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Intellectual Discipleship — Following Christ with Our Minds

A failure of Christian thinking is a failure of discipleship, for we are called to love God with our minds.

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The biblical master narrative serves as a framework for the cognitive principles that allow the formation of an authentically Christian worldview. Many Christians rush to develop what they will call a “Christian worldview” by arranging isolated Christian truths, doctrines, and convictions in order to create formulas for Christian thinking. No doubt, this is a better approach than is found among so many believers who have very little concern for Christian thinking at all, but it is not enough.



A robust and rich model of Christian thinking—the quality of thinking that culminates in a God-centered worldview—requires that we see *all* truth as interconnected. Ultimately, the systematic wholeness of truth can be traced to the fact that God is himself the author of all truth. Christianity is not a set of doctrines in the sense that a mechanic operates with a set of tools. Instead, Christianity is a comprehensive worldview and way of life that grows out of Christian reflection on the Bible and the unfolding plan of God revealed in the unity of the Scriptures.

A God-centered worldview brings every issue, question, and cultural concern into submission to all that the Bible reveals and frames all understanding within the ultimate purpose of bringing greater glory to God. This task of bringing every thought captive to Christ requires more than episodic Christian thinking and is to be understood as the task of the Church, and not merely the concern of individual believers. The recovery of the Christian mind and the development of a comprehensive Christian worldview will require the deepest theological reflection, the most consecrated application of scholarship, the most sensitive commitment to compassion, and the courage to face all questions without fear.

Christianity brings the world a distinctive understanding of *time, history, and the meaning of life*. The Christian worldview contributes an understanding of the universe and all it contains that points us far beyond mere materialism and frees us from the intellectual imprisonment of naturalism. Christians understand that the world—including the material world—is dignified by the very fact that God has created it. At the same time, we understand that we are to be stewards of this creation and are not to worship what God has made. We understand that every single human being is made in the image of God and that God is the Lord of life at every stage of human development. We honor the sanctity of human life because we worship the Creator. From the Bible, we draw the essential insight that God takes delight in the ethnic and racial diversity of his human creatures, and so must we.

The Christian worldview contributes a distinctive understanding of *beauty, truth, and goodness*, understanding these to be transcendentals that, in the final analysis, are one and the same. Thus, the Christian worldview disallows the fragmentation that would sever the beautiful from the true or the good. Christians consider the stewardship of cultural gifts, ranging from music and visual art to drama and architecture, as a matter of spiritual responsibility.

The Christian worldview supplies authoritative resources for understanding *our need for law and our proper respect for order*. Informed by the Bible, Christians understand that God has invested government with an urgent and important responsibility. At the same time, Christians come to understand that idolatry and self-aggrandizement are the temptations that come to any regime. Drawing from the Bible's rich teachings concerning money, greed, the dignity of labor, and the

importance of work, Christians have much to contribute to a proper understanding of economics. Those who operate from an intentionally biblical worldview cannot reduce human beings to mere economic units, but must understand that our economic lives reflect the fact that we are made in God's image and are thus invested with responsibility to be stewards of all the Creator has given us.

Christian faithfulness requires a deep commitment to serious moral reflection on matters of *war and peace, justice and equity, and the proper operation of a system of laws*. Our intentional effort to develop a Christian worldview requires us to return to first principles again and again in a constant and vigilant effort to ensure that the patterns of our thought are consistent with the Bible and its master narrative.

In the context of cultural conflict, the development of an authentic Christian worldview should enable the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ to maintain a responsible and courageous footing in any culture at any period of time. The stewardship of this responsibility is not merely an intellectual challenge, it determines, to a considerable degree, whether or not Christians live and act before the world in a way that brings glory to God and credibility to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Failure at this task represents an abdication of Christian responsibility that dishonors Christ, weakens the church, and compromises Christian witness.

A failure of Christian thinking is a failure of discipleship, for we are called to love God with our minds. We cannot follow Christ faithfully without first thinking as Christians. Furthermore, believers are not to be isolated thinkers who bear this responsibility alone. We are called to be faithful together, as we learn intellectual discipleship within the believing community, the church.

By God's grace, we are allowed to love God with our minds in order that we may serve him with our lives. Christian faithfulness requires the conscious development of a worldview that begins and ends with God at its center. We are only able to think as Christians because we belong to Christ, and the Christian worldview is, in the end, nothing more than seeking to think as Christ would have us to think, in order to be who Christ would call us to be.

I am always glad to hear from readers. Write me at mail@albertmohler.com. Follow regular updates on Twitter at www.twitter.com/AlbertMohler.

For background reading, see:

R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "[The Glory of God and the Life of the Mind](#)," Friday, November 12, 2010.

R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "[The Knowledge of the Self-Revealing God: Starting Point for the Christian Worldview](#)," Friday, December 3, 2010.

R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "[The Christian Worldview as Master Narrative: Creation](#)," Wednesday, December 15, 2010.

R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "[The Christian Worldview as Master Narrative: Sin and its Consequences](#)," Friday, January 7, 2011.

R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "[The Christian Worldview as Master Narrative: Redemption Accomplished](#)," Monday, January 10, 2011.

R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "[The Christian Worldview as Master Narrative: The End that Is a Beginning](#)," Wednesday, January 12, 2011.

