Christian Worldview Primer

2026 Q4 Salt & Light Bible study series

October: setting a baseline	Session 1	Christian worldview review and *almost* Christian religions
	Session 2	Islam, Judaism, and Christianity
	Session 3	The materialist worldview and its implications
	Session 4	The transcendentalist worldview and its implications
November: addressing social issues	Session 5	On gender and identity
	Session 6	On social justice and critical theory
	Session 7	On sexual mores
	Session 8	On the treatment of children
December: Our place in the world	Session 9	Great Commission meets current culture
	Session 10	Living in line with a Christian worldview
	Session 11	Quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger
	Session 12	The reality of our persecuted Church

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth,
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was cricified, died, and buried;
He descended into hell.
The third day He arose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit;
the holy catholic church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Four-part Christian Worldview Framework

	Main Points	Scriptural References
Creation	• The cosmos and all it contains was made by God, who is himself eternal and therefore not made; Creator and creation are distinct from one another • The material world and all that it entails was declared good by God • Humanity was made uniquely in God's image and as God's local representative to govern and protect His creation (identity & purpose) • Although God rested from his work on the seventh day of creation, he did not cease interacting with creation; the Bible is our written history of those interactions	Genesis 1-2
Fall	• What God made good, the human choice to reject his rule (sin) made accursed • Sin introduced guilt, shame, and death to humanity via separation from the Lord of life	Genesis 3 Romans 5:12-17
Redemption	• God did not abandon those condemned to die under sin; he chose instead to pay the price of their penalty himself in the person of the Son to set free all who believe in him • The death, burial, and physical resurrection of God the Son, Jesus, provided justification (made legally right with God) and sanctification (made holy in the image of Jesus) all who are “in him” (union with Christ)	Romans 3:21-26 1 Peter 1:17-19 1 John 1:7
Restoration	• Beginning with all who are in Christ, God has set out to reverse the damages caused by sin; believers are not only restored, but are given the task of bringing restoration • Scripture ends with the promise that all things will be restored in the end	Romans 8:18-25 2 Corinthians 5:16-20

Session 1 Notes:

Resources:

- Rose Publishing. (2005). *Rose book of Bible charts, maps, and time lines*. Rose Publishing.
- Martin, W. (2019). *The kingdom of the cults: The definitive work on the subject* (6th ed.) [E-book version]. Bethany House Publishers. amazon.com
- Muck, T. C., Netland, H. A., & McDermott, G. R. (Eds.). (2014). *Handbook of religion: A Christian engagement with traditions, teachings, and practices.* Baker Academic.
- Childers, A. (2020). *Another gospel? : A lifelong Christian seeks truth in response to progressive Christianity.* Tyndale Momentum.

Session 1: Near-Miss Religions Comparison

	Jehovah's Witnesses	Mormons (Church of Latter-Day Saints)	Christian Science	Progressive Christianity
Who is God?	A one-person god named Jehovah	Former human who progressed to deity (Elohim), who retained a physical body and has a wife (Heavenly Mother)	An impersonal Principle of all good spiritual things and all that truly exists (matter / evil is an illusion)	Undefinable "everythingness" interwoven into nature and experienced through human relationships
Who is Jesus?	The first (and only direct) creation of Jehovah, a mighty god but distinct and subordinate to Jehovah (sometimes said to be the archangel Michael) Jesus Christ: a perfect human body inhabited by the mighty god / archangel, died and was raised a spirit creature freed from the human body	A god separate from and less than Elohim, born a "spirit child" to Elohim and Heavenly Mother, whose body was then born from the sexual union of Elohim and Mary	The only human who truly manifested the "Christ idea" (meaning perfection) on earth; mortal, because God as impersonal principle cannot become flesh	Human teacher whose "Way" (not he himself) is worthy of worship; His death is variously described as the perfect example of sacrificial love or as divine child abuse
Who is the Holy Spirit?	Jehovah's impersonal active force (compared to electricity)	Sometimes referred to as a third god ("the Holy Spirit") and sometimes as "a divine substance, fluid, or essence"	An impersonal force, another way to refer to "Divine Science" (the teachings of Christian Science)	God's influence installed in nature
Scripture	JW's "New World Translation" Bible, all publications of the Watchtower	The KJV Bible, the Book of Mormon, ongoing revelation to leadership	*Science and Health* (Eddy); the Bible (not reliable)	Bible as spiritual travel guide - no divinely inspired writings

Session 2 Notes:

Resources:

- Newman, R. (2016). *Engaging with Jewish People: Understanding their world; sharing good news.* The Good Book Company.
- Qureshi, N. (2016). *No God but one: Allah or Jesus?* Zondervan.
- Qureshi, N. (2014). *Seeking Allah, finding Jesus: A devout Muslim encounters Christianity*. Zondervan.

Session 2: Monotheisms Comparison

	Judaism	Islam
Who is God?	The God of the Tanakh (Old Testament) - singular, not triune; depending on their position on the Jewish spectrum of belief: ● either personal / knowable ● impersonal/unknowable	Allah, a singular (not triune) deity as revealed to Muhammad in the Quran; personal, knowable, eternal, and without attributes*; cannot / does not enter his creation, seeks only right belief and obedience (see Salvation)
Who is Jesus?	A rabbi – depending on the position on the Jewish spectrum of belief: ● a good rabbi whose teachings were distorted ● a heretic rabbi worthy of his condemnation	A great and miraculous prophet in the same prophetic "lineage" as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, and other major personalities in the Hebrew Scriptures; superceded by the one perfect human being, the prophet Muhammad
Who is the Holy Spirit?	Either a metaphor of God's activity in the world, or an attribute of God	No concept of a Holy Spirit
Scripture	Tanakh (the Law, Prophets, and Writings); the Talmud (commentaries on the Tanakh)	The Quran (although only scholars and imams study it directly); the hadiths (stories about Muhammad's life)
Salvation	Depending on the position on the Jewish spectrum of belief: ● Prayer, adherence to some part of the Law, annual repentance, personal sacrifice ● Social activism / improving the world to save oneself	Right belief in the six articles if Islamic faith: ● Believe that Allah is one, neither a father nor a son ● Believe in the prophets ● Believe in divinely inspired writings ● Believe in angels and the unseen ● Believe in the day of judgment ● Believe in Allah's predestining sovereignty[1] Practice of the five pillars: ● Proclaim the *shahada*, "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his Messenger" ● Pray five daily prayers ● Fast during Ramadan ● Give alms ● Take a pilgrimage to Mecca[2]

[1] Qureshi, *No God but One*, p. 33
[2] Qureshi, *ibid*, p. 34

Session 3 Notes:

Resources:

Phillips, W. G., Brown, W. E., & Stonestreet, J. (2008). *Making sense of your world: A biblical worldview* (2nd ed.). Sheffield Publishing Company

Sire, J. W. (2020). *The universe next door* (6th ed.). Inter-Varsity Press.

Sunshine, G. S. (2009). *Why you think the way you do: The Story of Western Worldviews from Rome to Home*. Zondervan.

Session 3: Materialist (naturalist) progression

	Reality	Knowledge	Value / Ethics
Deism	God exists (probably) but is purely transcendent (separate) from his creation; the cosmos is closed to any outside intervention (miracles) and to say otherwise is to say God is a bad creator	Human reason is the sole ground for knowing anything, including self, the cosmos, and God (no revelation - which is an outside intervention)	Humans as rational creatures discern value rationally from observations of the cosmos, which in turn reveals the nature of God and the "rules" he built into the cosmos
Naturalism	The material cosmos is all that exists, and everything that exists within it is purely natural (nothing supernatural or spiritual exists - all is either a phenomenon or an epiphenomenon)	Human reason based on scientific observation is the sole ground for knowing anything; the cosmos "is understood to be in its natural state"[3] (it is as it always has been)	Humans determine morality through personal and social utility; ethics is individual first and social second - each person determines, but interaction leads to negotiation as all act in favor of species survival
Nihilism	If everything exists within a closed system, then our perception of reality is also a part of the closed system; "reality" can never be a certainty	Knowledge is ultimately impossible because that with which we know (the brain) is a piece of the closed system	Choice is either mechanistic determinism (pure cause-and-effect) or chance (meaningless randomness), so morality is an illusion of significant action[4]
Existentialism	Reality is cosmos = matter, but human perception introduces a second form of this reality, subjectivism	Same as naturalism: human reason based on scientific observation of a cosmos in its natural state	Morality is the individual's "revolt against the absurd" - namely a subjective choice (any choice) to act is a rebellion against the inescapability of death by creating value

[3] Sire, J. W. (2020). *The universe next door* (6th ed.), p. 64
[4] Sire, *ibid*, p. 92

Session 4 Notes:

Resources:

Keown, D. (2013). *Buddhism: A very short introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Knott, K. (1998). *Hinduism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Sire, J. W. (2020). *The universe next door* (6th ed.). Inter-Varsity Press.

Session 4: Transcendentalist worldviews

	Hinduism	Buddhism
Reality	The spiritual is more “real” than the material; souls are eternal (always have been / will be) and occupy an “eternal wandering” – the cycle of rebirth or transmigration – carrying into each life the moral debits / credits of karma that determine the form of successive lives	The cosmos is made up of many layers of existence, from the worst of hells at the bottom to realms of pure being at the top, leading closer to non-being the higher you go; all entities (animals, humans, spirits, gods) will rise or sink from one layer of existence to another depending on their karmic load
Suffering and evil	The world is made of opposites; suffering is merely the inseparable opposite of well-being and, as such, is inevitable	Life is composed of suffering, which arises through desires (physical, existential, spiritual) because of attachment to “the illusion of self”
Deity	Mixed and contradictory beliefs: ● Monotheists - Krishna / Vishnu or Shiva worshipped as the one supreme god with many manifestations ● Monists/pantheists - “god is all and all is god” ● “Panentheists” – the cosmos is the body and god is its soul ● Animists - physical objects are animated by spirits / gods ● Polytheists - many separate gods (usually choose one that appeals as the focus)	Closely related to Hindu monism / panentheism, Buddhist views on the spiritual and deity tend toward the “god is everything and so everything is god” view, with the physical universe as a vehicle or vessel for divinity ● Classical Buddhism believes that gods and spirits exist, but that these are essentially like humans or animals in that they can die and be reborn
Salvation	Self-salvation is viewed as escaping the “eternal wandering” and is achieved by reunion of the soul to (and extinguishing of individuality within) the unknowable universal spiritual reality through (at least) one of three possible paths: ● Disinterested action ● Devotion to a spiritual entity ● Knowledge (mystical insight)	All entities may only escape from rebirth / transmigration by putting an end to suffering via the “Four Noble Truths” (Buddha’s teaching about suffering) and the “Eightfold Path” (principles of Buddhist wisdom, morality, and meditation), by which one gains knowledge about self and surroundings, detaches self from desire (nirvana), and eventually achieves non-being

Session 5 Notes:

Resources:

ACL – Australian Christian Lobby. (2024, Aug. 8) *I am a Detransitioner | Chloe Cole's Story*. [Video] YouTube. https://youtu.be/mfrRp1LAbZ4?si=hVlwwy0oFiOH42PL

BBC Politics. (2019, Nov. 26) *Detransitioning: Reversing a gender transition - BBC Newsnight.* [Video] YouTube. https://youtu.be/fDi-jFVBLA8?si=mWauj9Po5PGLj3Ee

Trueman, C. (2022) *Strange new world: How thinkers and activists redefined identity*. Crossway Publishing

Session 5: Gender and identity

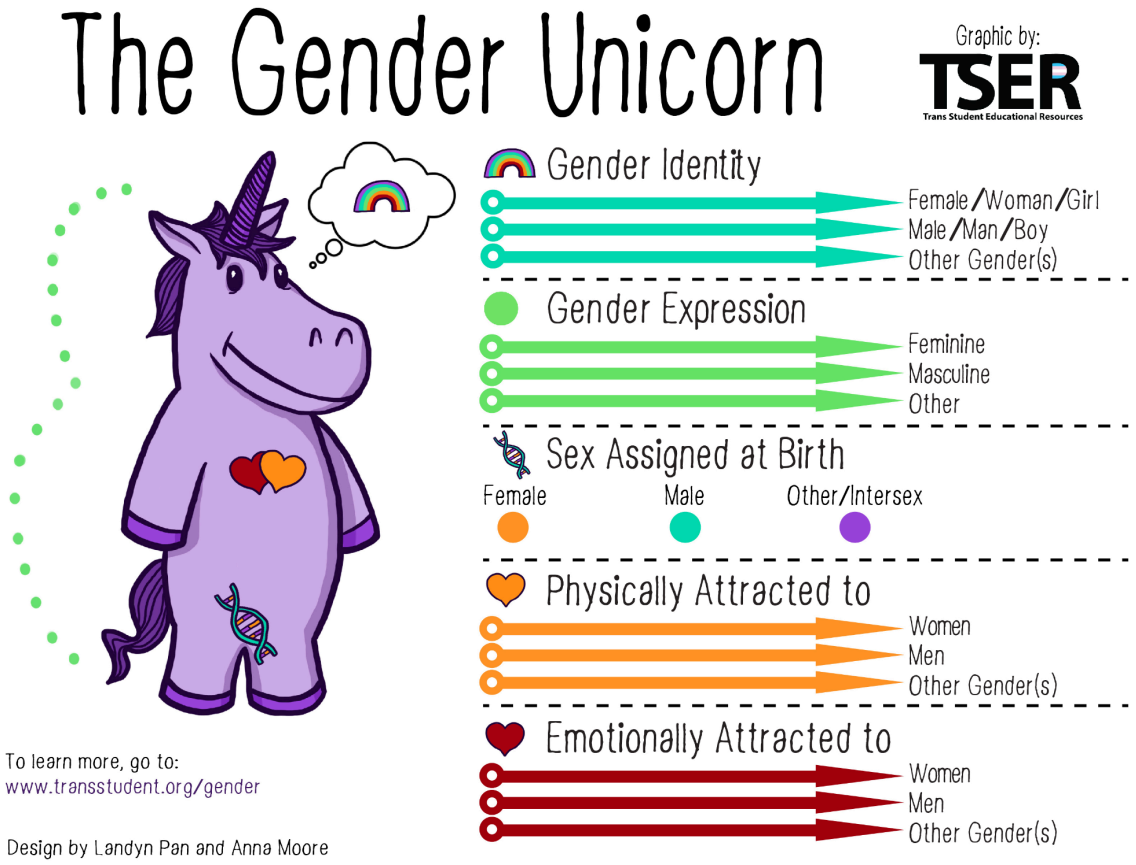
Vocabulary:

Expressive Individualism: “each person has a unique core of feeling and intuition that should unfold or be expressed if individuality is to be realized” [5]

Gender fluidity: “Gender fluidity is the ability to freely and knowingly become one or many of a limitless number of genders, for any length of time, at any rate of change.”[6]

Gender identity: “each person’s deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical, or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech, and mannerisms”[7]

Visuals:



[5] Robert Bellah, quoted by Carl R. Trueman in *Strange New World*, p. 22
[6] Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Gender-fluid. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved October 31, 2026, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gender-fluid
[7] *The Yogyakarta Principles*, quoted by Carl R. Trueman, *ibid*, p. 141

Session 6 Notes:

Resources:

Shenvi, N., & Sawyer, P. (2023). *Critical dilemma: The rise of critical theories and social justice ideology—Implications for the church and society.* Harvest House Publishers.

Williams, T. J. (2020). *Confronting injustice without compromising truth: 12 questions Christians should ask about social justice.* Zondervan Academic.

Session 6: Critical theories

Vocabulary:

- *Social binary*: the division between oppressor / dominant and oppressed / marginalized cultures
- *Intersectionality*: the belief that an individual can be categorized according to multiple locations in the social binary, even combining both dominant and marginalized in the same individual
- *Hegemony / hegemonic structures*: the concept that, separate from individual or group intentions, a dominant culture creates oppression by "normalizing" its oppressive values in law, social mores, etc.
- *Social justice*: a set of actions aimed at overthrowing oppression by creating equity (raising up marginalized cultures) and destroying hegemony (tearing down cultures associated with oppression – see 'hegemony / hegemonic structures')
- *Lived experience*: the history and current perspective of the individual; in critical theories, only the marginalized lived experience has validity

Worldview questions answered by Christianity versus contemporary critical theory[8]

Worldview Question	Christianity	Contemporary Critical Theory
Who am I?	A creature made in God's image	A member of various social groups locked in a struggle for dominance
What is the fundamental human problem?	Sin	Oppression
How can that problem be solved?	Redemption through Jesus	Activism and solidarity
What is my primary moral duty?	Glorifying God	Dismantling unjust systems and structures
How do I know the truth?	Revelation and reason	Lived experience
What is the end goal of history?	The new heaven and earth	Social justice

"We can't separate the Bible's commands to do justice from its commands to be discerning. The oppressed deserve more than our good intentions. We must love them not merely with our hearts and hands but with our heads too. This includes carefully distinguishing true social justice from its counterfeits."[9]

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[8] Shenvi, N., & Sawyer, P. (2023). *Critical dilemma: The rise of critical theories and social justice ideology—Implications for the church and society.* Harvest House Publishers. Chap. 9, table 3, Kindle

[9] Williams, T. J. (2020). Confronting injustice without compromising truth: 12 questions Christians should ask about social justice. Zondervan Academic. Kindle

Session 7 Notes:

Resources:

West, C. (2020) *Our bodies tell God's story*. Brazos Press