

Essentials

Embracing the Existence of God

Romans 1:16-32

Sorry for my absence these past two weeks...

Two weeks ago I had an Ablation procedure...

Last week...

→ *Pic of Harper's baptism*



Moralistic Therapeutic Deism

- *Belief in a God who remains distant from people's lives.*
- *People are supposed to be good to each other (i.e., moral).*
- *The universal purpose of life is being happy and feeling good about oneself.*
- *There are no absolute moral truths.*
- *"Good people" earn their way into Heaven.*
- *God places very limited demands on people.*

Although 74% of those embracing MTD as their philosophy for life claim to be Christians they do not hold to basic Biblical truths...

95% do not consider success in life to be described as consistent obedience to God.

92% do not believe that the wealth they have has been given to them by God to manage for His purposes.

91% do not believe that people are born into sin and need to be saved by Jesus Christ.

88% say they get their primary moral guidance from various sources other than the Bible.

87% do not believe that the ultimate purpose of human life is to know, love, and serve God with all their heart, mind, strength, and soul.

76% contend that good people can earn a place in Heaven through their good behavior.

75% do not believe that God is the basis of all truth.

74% believe in karma.

73% say that having some type of religious faith is more important than which faith is embraced.

71% do not believe that the Bible is the true and reliable communication from God.

It is rare to find MTD proponents who consistently accept biblical principles related to truth, morality, lifestyle, and personal relationships.

Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is essentially a fake version of Christianity.

The fact that a greater percentage of people who call themselves Christian draw from Moralistic Therapeutic Deism than rely on the Bible says a lot about the state of the Christian Church in America.

Christianity in America is rotting from the inside out.

A Christian Worldview

Christianity is not only a personal relationship with the living God through faith in Jesus Christ; it is a worldview. It is an entire way of thinking, covering not only theology, but how to think about ethics, history, science, literature—about everything.

God: Biblical Christianity views God as He is revealed in the Bible; one of those central truths is the doctrine of the Trinity. It separates biblical Christianity from all other worldviews.

God is also revealed in Scripture as the creator and sustainer of all life. As prime reality, God creates ex nihilo and then sustains all that He creates (see Gen. 1–2; Col.

1:15–20). He is a God of truth (John 14:6), and His revelation (i.e., the written Word) is truth (John 17:17). He is a personal God who seeks intimacy and fellowship with His creatures (see the Psalms, 1 John and John 4).

Jesus: Without question, the defining issue of biblical Christianity is Jesus Christ. Only a Jesus who is truly God and truly man can provide complete salvation for humanity. He must be fully human to be our substitute, and He must be fully God to be our perfect substitute. For that reason biblical Christianity has always taught that Jesus is both God and man—the Godman.

Salvation: Biblical Christianity declares that humans are born sinners and inherit the guilt and corruption of Adam, for when Adam sinned, all sinned (Rom. 5:12). Therefore, the fundamental problem of the human race is not political, social, economic, or psychological; it is spiritual.

How does one appropriate God's grace in Jesus? Only by faith in His finished work on Calvary's cross. Because God is just and holy, He demands payment for sin. Further, any human action or work to merit God's favor in salvation is inadequate—all human righteousness is as "filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6). The situation, therefore, appears hopeless. Because of this hopeless human condition and because of His love, God sent the second Person of the Trinity to add a human nature to His divine nature and die on the cross as our substitute (Isa. 52:13–53:12; John 3:16). God's just demands are thus met and we appropriate that finished work through faith (Eph. 2:8–9). We then become His children by adoption into His family with all the rights, benefits, and privileges intact (Gal. 4:1–7).

Ethics: What are these propositional truths that constitute the Christian ethical framework?

1. God's moral revelation in His Word is an expression of His own nature. He is holy, and therefore He insists that His human creatures also meet that standard. If they do not, judgment results. Hence, the vital nature of Jesus' substitutionary atonement. Appropriating that atoning work by faith makes the human holy in God's eyes, and thus acceptable to God. The same argument can be made about God's ethical standards of truth, beauty, love, life, and sexuality.

2. God's moral and ethical system consists of more than external conformity to His moral code; it centers on conformity with internal issues of motivation and personal attitudes. Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount presses this point. The ethical standard prohibiting adultery involves more than simply the external act; it also involves lusting with the heart after someone (Matt. 5:27–28). The prohibition of murder involves more than the external act; it includes bitterness, hatred, and anger in the heart (Matt. 5:21–22).

3. God provides the absolute criteria for determining the value of human beings. Because physical, economic, mental, and social/cultural criteria are all arbitrary and relative, they are inadequate for assigning value to humans. God created humans in His image (Gen. 1:26ff.) and established His absolute criteria for their value. Being made in the image of God means that humans resemble God. Like God, humans possess self-consciousness, self-will, and moral responsibility. What humans lost in the Fall (Gen. 3) was righteousness, holiness, and knowledge; these are renewed in Christians as they are being conformed to the image of Christ. Being in God's image also means that humans represent God.

History: Biblical Christianity offers an approach to history rooted in God's revelation.

The ancient Greeks adhered to a cyclical philosophy of history that saw past events as a series of repetitive cycles—the old adage that history repeats itself. The religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and the amorphous New Age Movement, with their common emphasis on reincarnation, all view history similarly.

The eighteenth-century Enlightenment saw history through the grid of progress. The Scientific Revolution of the preceding century and the certainty of constructing a science of man created an optimism about humanity that viewed human perfectibility as imminent.

Modern existentialism or postmodernism offer no meaning to history except individual autonomy and choice.

Biblical Christianity's approach, rooted in God's revelation, gives hope and solid confidence for the future. This approach has four essential aspects:

First, the Bible calls for a worldview that rejects the cyclical model of history. The ancient Hebrews saw history as a line with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Second, the Christian approach to history is a commitment to God's sovereignty. Daniel 4:17, 25 affirms in the message to King Nebuchad-nezzar that God rules in the affairs of men, seeking the counsel of no one.

A third element in the Christian approach to history is that God uses pagan nations to accomplish His ends.

Finally, the Christian approach to history focuses on the principle of justice that pervades God's character and subsequently His history.

Top 10 beliefs in America that are unbiblical...

- **Having faith matters more than what faith you have.**
 - **All faiths are of equal value.**
 - **Belief in “karma,” the idea rooted in Eastern religions that “you get what you give.”**
 - **There is no absolute moral truth.**
 - **All moral truth is personal and subjective.**
 - **People are “basically good.”**
 - **Success is determined by happiness, comfort, goodness, or fulfilled potential.**
 - **Sexual relations apart from marriage are morally acceptable.**
 - **People are not inherently sinful.**
 - **The accumulation of personal wealth is unrelated to God’s blessings or purposes.**
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Schaeffer clearly understood the goals of the Enlightenment as well as the ensuing consequences. “The Utopian dream of the Enlightenment can be summed up by five words: reason, nature, happiness, progress, and liberty,” Schaeffer argues that these concepts were not merely an attempt at progressing the human race, but also capable of dismantling the Christian faith if handled incorrectly.

Francis Schaeffer points out certain errors in the logic of the Enlightenment thinkers. The first is their all-or-nothing approach of throwing everything out in one large pile. Schaeffer would argue that, while their rejection of religious authority may have had some validity, the complete disassociation with God’s authority was unnecessary. Man was not just rebelling against the inability to think for

himself, but the ultimate authority. Subsequently, mankind became the ultimate authority.

Schaeffer argues that belief in God creates a rational basis for seeking out answers and knowledge, and does so more thoroughly than would a humanistic foundation; therefore accomplishing some of the goals of the Enlightenment without destroying the religious foundation.

The Enlightenment thinkers discarded the notion of an ultimate authority all too easily, and while they did not necessarily reject the existence of God, He became a far less important figure to them.

It could be said that Schaeffer held to five primary principles regarding the Christian faith: truth is absolute, the Christian faith is rational but rational faith is not the same as rationalistic humanism, the world should be seen in terms of worldviews, and the ultimate authority of Jesus Christ.

Schaeffer believed that the Christian faith was reasonable in that it could be believed on the basis of reason and not just blind faith. While faith is not just an activity of the mind and reason, it is not necessary to abandon these to affirm Christianity.

Though the Christian faith is rational, God is the centerpiece.

Schaeffer espouses two additional tenants of the Christian worldview that are nonnegotiable and logically follow. These are the fallenness of man, and the redemption of man through Christ.

Schaeffer therefore argues that the establishment of man as the center of the universe and existence carries another

complication. This is a problem that leads to impassible consequences; if mankind is the paragon of existence, then progress is limited by his level of perfection. Even if mankind attained the utmost perfection possible for a material being, even then humanity would eventually find itself restricted to some extent. The pitfall here is that this limitation necessarily means that mankind and his perfection are finite, they are limited. In the humanist worldview, there is no conceivable way to circumvent this problem.

If an Ultimate Creator is the measure, then the measure of perfection is both infinite and unachievable by man alone.

Voltaire and many of the Enlightenment thinkers held to a modified form of Christianity known as Deism. Deists generally claimed to believe in God, but as a “watchmaker,” someone who created the world but is no longer involved with it.

With man as the central starting point, religion necessarily became of lesser importance and legitimacy. The Enlightenment thinkers again not only brought into question the concept of religious authority, but also the belief in God.

The Enlightenment thinkers claimed that Christianity was a religion of blind faith and was completely unscientific. They considered much of religion to be harmful to reason and scientific progress.

Without a God to turn to, mankind had to look inwards to find purpose; and look inward he did. Mankind attempted to find purpose and meaning in progress, in believing that mankind was improving, was getting better. One of the venues mankind explored to this end was evolution. Evolution can logically support this form of progress. When

man eventually began to realize that his situation was hopeless, that he could not derive his purpose solely from himself, something was needed to fill this gap. Regardless of scientific debate, philosophically the theory of evolution alleviates much of the hopelessness created by humanism by creating an illusion of progress. The logical outcome of this is that mankind is the pinnacle of evolution, the ultimate biological entity; therefore validating the humanist worldview and the concept of progress.

Long before the popularization of Evolution, the Enlightenment perpetuated two primary views on the progressive nature of humanity. One is that humanity is advancing as a whole, while the individuals themselves do not change much. The other view, which is a little bit more optimistic and far less popular, maintains that mankind is progressing in its very nature (as individuals).

Many of the Enlightenment thinkers believed that society progressed while the individual remained somewhat static.

Despite any such interpretations, Turgot believed that all nations will eventually work through stages from what he would call infancy, to what we might call, maturity. 72 No matter what happens, society moves closer and closer to perfection:

. . . Empires rise and fall . . . the arts and sciences are in turn discovered and perfected, in turn retarded and accelerated in their progress . . . yes in the midst of their ravages manners are softened, the human mind becomes more enlightened, and separate nations are brought closer to one another . . . and the whole human race, through alternate periods of rest and unrest . . . towards greater perfection.

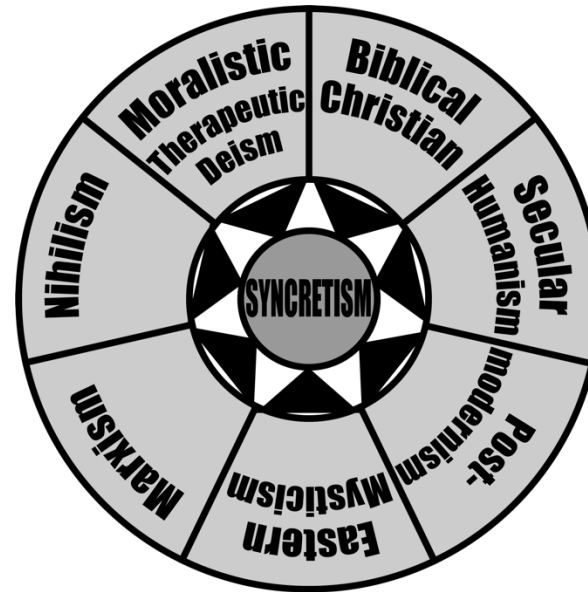
In the end, morality and significance are placed on an altar of humanism, and sacrificed to the god of reason for nothing more than an illusion of progress. Even though the theory of Evolution is intended to demonstrate the progressive nature of humanity, in the end it is only an empty promise.

Proverbs 14:34 (ESV) — Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

What is the “Righteousness of God”?

What is the “Wrath of God”?

→ Pic – Competing Worldviews



ONE THING

The existence of God is not a THEORY to be DEBATED, but a REALITY to be EMBRACED.

The Christian Worldview

→ Pic Christian



God – As revealed in Scripture, is the Creator and Sustainer of all life. He has revealed Himself as One God in Three Persons which is referred to as the Trinity.

Jesus – He is fully God and fully man Who came to reveal God to humanity and redeem humanity back to God.

Salvation – Humans are born sinners having inherited the guilt and corruption of Adam. Therefore, the fundamental problem with humanity is not political, social, economic, psychological, or intellectual; it is spiritual. Only by giving one's life by placing one's faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross can one be redeemed and made right with God.

Ethics – The moral principles that govern a believer's behavior are the Word of God outlined in Scripture and fulfilled through daily dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

History – The Ancient Greeks and many other religions hold to a cyclical philosophy of history that sees past events as a series of repetitive cycles.

The eighteenth-century Enlightenment saw history through the grid of progress. Modern postmodernism offers no meaning to history except individual autonomy and choice.

Christianity's approach, rooted in God's revelation, gives hope and solid confidence for the future.

- History as linear with a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- God rules over all.
- God uses pagan nations to accomplish His ends;
- God's justice will prevail

1. The CLARITY for RECOGNIZING God's Existence

Romans 1:18–20 (ESV) — For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the

world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

The word translated here, “suppress” means...

Suppress - To prevent someone from doing something by restraining or hindering—‘to prevent, to hinder, to restrain, to keep from.’

→ Suppressing the truth

The World’s Agenda...

Colossians 2:8 (ESV) — See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

The “WHAT” of the Agenda...

Colossians 2:8a (ESV) — See to it that no one takes you captive...

The word, “captive”, used here means...

“To be carried off as hostage; to control completely; to take control of; to make captive of.”

The “HOW” of the Agenda...

Colossians 2:8 (ESV) — See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world...

The word, “philosophy”, used here means...

“human understanding or wisdom”

1 Corinthians 1:19 (NLT) — As the Scriptures say, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and discard the intelligence of the intelligent.”

Another phrase in our Colossians 2:8 passage is “empty deceit”...

“To cause someone to have misleading or erroneous views concerning the truth; to mislead, to deceive.”

Which brings us to the last part of “The World’s Agenda”...

The “WHY” of the Agenda...

Colossians 2:8 (ESV) — See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

The “WHY” of the world’s agenda is to throw off the restraints of having to be accountable before God...

Psalms 2:1–3 (ESV) — Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.”

Psalm 2:4a (ESV) — He who sits in the heavens laughs ...

1. The CLARITY for RECOGNIZING God's Existence.

2. The CORRUPTION for REFUSING God's Existence

Romans 1:21–23 (ESV) — For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

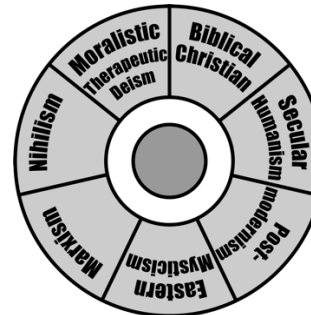
→ Darkened hearts

Ephesians 4:17–19 (ESV) — Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

1 Corinthians 1:20 (ESV) — Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

→ Idolatry

→ **Pic – The Seven Worldviews**



Everyone has a worldview—the filter we use to make sense of and respond to the world in ways that represent what we believe to be true, good, appropriate, and worthwhile.

Secular Humanism. This worldview puts its faith in science and human reason, dismissing the existence of supernatural beings. It teaches that the universe erupted without any divine intervention and one of its products was humanity. This view contends that even though people have evolved over centuries of time, human beings are little more than biological machines. Secular humanists revere nature as the central, powerful force responsible for all that exists; therefore we must fiercely protect it. Morals and ethics are determined through application of science, reason, and experience. The goals of life are happiness and social justice. This view esteems fairness, tolerance, freedom, responsibility, and unity.

Postmodernism. *This philosophy of life rejects all large-scale narratives (such as Christianity or traditional anthropocentric history) used to explain our existence and progression. Instead, history, culture, and traditions are dismissed as artificial and contrived. Postmodernism rejects the imposition of truth principles, views material success as the goal of life, and generally "deconstructs" all forms of human organization and theory without offering alternatives. This philosophy of life was originally developed as a reaction to Marxism, which Postmodern thinkers vehemently rejected.*

Eastern Mysticism. *An alternative to Western thought, this approach posits there is no personal God. Instead, this combination of Eastern philosophies contends that the prevailing force is the cosmos, of which we are all part, and through which we are all interrelated and interdependent. This view rejects God, absolute moral truths, and human reasoning. Instead, as part of the universal consciousness and continuity in which everything is part of the eternal, impersonal life force, our life's goal is to transcend the material world to reach a unified spiritual expression. Buddhism and Hinduism are the best-known expressions of this philosophy, and a widely recognized adaptation of eastern principles is known as New Age.*

Marxism. *Marxists say that life is best understood through the lens of oppression—particularly economic and political. Critical Race Theory, a derivative of Marxism, views race as potentially oppressive. The Marxist view, which serves as the philosophical underpinning of socialism and communism, dismisses organized religion, the Bible, the existence of God, life after death, the innate value of human life, and moral absolutes. It offers cultural elites as the hope of humankind due to their intellectual and moral superiority, and their willingness to lead the way forward. Marxism advocates abolishing family, marriage,*

individuality, tradition, and individual ownership of property.

Nihilism. *This philosophy of life rejects the supernatural, moral absolutes, ethical norms, and political and social institutions. Nihilism says that life has no meaning, purpose, truth, or value. Instead, life is pointless and random. This view claims that knowledge and meaning are illusions. Because nothing matters and there is no God to whom we answer, life is justifiably self-indulgent, but results in extreme pessimism and skepticism.*

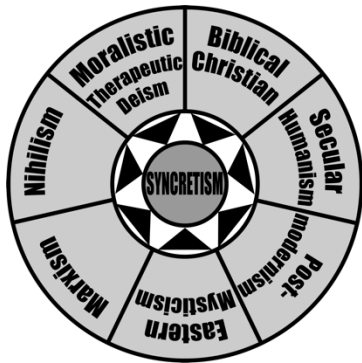
Moralistic Therapeutic Deism. *A perversion of biblical Christianity, this philosophy believes that God exists but stays removed from humanity. He allows people to earn their salvation through their goodness and He has low standards for our earthly experience. MTD contends that our earthly purpose is to be happy, which comes from feeling good about self and being good to others. There are no absolute moral truths in this worldview. Instead, the Bible is a useful guidebook but not considered an infallible source of truth. This worldview is optimistic, driven by emotions, and human-centric.*

Third, the big winner when it comes to worldview in America is "none of the above."

- ***Almost nine out of 10 U.S. adults (88%) have an impure, unrecognizable worldview that is nothing more than a customized, personal blend of disparate ideas adopted from multiple philosophies of life.***

*This worldview is called **Syncretism**.*

*→ **Pic – Complete***



Syncretism reflects the superficial thinking and feelings-based decision-making that prevails in our cut-and-paste society.

Think about how a person's worldview is established. My past research has shown that...

- ***A worldview begins developing at 15-to-18 months of age and is almost fully formed by the age of 13.***
- ***It is then tested and refined during one's teens and 20s before it is fully adopted and implemented.***
- ***It rarely changes once people reach their 30s.***

- ***People generally adopt worldview beliefs and behaviors based on information derived from arts and entertainment, news reports, political statements or policies, and through conversations and experiences with people they trust.***

1. The CLARITY for RECOGNIZING God's Existence.

2. The CORRUPTION for REFUSING God's Existence.

3. The CONSEQUENCES for REJECTING God's Existence

Romans 1:24–32 (ESV) — 24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. 28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God's righteous decree that

those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

→ Lusts of hearts

→ Dishonoring of the body

→ Dishonorable Passions

→ Debased Mind

→ Depraved Lifestyles

1. The CLARITY for RECOGNIZING God's Existence.

2. The CORRUPTION for REFUSING God's Existence.

3. The CONSEQUENCES for REJECTING God's Existence.

4. The CORRECTION for REVEALING God's Existence

Romans 1:16–17 (ESV) — For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

Essentials
Embracing the Existence of God
Romans 1:16-32

*The existence of God is not a _____ to be _____,
but a _____ to be _____.*

**1. The _____ for _____ God's
Existence**

**2. The _____ for _____ God's
Existence**

**3. The _____ for _____ God's
Existence**

**4. The _____ for _____ God's
Existence**