is the gospel? And why does it matter when it comes to this subject of worldview?
- In what ways do you struggle with your identity?
- How has it been hard for you to stand your ground on things you believe?
- How much would you say you "own your faith?"
- What does it look like to disagree with someone in love while still engaging them in conversation?

Big Life Questions:

- Who am I?
- Am I loved?
- Will everything be ok?
- Does my life matter? What is my purpose?
- Why are things broken and how do I fix them?
- Who are my people?
- How can I be happy?
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Questions To Ask When Sifting

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