



The Good Life – Sample Lesson

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THE GOOD LIFE

Sample Lesson Guide

I. Introduction to Worldviews

Story of a businessman and fisherman

A successful businessman who was a self-described workaholic took a short vacation to a small Caribbean island. While he was there, he met the owner of a small fishing boat. The businessman, after tasting the wonderful fish the fisherman caught, tried to convince him to take his small, one-man operation and turn it into a multi-national conglomerate. The problem was, the fisherman only worked for a few hours a day. The rest of his time was spent relaxing with his family.

“You see,” the businessman admonished him, “if you just worked incredibly hard for several years, someday you will be able to have everything you ever wanted.”

“Really?” the skeptical fisherman replied. “If I were to do as you say, what would I get in the end?”

“Well,” the businessman said with a proud smile, “you could end up like me. In a few years I will retire with enough money to buy a vacation mansion on this island and live a life of leisure as I see fit.”

“Oh, I see,” the fisherman replied. “So, you’re saying if I were to slave away for most of my life I could someday retire to a place where I can fish when I want and spend time with my family when I want?”

“Yes!” the businessman exclaimed. He thought he was finally getting through to the man.

“How, then, is this any different than how I live now?” He smiled broadly and said, “I’m just going to skip the years of working myself to the bone and keep enjoying the life I currently have.”

This story perfectly illustrates what happens when two differing worldviews come into contact with each other. Both the businessman and the fisherman had goals in life. Both had different views on how to achieve those goals. Who was right? Who was wrong? Is there an answer?

We could probably debate endlessly who had the correct “worldview”, but the reason I share this story is simply to illustrate that different people interpret the path to the “good life” in different ways. What is the good life? Well, we will get to that in a bit. Right now, let’s explore this idea of a worldview.

According to dictionary.com, the word “worldview” originates from the German word “Weltanschauung” and means “a comprehensive conception or image of the universe and of humanity’s relation to it.” Another way to look at it is that a worldview is the lens through which someone interprets the world around him.

I realize that this can be somewhat confusing at times, so let’s break it down. As I am typing this lesson on my laptop, it is necessary for me to wear prescription glasses. Technically, I don’t have to wear them, but when I look at the screen without my glasses on, instead of seeing words all I see is a jumble of black and white mixed with other colors. Essentially, in order to understand what I am looking at, I need to look through a specific lens.

A worldview is basically the same thing as eyeglasses for someone in need of a prescription. Every human being requires these worldview glasses to understand the world, to interpret how he or she is supposed to live in it. Every human being develops their worldview as he/she progresses through life. Just like my eyeglasses prescription has changed over the years, my worldview has undergone changes. There are a number of factors that shape our worldviews; however, as we will see in this series, the Christian worldview and that of the non-Christian are often very different.

The Christian Worldview

Before we look at the non-Christian worldview, let’s look at the Christian’s “lens”. Our “lens” is Jesus. Our entire understanding of the world and how we are to live in it is supposed to be filtered through Jesus, His Word, and the Holy Spirit. Let’s unpack that a little by seeing what the Bible tells about this statement.

- Jesus

Scripture Reading: 1 John 5:19-20 (The Message)

We know that we are held firm by God; it’s only the people of the world who continue in the grip of the Evil One. And we know that the Son of God came so we could recognize and understand the truth of God—what a gift! —and we are living in the Truth itself, in God’s Son, Jesus Christ. This Jesus is both True God and Real Life.

This passage does a wonderful job of describing the difference between the Christian and non-Christian worldview. The non-Christians “continue in the grip of the Evil One.” Essentially, their worldview is shaped by Satan. Hear me carefully, I am not trying to say that non-Christians are Satan worshippers or anything like that, but their primary influence (lens) is going to come from the world not God.

Christians, on the other hand, are “living in the Truth itself. ” Our lens is Truth. I love the way that the Message chose to capitalize the word “Truth”. This is not a

grammatical mistake. It is pointing out the incredibly powerful fact that Jesus is Truth. He is the Real Life. If we want to know the true way to view the world, we need to be living in Jesus Christ because He is Truth.

- His Word (The Bible)

Scripture Reading: Psalm 119:105 (NLT)

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.

Have you ever been incredibly lost? I learned how to drive before the days of GPS, let alone turn-by-turn directions on my cell phone. I can remember a number of occasions where I was completely lost with little hope of finding my way. One time in particular I was driving through Kansas very late at night on my way to lead worship at a youth conference. I was running incredibly low on gas and was shocked to find out that all the rural gas stations were closed for the night. Long story short, I miraculously sputtered into a gas station in time, but I would have loved to have had access to something that would have guided me quickly to where I needed to be.

Trying to discover your worldview without Jesus and His Word is a lot like trying to find that one open gas station when I was completely lost. Directions are incredibly helpful! The Bible is not just a book we “have” to read to be a “good” Christian. It is a legitimate guidebook. It shows us the path to the good life.

- Holy Spirit

Scripture Reading: John 14:26 (NLT)

But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you

There is a lot of confusion and disagreement in the church about who the Holy Spirit is and what role He plays in our lives. Though different denominations come to different understandings, Jesus made one aspect of the Holy Spirit incredibly clear. He promised the disciples that He was going to send His Spirit to teach us. The Holy Spirit doesn't just give us a few helpful hints along the way. He teaches us everything. He is so incredibly important that Jesus says in John 16:7 “it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come” (NLT). Jesus was basically saying that having 24/7 access to the Holy Spirit is better than hanging out with Jesus in physical form every day. That's an amazing statement!

If a Christian is to view the good life in the way Jesus wants, he must rely on the Holy Spirit to teach him how to do so. The Holy Spirit isn't just a fun "add-on" to our faith. He is critical to our spiritual growth.

II. Practice Discerning Worldviews

Let's look back at the story from earlier. What is different about the worldviews of the businessman and fisherman? The businessman sees hard work and sacrifice as the keys to achieving the good life. The fisherman sees the good life as something to be enjoyed in the "now" with his family, not later. Both seek the good life. They just have a different worldview about what it is and how to get there.

III. The Good Life

Everyone has their own definition of what the good life is. Christians, for the most part, should have a similar understanding—a similar worldview, but the world sees the good life in very different ways. For some the good life is being rich, owning beautiful homes, cars, and so on. For others it is being incredibly successful at whatever they are good at: sports, school, relationships, etc.

I define the good life like this: it is what an individual sees as the ideal way to live life—the best possible life that will bring the most happiness, meaning, and purpose. Throughout this series we will explore a few ways the world sees this ideal way to live while contrasting it with the way Jesus wants us to see it. What is your definition of the good life? What do you think that Hollywood, music, your friends, etc. say the good life is?

IV. Worldviews Collide

Though I've said it before, it's worth repeating. God's version of the good life is often very different from the world's. In fact, in many ways God's way will seem very strange to the world. Many think it is completely backwards from what it should be. In this series we are going to look at four specific examples of this clash.

The world says:

- Personal success leads to the good life
- Having the perfect external image leads to the good life
- Sex leads to the good life
- Getting more "stuff" leads to the good life

Jesus says:

- Dependency leads to the good life
- Having a Christ-like heart leads to the good life
- Love leads to the good life

- Sacrifice and contentment lead to the good life

V. Closing

I chose to end this week with scripture readings because I want you to allow the words to marinate. Take a few minutes and read these verses more than once. Really let them sink in because they are keys to understanding the way Jesus describes the good life.

As you read the following passages think about these questions: What do these scriptures teach me about the Christian worldview? What do they teach me about the good life?

Scripture Readings:

Romans 12:2 - Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (NLT)

1 John 2:15 - Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. (NLT)

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. In the story at the beginning of the lesson, who had the “right” worldview? Why? (Note for leader: My goal with this question is not to have the group pick a “right” answer but to unpack differing worldviews)
2. Ask a student to define what a “worldview” is in his/her own words. What are some of the things that influence/help shape your worldview? What or whom do you think most influences your current worldview?
3. The lessons mentions that for Christians, “our entire understanding of the world and how we are to live in it is supposed to be filtered through Him, His Word, and the Holy Spirit.” What do you think this means?
4. What are some ways that that a Christian’s worldview is different from a non-Christian’s?
5. Do you think a Christian’s worldview needs to always be different from a non-Christian’s? Why/why not?
6. Romans 12:2 tells us Christians to not “copy the behavior and customs of this world”. What are the behaviors and customs of that this verse is talking about?
7. How does God “transform us into a new person”? What does this mean?
8. 1 John 2:15 says, “Do not love this world nor the things it offers you” but Jesus tells us frequently to love everyone. What do you think this verse is trying to say?

Game / Activity

Supplies Needed

Misc. images, either in the power point or just printed. These images should be a bit controversial in nature so that there can be discussion.

Space Requirements

No special space requirements. This can be done without anyone moving.

Game Description

This is more of an activity than a game and needs to be done in the middle of the message and should help them understand what has just been talked about.

Split the group into two sections. They don't have to move, just half and half is fine. Designate one half "the world" and the other "Christians." Show an image, whether on the screen or the printed copy, and first have "the world" describe how they see it. Then switch and have the opposite side describe how Christians SHOULD see this image.

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Sample – Lesson Outline

I. Introduction to worldviews

- a. Story of businessman and fisherman
 - i. Businessman tries to convince fisherman to work harder to be successful..
 - ii. Fisherman resists. In the end he sees that he can have everything the businessman is promising in the end by living the life of leisure he currently leads.

- b. These two men desired the same thing but saw it through different worldviews.
 - i. They desired the “good life”
 - 1. We will explore that more in a bit...

- c. What is a worldview?
 - i. Dictionary.com
 - 1. Originates from the German word, “Weltanschauung”
 - 2. “A comprehensive conception or image of the universe and of humanity's relation to it”.
 - ii. A worldview is the lens through which someone interprets the world around him.
 - 1. Imagine that you are nearly blind. The only way you can see is with strong prescription glasses. The glasses are your “worldview”. They are how you can make out what you are looking at.

- d. What is the “lens” (worldview) that Christians use?
 - i. Our “lens” is Jesus.
 - ii. Our entire understanding of the world and how we are to live in it is supposed to be filtered through three things.
 - iii. Jesus
 - 1. 1 John 5:19-20 (The Message)
 - a. We know that we are held firm by God; it's only the people of the world who continue in the grip of the Evil One. And we know that the Son of God came so we could recognize and understand the truth of God—what a gift! — and we are living in the Truth itself, in God's Son, Jesus Christ. This Jesus is both True God and Real Life.
 - 2. Non-Christians' worldview is shaped by Satan.
 - a. This doesn't mean they are “Satan worshippers”.

- b. It means their primary influence (lens) is going to come from the world not God.
 - 3. Christians are living in Truth itself.
 - a. Jesus *is* Truth, Real Life
 - b. If we want to know the *true* way we need to be living in Jesus Christ.
 - iv. His Word / The Bible
 - 1. Psalm 119:105 (NLT)
 - a. Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.
 - 2. Trying to discover your worldview without God's Word is like trying to find your way without a guide or tool when you are completely lost.
 - v. Holy Spirit
 - 1. John 14:26 (NLT)
 - a. But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.
 - 2. The Holy Spirit doesn't just give us a few helpful hints along the way. He teaches us *everything*.
 - 3. John 16:7 (NLT)
 - a. "...it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come..."
 - b. Having 24/7 access to the Holy Spirit is better than hanging out with Jesus in physical form every day.
- e. What is the lens (worldview) that the world (non-Christians) uses?
 - i. That is what we will be exploring in this series.
 - ii. This worldview is what leads to a misunderstanding of the good life.

II. Practice Discerning Worldviews

- a. Recount the key facts from the story of the businessman and fisherman.
- b. What are the different worldviews of the businessman and fisherman.
 - i. Businessman
 - 1. Sees hard work and sacrifice as the key to achieving the good life.
 - 2. Work hard now – enjoy life later.
 - ii. Fisherman

1. Sees the good life as something to be enjoyed right now with his family.
2. Work just hard enough – enjoy life now.

III. Game

IV. The Good Life

- a. Everyone has their own definition of what it is.
- b. For some it is being rich and owning beautiful homes/cars.
- c. For some it is being incredibly successful in _____ (sports, business, school, friendships, relationships, etc.)
- d. The good life is a what an individual sees as the ideal way to live life—the best possible life that will bring the most happiness, meaning, and purpose.
- e. What is your definition of the good life?
- f. What do you think that Hollywood, music, your friends, etc. say the good life is?

V. Worldviews Collide

- a. As we will see in this series, God’s version of the “good life” is often very different from the world’s.
- b. In fact, God’s way will seem very strange to the world.
 - i. Many think it is completely backwards from what it should be.
- c. The world says:
 - i. Personal success leads to the good life.
 - ii. Having the perfect external image leads to the good life
 - iii. Sex leads to the good life.
 - iv. Getting more “stuff” leads to the good life.
- d. Jesus says:
 - i. Dependency leads to the good life
 - ii. Having a Christ-like heart leads to the good life
 - iii. Love leads to the good life
 - iv. Sacrifice and contentment lead to the good life

VI. Closing

- a. In a second I am going to read (or put on the screen) two verses.
 - i. Read them carefully
 - ii. Read them more than once
- b. Ask yourself:
 - i. “What do these verses teach me about the Christian worldview?”
 - ii. “What do they teach me about the good life?”
- c. Romans 12:2 (NLT)
 - i. Romans 12:2 - Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.
- d. 1 John 2:15 (NLT)
 - i. Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you.

VII. Small Group Discussion Questions