

Copyright © 2017 Jason Brian Williams

All rights reserved. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has permission to reproduce and disseminate this document in any form by any means for purposes chosen by the Seminary, including, without limitation, preservation or instruction.

LEADING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO ADOPT A BIBLICAL
WORLDVIEW THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP AT FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH, LAWRENCEVILLE, GEORGIA

A Project
Presented to
the Faculty of
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Jason Brian Williams
May 2017

APPROVAL SHEET

LEADING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO ADOPT A BIBLICAL
WORLDVIEW THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP AT FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH, LAWRENCEVILLE, GEORGIA

Jason Brian Williams

Read and Approved by:

Troy W. Temple (Faculty Supervisor)

Stuart W. Scott

Date _____

To Tamorah, my loving wife and best friend. I love you so much! You are truly God's blessing in my life. Your constant faithfulness, unending patience, and sacrificial love are a testimony of your incredible devotion to Christ.

I am so thankful that the Lord continues to use you to sharpen me as iron sharpens iron.

Thank you for your constant encouragement each step of the way!

You are my once in a lifetime for all time love.

To Hannah Kathryn, Joshua Andrew, Sarah Elizabeth, Abigail Grace, Caleb Asher, and Daniel Stephen, each of you is an absolute blessing from God. I love you each of you! I am very thankful for your sacrificial love, and I pray that

God will use each of you for His Glory.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	vi
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose	1
Goals	1
Context of the Ministry Project	2
Rationale for the Ministry Project	4
Definitions and Limitations	9
Research Methodology	11
2. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR LEADING HIGH SCHOOL AGED STUDENTS TO ADOPT A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW	13
Introduction	13
A Biblical Foundation Grounded in Creation	14
A Biblical Foundation Grounded in Illumination	22
A Biblical Foundation Grounded in Revelation	28
Conclusion	34
3. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES IN LEADING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO ADOPT A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW	36
Introduction	36
The Millennial Generation	36
A Church in Crisis	43

Chapter	Page
Biblical Change Is Essential	53
Conclusion	61
4. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT	64
Promotion and Participant Enrollment	65
The Retreat	65
Conclusion	80
5. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT	82
Evaluation of Project's Purpose	83
Evaluation of Project's Goals	84
Strengths of the Project	86
Weaknesses of the Project	87
What I Would Do Differently	89
Theological Reflections	90
Personal Reflections	91
Conclusion	92
 Appendix	
1. INFORMED CONSENT WITH MINORS OR MEMBERS OF A VULNERABLE POPULATION	94
2. PRE- AND POST-SEMINAR QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CLASS PARTICIPANTS	95
3. PRE- AND POST-SEMINAR WORLDVIEW SURVEY FOR CLASS PARTICIPANTS	97
4. BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SCRIPTURES	101
BIBLIOGRAPHY	104

PREFACE

Throughout my time at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, the Lord has continued to refine my theology and deepen my love for the sufficiency of the Scripture and for its application upon every aspect of life. The project has become a part of my story and the culmination of many years of teaching, study, and ministry. I am very grateful for the grace that the Lord has extended to me upon my salvation and the grace He has continued to grant me over the years. It is my prayer that the Lord has been and will continue to be glorified in this project and within every aspect of my life.

First, I want to express my sincere thanks to my wife, Tammy. You are an incredible woman of God. Without your constant love, devotion, and support, none of this would have been possible. Thank you for all of the sacrifices you have made and the many prayers you have prayed during this long journey. Words can never express how deep my love is for you and how thankful I am for you! I constantly praise God for you and how He continues to use you to deepen my love and my affection for Him. Thank you for loving me unconditionally and for your faithful devotion to our Sovereign God and His all-powerful and sufficient Scriptures. Nothing brings me more joy than serving Christ with you each and every day. May He always be glorified in our lives, in our marriage, in our family, and as we serve together for His glory.

Second, the Lord has richly blessed Tammy and me with amazing children, some of whom were not born when this project began. Hannah Kathryn, Joshua Andrew, Sarah Elizabeth, Abigail Grace, Caleb Asher, and Daniel Stephen, thank you all for your tremendous patience and love that you have given Daddy over these years. Without the support of my wife and our children, this completion of this project would have been impossible. It is my prayer that each of them will love Christ supremely, and that each of

them will love, cherish, stand, and defend the hope that is found only within the person of Jesus Christ and within living and active Word of God. I love each of them so much and am grateful for how they have faithfully prayed for me and for the many sacrifices they have made through the years.

Third, I want to thank Dr. Stuart Scott for allowing God to use him to shape my understanding of the Scriptures, to mold me into a better husband and father, and to train me to be a better pastor. I am grateful for his faithfulness to God's Word, his authenticity, and his friendship. I am very thankful for the friendships of Dan Dumas, Jim Stitzinger, and Jeff Dalrymple, especially for their wisdom and encouragement. I am grateful for Dr. John Babler, whom the Lord used to open my eyes to the sufficiency of the Scriptures. It was through his teachings that this journey began.

Fourth, I am thankful for the constant encouragement and accountability of some faithful and Christ-like men. A few of these men are Dr. Landon Dowden, Brian K. Smith, Dr. Robert Tims, Rusty Banks, Brian Carter, Scott Harp, Shawn Powell, Damon Cupp, Glenn Ross, Brad Vose, Dan Farmer, Ron Robinson, Joe Hicks, and Steve Mulhollen; thank you all for your prayers, friendship, and investment in my life.

Finally, I want to thank First Baptist Church, Saltillo, Mississippi; First Baptist Church, Paducah, Kentucky; and Heartland Worship Center, Paducah, Kentucky. I am so grateful for the prayers and support that they have given me over the years. I am also thankful for the students and families of First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia, for allowing me the opportunity to implement my project during our time together. The Lord has used each of them to play a significant role in this project and within my life. I am so thankful for each congregation and for the friendships they represent.

Jason Brian Williams

Paducah, Kentucky

May 2017

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to lead high school students to adopt a biblical worldview through discipleship at First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia.

Goals

This project was designed to accomplish three goals that served as the criteria for evaluating its effectiveness. The first goal was to evaluate the high school students of First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia, in their understanding of a biblical worldview. A questionnaire was distributed to each student to help evaluate his or her current understanding of a biblical worldview. This goal was measured by the comparison of data collected from a pre- and post-seminar questionnaire. The goal was successfully accomplished when 7 out of 10 students completed the evaluation.

The second goal was to equip and disciple high school students during a weekend retreat to begin to adopt and apply the Word of God in real life situations. During the retreat, students began to memorize pre-selected Scriptures and their references that assisted them in applying the Word of God to their lives. This goal was evaluated and measured by administering the pre- and post-seminar worldview survey during the retreat weekend. This goal was successfully accomplished when two-thirds of the participants could list 3 to 5 Scripture references that were foundational to a biblical worldview.

The third goal was to lead students to commit to expanding their biblical worldview. This project was limited in the thoroughness of each topic but it was

designed as an effective introduction for the necessity of the adoption of a biblical worldview. The aim was for high school students to begin to see and understand the power of Scripture and the foundational element that it must be within their lives in order to begin using Scripture to evaluate every aspect of their thinking. At the conclusion of the project, students were given the opportunity to commit to additional training in expanding their biblical worldview by completing the participant questionnaire. This goal was measured by the students' willingness to sign a commitment card that compelled them to further discipleship in the area of biblical worldview training. This goal was successfully accomplished when 50 percent of the retreat participants committed to further biblical worldview training.

Context of the Ministry Project

First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia, is a 167-year-old church that in recent years has struggled to redefine itself as its congregation. Numerous pastoral changes have brought varying theological perspectives and philosophies to the church. Due to these constant changes, First Baptist Church has not formulated or implemented any consistent model for discipleship within the church, especially in the area of biblical worldview. While Deuteronomy 6:7 places the importance of discipleship primarily on the parents, it is vital that the church recognizes its role of assisting and equipping each individual member in the disciple-making process. This lack of direction and vision within the area of discipleship has definitely infiltrated the student ministry. For generations, students have not been spiritually prepared for battles that they will face after graduation from high school.

At First Baptist Church, many of the high school and college students seem to be apathetic about their faith and view of the church. The student ministry too has lacked any strategic plan for discipleship, especially in the area of a holistic, worldview approach. Prior to this past year, students were disciplined within their Sunday School

classes with a variety of different curriculums. Currently, students are taught “The Gospel Project for Students” published by LifeWay Christian Resources. It is a three-year, gospel-centered curriculum that chronologically and systematically studies the major characters and themes of Scripture. Other forms of discipleship over the past five to seven years have included topical studies and topic-driven retreats, but little attention was given to intentional, targeted doctrinal or worldview study. For many decades, an accurate view of biblical manhood has been absent from much of the practice of First Baptist Church. For many students, the lack of solid doctrinal teaching, lack of intentional discipleship, and the lack of a proper view of manhood and womanhood have contributed to a weakened understanding of who God is, led to an inconsistent view of the Scriptures, and a weakened view of the local church.

Unfortunately, over the years many students have been more connected to the events that focused on fellowship and fun, instead of prioritizing the intentional discipleship. About five years ago, First Baptist Church began to recognize this problem. As a response, they began the process of laying an early foundation for a holistic approach to the family. Prior to and during the formation of the strategy, minimal discipleship and preparatory efforts have been made to help transition high school students into college with a biblical worldview. Each of these factors may have contributed to the increasing number of students who have left First Baptist Church ill-prepared for the challenges that they encounter in college. Currently, First Baptist Church has 31 young adults on role between the ages of 19-26 years old. Of these young adults, approximately two-thirds have little to no connection to First Baptist Church or to another body of believers while they are at school. Approximately 20 students are enrolled in the high school ministry of First Baptist Church and without the implementation of a strategic plan to disciple these high school students this pattern of disconnection will continue to increase.

Rationale for the Ministry Project

At First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia, there was a great need to help prepare and transition high school students into college and adulthood. In recent years, students across the country have entered college with what seemed to be a growing relationship with Jesus Christ only to become distracted, discouraged, or completely abandon their faith. At First Baptist Church, a similar trend has been witnessed as well. First Baptist Church has witnessed many college-aged students become distracted in their walk with Christ and many disconnected for any form of a local church. Many of these students' faith was shaken during the college years when confronted with false teaching or worldly philosophies. Apathy toward Christ and the local church is very prevalent. For many, this was the time when they walked away from the church.

According to Steve Wright, "Students are leaving the church at an alarming rate."¹ This assertion is supported by various studies in recent years that have determined anywhere from 58 to 84 percent of "graduating youth from church youth groups are not returning" to the church.² According to David Kinnaman in a 2011 study, there was a 43 percent drop-off of church attendance in eighteen to twenty-nine year olds that had attended church on a monthly basis.³ The study also revealed that among high school students, "Teen church engagement remains robust, but many of the enthusiastic teens so common in North American churches are not growing up to be faithful young adult disciples of Christ."⁴ He further explains that this generation of high school and college

¹Steve Wright and Chris Graves, *Rethink: Decide for Yourself, Is Student Ministry Working?* (Wake Forest, SC: InQuest, 2007), 16.

²Mark Matlock, "From Wacky to Wise," *Youth Workers Journal* (May/June 2006), accessed June 28, 2009, <http://www.youthworker.com/resources/ministry/11553482/page2/>.

³David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 22.

⁴*Ibid.*, 21.

students has not been less churched than other generations. For many students, their involvement with the church fades away during the most crucial time of their life. Essentially, at the core of the dropout problem is a “disciple-making problem. The church is not adequately preparing the next generation to follow Christ faithfully in a rapidly changing culture.”⁵ These statistics definitely shed light on the contextual problem with students at First Baptist Church. First Baptist Church must begin to disciple more adequately.

Recent statistics, however, can offer hope as well. George Barna stated that “only 33 percent of churched youth say that the church will play a part in their lives when they leave home.”⁶ This statistic was further enhanced by a growing countertrend in recent surveys that states that there are a growing number of “young Christians who are passionate, committed, and bursting to engage the world for the sake of the gospel.”⁷ Therefore, the question remains for those who dropout, “Are these teenagers Christ-followers or just Christianized pagans who have gained knowledge of the Bible but whose hearts have never been transformed. If they are followers of Christ, are they grounded in the Scripture enough to know how to defend their faith in the face of adversity?” Another part of the problem could be that students are just putting their church involvement on hold as they prolong their adolescence during these years of self-absorption?⁸ A prolonged adolescence is a symptom of a deeper heart issue. Students are more concerned about their own personal wants and desires than they are with how God can use them as part of His great redemptive plan. Once they begin to grasp this

⁵Kinnaman and Hawkins, *You Lost Me*, 21.

⁶Wright and Graves, *Rethink*, 19.

⁷Kinnaman and Hawkins, *You Lost Me*, 27.

⁸Ibid.

theological reality, they begin to realize how God can use them within His church and within the world.

Another recent study by James Shields gives hope to this growing problem. In his research, Shields examined the retention rates of students from conservative Southern Baptist megachurches. His research “was the first of its kind to narrow the parameters of retention from ‘actively involved’ (defined as twice a month) to ‘levels of commitment,’ an engaged disciple of Christ.”⁹ He sought to provide a more accurate portrait of student retention rates after graduation by “not being forced to take credit for ‘dropouts’ that were in reality no more than disengaged prospects.”¹⁰ Shields discovered from his research that there is a linear increase of retention of graduates from 79 to 92.8 percent.¹¹ Simply, the more engaged a student is within the discipleship process in the local church, the greater the chance they will remain faithful to the local church after graduation.

Another interesting component of Shield’s research was the surprising levels of involvement that these students demonstrated after graduation. Over 50 percent of those graduates surveyed indicated they were participating at the highest level of involvement within the local church.¹² While these statistics demonstrate a contrast in the earlier research, they offer hope to the local church. One of the commonalities of the churches within Shields’ study was the priority placed on evangelism and discipleship.¹³ Intentional methods of discipleship for students and parents are essential for the spiritual development and retention of students upon graduation.

⁹James Brandon Shields, “An Assessment of Dropout Rates of Former Youth Ministry Participants in Conservative Southern Baptist Megachurches” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008), 178.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., 179.

¹³Ibid., 180.

Students at First Baptist Church must begin to understand their need for the gospel. Before they can ever understand and adopt a biblical worldview, before they can ever be disciples, they must first have a solid understanding of the gospel and its transforming power. Once they begin to comprehend these basic but necessary aspects of the gospel, only then can they begin to see necessity of the gospel's impact on their lives. In order to do this, they must begin to use Scripture as a lens through which they view every situation that they experience. According to David Noebel, "Too many Christian young people are ill-prepared to lead. The vast majority have no concept of the components of their worldview and stand intellectually naked before left-wing university professors and the liberal media."¹⁴ Teenagers will face many more issues than the scope of this project can addresses. For the most part, parents and churches are sending their students "into the world to withstand the fallout. Too many are incapable of reasoning clearly about their faith and unwilling to take real risks for Christ's sake."¹⁵

For students at First Baptist Church, understanding and adopting a biblical worldview will be foundational and transformational to their life. Adopting a biblical worldview will transform their "walk with Christ not just for their high school years but for a lifetime."¹⁶ As the foundational biblical principles are laid, students must begin to be able to articulate what they believe and why they believe it. Individuals must be transformed by the power and hope of the gospel. Second Timothy 3:16 illustrates that the transforming power is only found within the pages of Scripture, God's direct revelation to mankind. A teenager's profession of faith may become an area of concern when their profession does not match their lifestyle and the choices that follow. As a

¹⁴David A. Noebel and Chuck Edwards, *Thinking Like a Christian: Understanding and Living a Biblical Worldview* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 9.

¹⁵Kinnaman and Hawkins, *You Lost Me*, 28.

¹⁶Wright and Graves, *Rethink*, 18.

result, the question must be asked, “Is that student truly a follower of Christ, or merely living as a Christianized pagan?” Teenagers at First Baptist Church must begin to examine their hearts to see if their salvation is genuine (2 Cor 13:5), or if they are merely following a set of rules that is the culture’s expectation of religion. The power and the hope of the gospel must be presented to them before they can ever begin the process of adopting a biblical worldview.

A biblical worldview is built upon the sufficiency and authenticity of Scripture. Many teenagers would profess to believe that God’s Word is true. However, many of them do not live by that truth in their daily lives. Teenagers, as well as all believers, must learn to grasp the absolute reality and truth of 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Until teenagers understand that Scripture is trustworthy and useful for all areas of life, attempting to lay a foundation for a biblical worldview will be fruitless. Many believers would also profess that they know a good portion of God’s Word when in actuality Scripture very rarely impacts their daily decision-making ability. At the same time, there are many believers who have not been adequately taught how to apply the truths of Scripture to their everyday life. No matter what the circumstance, all individuals must learn to grow in the knowledge of Scripture as well as the application of it to their daily lives.

The application of the Scripture to their everyday lives is essential during this crucial season in their lives. This generation of students “has access to more knowledge content than any other generation in human history, but many lack discernment for how to wisely apply that knowledge to their lives and world.”¹⁷ It is this lack of discernment that can hinder an individual’s spiritual growth and their decision-making ability. By developing a more complete understanding of a biblical worldview, an individual’s outlook on life, in general, will be different. It is imperative that students at First Baptist

¹⁷Kinnaman and Hawkins, *You Lost Me*, 30.

Church begin making decisions based upon their understanding and the application of Scripture and as these areas are strengthened their love for the church will deepen.

For many years, students have graduated high school and have left First Baptist Church ill-prepared spiritually for adulthood. As students at First Baptist Church are gripped by the gospel, they will begin to see the importance of the local church. Students begin to embrace the gospel so that an adoption of a biblical worldview becomes possible. This project was an essential component or a first step of a much larger plan necessary for leading students to adopt a Biblical worldview.

Definitions and Limitations

High school student. This term refers to any student who is currently in the 9th to 12th grade. A high school-aged student typically refers to someone who is between 14 and 18 year olds. The term “teenager” may be referred to within this project to mean high school student as well.

Worldview. This term is defined as “a set of presuppositions which we hold about the basic make-up of our world.”¹⁸ These basics presuppositions, or beliefs, are concerning the most important issues in life. It is with them that an individual interprets and judges reality.¹⁹ For believers, Scripture as God’s special revelation to humanity holds final authority. It is absolute truth and believers are to base their worldview solely upon it, thus giving them a biblical worldview. A biblical worldview sees life as it is mandated through the pages of Scripture.²⁰

¹⁸N. Allan Moseley, *Thinking against the Grain: Developing a Biblical Worldview in a Culture of Myths* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003), 20.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Thomas Andrew Randle, “Student Perceptions of a Biblical Worldview at a Four-Year Christian College” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002), 7.

Nouthetic counseling. “The word nouthetic comes from the Greek word *nouthesia* and is translated “counsel,” “admonish,” “exhort,” and various other ways in the New Testament Scriptures. It is one of the biblical words for pastoral counseling.”²¹ Other terms that will be used within this project to describe “nouthetic counseling” will be “biblical counseling,” and “discipleship counseling.” Each of these terms can be used interchangeably. A nouthetic counselor uses the Bible as his or her absolute authority to address matters of the heart. Other forms of Christian counseling integrate various aspects of psychological thoughts and theories into their counseling practice as they seek to modify and change a counselee’s behavior. In nouthetic, biblical, or discipleship counseling, the aim is for “nothing less than transformation into the image of Jesus Christ amid the rough and tumble of daily life.”²² As the heart is transformed so will the counselee’s behavior, otherwise it is just behavior modification. True transformation of the heart is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. Within biblical counseling, pastors, counselors, and lay people teach and model before their counselees the hope of the gospel and the change that Christ can make in one’s life.

One of the limitations of this project was the participants. The participants were limited to the 10 to 15 high school-aged students who were involved in the student ministry at First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia. This specific age group of teenagers was selected because of their maturity and the close proximity to graduation from high school. Topics were geared toward the stage of the participants’ life after high school graduation, realizing that not all of the variables were present for each participant.

²¹David Powlison, “Competent to Counsel? The History of a Conservative Protestant Anti-Psychiatry Movement” (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1996), 125.

²²John MacArthur, *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 28.

The second limitation was the fifteen-week length of the project, however, the teaching time consisted of an intensive weekend retreat. These fifteen weeks consisted of weeks to promote, research, teach, and evaluate the project. Because of the length of the project, some of the long-term results may not be readily recognized until several years later. The project was limited to helping the students to begin their journey of adopting a biblical worldview.

The third limitation was the thoroughness of the topics that were addressed. There was a vast amount of information disseminated in a small amount of time. Students were introduced to these topics in order to begin the development of a biblical worldview. However, knowing that many more topics could have been chosen, the retreat introduced students to culturally relevant and foundational issues that they will face in the near future.

Research Methodology

The primary objective of this project was for high school-aged students to adopt a biblical worldview through discipleship in preparation for college so that it would become foundational to all aspects of life. The first goal evaluated the high school students of First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia, in their understanding of a biblical worldview. Prior to the project, a questionnaire was given to the students. The purpose of this questionnaire was to gain an awareness of their understanding of the gospel and other basic doctrines in addition to their understanding of a biblical worldview. The same questionnaire was given at the conclusion of the project with the intention of gaining insight into whether the participants had increased their knowledge of the selected topics and had begun to adopt a more biblical view of the world.

The second goal was to equip and disciple high school students during a weekend retreat to adopt and apply the Word of God in real life situations. Students began to deepen their understanding of Scripture, while they sought to comprehend what

they believed and how to defend those beliefs. During the retreat, students began to memorize pre-selected Scriptures and their references that would assist them in applying the Word of God to their lives. Students were introduced to various case studies during the weekend that were designed to assist them in applying the Scriptures and the topics taught to real-life situations. Within these case studies, students were given various passages of Scripture for continued study that would help him grow in their understanding of scripture's usefulness as they encountered various situations throughout life. These case studies were very practical in nature and an excellent resource for further study within the family unit, thus assisting each student to reflect more deeply concerning his own life. This goal was evaluated and measured by administering the pre- and post-seminar questionnaire during the retreat weekend.

The third goal was to lead students to commit to expanding their biblical worldview. At the conclusion of the project, each participant filled out a post-seminar questionnaire. Each student was given the opportunity to sign a commitment card committing to additional training in expanding his or her biblical worldview as they completed the participant questionnaire. The some of the initial results were revealed in the findings of the completed survey that followed the retreat; however, many of the outcomes may not be known for years to come as students transition to college.

CHAPTER 2
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR LEADING
HIGH SCHOOL AGED STUDENTS TO ADOPT
A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

Introduction

The high school years of a student's life are ever changing. During this time students begin to see the world differently and begin to seek more independence. Teenagers are experiencing rapid physical growth and trying to process the constant change of their emotions. Not only are students changing physically and emotionally, they are also beginning to wrestle with deep spiritual truths. During these years, students begin to think more deeply. Students may begin to question their purpose in life, if God really exists, if there is absolute truth, why evil exists, why do their choices even matter, or do they really believe in God. Students wrestle with so many important life-altering questions during these formative years as they grow toward independence. The way they think critically through questions will drastically impact how they view the world and upon what worldview they will base their lives.

Parental involvement during these formative years is so vital. Parents have the opportunity and responsibility to lay a solid foundation of biblical truth during the early years of childhood. When parents begin to lay this foundation early, many will begin to see the fruit of their labor during these formative teenage years. However, parents must also remember that laying a proper foundation does not always translate into faithfulness during these years. The Proverbs offer promises as well as general principles that can help strengthen believers. Proverbs 22:6 exemplify this idea of a general principle: "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it." Parents are called to love, teach, admonish, and shepherd their children. Parents are

called to be faithful to their calling as they in turn trust God for the results. The high school years provide both parents and the church one last opportunity to partner together as they impart biblical truth within a student's life prior to graduation and adulthood. Solid biblical teaching during is imperative not only for spiritual growth but for the progressive sanctification of their child's spiritual heart.

It is within these years in a student's life that the truths they have been taught as a young child will begin to take root within their own life or will begin to be overshadowed and overtaken by the world. For many students, the biblical truths they have been taught never become their foundational beliefs, but remain the inherited belief system of their parents. It is this concern that brings urgency for students to begin to adopt a biblical view of their life.

The Bible provides the necessary answers to the questions students begin to ask during their formative high school years. According to 2 Peter 1:3, God through His revealed Word has provided for each believer everything necessary for life and godliness. The thesis of this chapter is that a biblical worldview view must be derived from Scripture. Key passages of Scripture are examined that are essential to the formation of a biblical worldview.

A Biblical Foundation Grounded in Creation

Each person has a unique understanding of how they view and experience life. A non-believer is guided by himself or herself and by the prevailing culture of the day, while a follower of Christ is held to higher standards. A believer must be is guided by God and His Word. One of the main differences between these two opposing views is where each view starts. One view starts with a self-driven, culturally-prevailing thought where self and science is uplifted, while the other view exemplifies submission, faith, and selflessness. All believers, and primarily for this discussion students, must begin to understand and believe in the authority of Scripture within their lives and its great

relevance and importance to every aspect of their lives. These foundational and formative truths are found throughout the pages of Scripture.

The first foundational component for a biblical worldview is an accurate understanding of how the world was formed. Intertwined within this component is the need for an accurate view of God and the need to have a proper view of man. These two elements are essential to forming the foundational pillars of a biblical worldview.

The Beginning Matters

In order to have a solid biblical worldview, it is essential that students have an accurate and proper view of who God is. The beginning few verses of Scripture display the glory of God and His mighty power. John Phillips explains the importance of Genesis 1 by stating that it “is one of the most God-centered chapters in the Bible. God is mentioned by name thirty-two times in thirty-one verses.”¹ For thousands of years, people have attacked the validity of Genesis. Unfortunately, many want to abandon Genesis 1 because they believe it to be “unfactual and unreliable, as mere mythology, as a doctored-up copy of the Babylonian creation epic, as totally unacceptable to modern science.”² Unfortunately, when Genesis 1 is interpreted accordingly, the Bible becomes minimalized and weakened in other areas as well. For example, “if the Holy Spirit cannot be trusted when He tells of creation, how can He be trusted when He tells of salvation?”³ The pages of Scripture, specifically Genesis 1:1-2:3, provide believers a precise understanding of creation as well as a deep insight into the very character of God.

¹John Phillips, *Exploring Genesis: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1980), 35.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

In the beginning. Genesis 1:1 states, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”⁴ This opening verse is essential to lay the foundation for a biblical worldview. It is often overlooked or taken for granted. John Sailhamer writes, “These seven Hebrew words are the foundation of all that is to follow in the Bible.”⁵ A. W. Pink describes Genesis 1:1:

The opening sentence of Holy Writ is not to be philosophized about, but is presented as a statement of truth to be received with unquestioning faith. . . . This opening sentence of the Bible repudiates atheism, for it postulates the existence of God. It refutes materialism, for it distinguishes between God and His material creation. It abolishes pantheism, for it predicates that which necessitates a personal God.⁶

John Phillips describes Genesis 1:1 in a similarly:

No attempt is made to water it down, to apologize to a skeptical age, even to prove that God is. The Holy Spirit simply deems certain truths to be self-evident, the first and foremost, that God is. In one sublime statement He sweeps aside atheism by asserting His existence, polytheism by declaring Himself to be the one, and pantheism by separating Himself from matter.⁷

Each of these writers brings awareness to the fact that the opening verse of Genesis demonstrates the extraordinary and miraculous act of creation while at the same time focusing on the God who created it. The creation story not only describes how the world was created in six days, but also demonstrates God’s mighty power and His eternal existence.

Another important component of Genesis 1:1 is the fact that this verse introduces God as the Creator. Kenneth Mathews explains, “The creation account is theocentric, not creature centered. Its purpose is to glorify the Creator by magnifying him through the majesty of the created order.”⁸ In Genesis 1:1, “God” is the grammatical

⁴All Scripture references are from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

⁵John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, in vol. 2 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 50.

⁶Arthur W. Pink, *Gleaning in Genesis* (Chicago: Moody, 1950), 9.

⁷Phillips, *Exploring Genesis*, 36.

⁸Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, *The New American Commentary*,

subject and then becomes the thematic subject throughout the rest of the creation story.⁹ Pink states that Genesis 1:1 “is the foundation truth of all real theology. God is the great Originator and Initiator.”¹⁰

The opening phrase in Genesis 1:1 is very simple but contains great theological implications. Matthews states,

The occurrence of “beginning” in 1:1 suggests that it has been selected because of its association with ‘end.’ If so, the author has at the outset shown that creation’s “beginnings” were initiated with the future goal intended, an eschatological purpose.¹¹

Within these the first three words of the Genesis, believers are given a glimpse into the Sovereignty of God. Even at creation, God was not only the creator of each element created, but also He in His sovereignty knew the ultimate purpose of His creation.

God. As this verse continues to build upon itself, God’s character and His divine attributes come evident within this opening phrase. One of the first attributes seen within the phrase “in the beginning God” is that God is self-existent. According to James Montgomery Boice, “this is not true of anything else.”¹² God’s self-existence also means that He does not answer to anyone nor does He have to defend himself or His actions to anyone. Not only does this opening phrase acknowledge God’s self-existence, but it also demonstrates His self-sufficiency. Self-existence by definition means that God does not have an origin, does not possess any needs, and is not dependent on anyone.¹³ One aspect that believers must continually wrestle with is that God is not in need of them or

vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 113.

⁹Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 113.

¹⁰Pink, *Gleanings in Genesis*, 10.

¹¹Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 126-27.

¹²James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 1:29.

¹³*Ibid.*, 1:30.

anything they can do. It is God who chooses to use believers for His glory and His purposes and He is not under obligation to His creation. “All of this is of great importance, for when we notice that God is the only truly sufficient One, we may begin to understand why the Bible has so much to say about the need for faith in God alone and why unbelief in God is such sin.”¹⁴ The third attribute or truth that is evident with Genesis 1:1 is that God is eternal. Each of these truths is closely related but have a quite unique definition. It is very important for students to grasp this important truth also. There has never been a time when God has not existed. He has always been and for always will be. He is unchanging and inescapable.¹⁵

The term for God used in Genesis 1:1 and exclusively in the creation account in Genesis 1:1-2:4 is the word *Elohim*. Mathews writes, “The regular appearance of *Elohim* in 1:1-2:3 rather than *Yahweh* is due to the theological emphasis of the section. Creation extols God’s transcendence and the power of his spoken word; thus *Elohim* is preferred.”¹⁶ *Yahweh* is another term that refers to God within the pages of Scripture, however, it is more commonly associated with the covenantal agreement between God and Israel as seen in Exodus 3.¹⁷

Created. The word *bara* is used consistently throughout the Old Testament and here in the creation account to describe new activity. The word is used six times during the creation account with its subject always being God. *Bara* conveys the idea that the special activity accomplished, which refers to the product created instead of the

¹⁴Boice, *Genesis*, 1:31.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 1:32.

¹⁶Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 127.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

materials to which it was made, could only come from God.¹⁸ This understanding of the word *bara* is why many commentators “have traditionally interpreted the verb as a technical term for *creation ex nihilo* (“creation out of nothing”).”¹⁹ The term *bara*, with the autonomous God as its subject, provides a clear indication that God alone is the only one who could accomplish such a creation.²⁰

The heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1, stating that God created the heavens and the earth, indicates that He created the totality of the universe.²¹ Genesis 1:1 describes the “absolute beginnings, the initial stage in the creation of the ‘earth’ that is brought to completion during the six days, climaxing in the consecration on the seventh day.”²² God’s complete work within the totality of creation is truly miraculous and is a tremendous testimony to His omnipotence and transcendence.

Created in the Image of God

Another very important element of the creation story for high school students to understand is found in Genesis 1:26-27. God created man in the image of God and for His Glory. Mankind is the crown of God’s handiwork in creation.²³ God does not begin by relating “man’s body and relate man to the beasts. He begins with man’s moral and spiritual nature, and relates man to God.”²⁴ Genesis 1:26-27 states,

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over

¹⁸Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 128.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., 129.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., 143.

²³Ibid., 160.

²⁴Phillips, *Exploring Genesis*, 45.

the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Within this verse, the author of Genesis was reminding the people that man is God’s special creation. Not only has God obviously set mankind a part from the rest of creation, but he also seems “intent on showing that man is like God as well.”²⁵ He gave them attributes that no other form of creation was given, namely mankind was made in His image.

When discussing what it means to be created in the image of God, Boice states, “One thing it means is that men and women possess the attributes of personality, as God himself does.”²⁶ No other form of God’s created order was given the ability to possess knowledge and emotions. The attribute of personality found here in Genesis 1 “links man to God but does not link man or God to the rest of creation.”²⁷

A second aspect commonly associated with being created in the image of God is one of morality. God has given mankind both responsibility and freedom. “To be sure, the freedom men and women possess is not absolute.”²⁸ Even in the garden, Adam and Eve were not autonomous. They were given responsibility and were to live in obedience. This character quality is separate from any other created thing.

Man is also created as a spiritual being. Mankind’s spirituality is an element of being made “in the image of God.” This element means, “man is made for communion with God, who is Spirit (John 4:24) and that this communion is intended to be eternal as God is eternal.”²⁹ The beauty of being made “in the image of God” is that it defines mankind’s true worth. The communion with the creator of the universe is special and

²⁵Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 37.

²⁶Boice, *Genesis*, 1:90.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid., 1:91.

²⁹Ibid.

unique to mankind. When understood in its proper context, it is clear to see how a biblical worldview is distinctively different from a secular worldview. No other worldview would begin with the basic belief that man is created with the intention of communing with the creator. This basic belief is vital for a believer to grasp within context of the creation account.

Another important element to examine in Genesis 1:26-27 is how the phrase made “in the image of God” helps to give clarification to human sexuality. Matthews states, “Human life, unlike lower orders, is not instructed specifically to reproduce ‘after its kind,’”³⁰ which gives evidence that man is of one kind. The idea of one human race is vital to the discussion worldviews and how man is created in the image of God. There is one human race with many different ethnicities. No one is inherently superior or inferior to another.³¹ Matthews continues, “The proper role of the sexes therefore is crucial to God’s designs for human life and prosperity. When human sexuality is distorted through neglect or abuse, the human family suffers as the image-bearers of God.”³² Within these two verses, God speaks uniquely and directly to his creation.

Genesis 1:26-27 gives evidence to God’s original creative work within mankind. Man was made in the image of God, however, the “image has been marred greatly by sin. There are vestiges of the image remaining, but man today is not what God intended.”³³ The effects of the fall in Genesis 3 are evident within humanity. These effects can be seen within the body, soul, and spirit. The communion and fellowship mankind had with God died instantly. Not only was this intimacy lost with God the father, but Adam and Eve’s soul began to die as well. “People began to lose a sense of

³⁰Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 174.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Boice, *Genesis*, 1:91-92.

who they are, gave vent to bad feelings, and suffered the decay of their intellect.”³⁴

Romans 1 gives great insight into the decaying of their soul, and explains that eventually their bodies will die according to Genesis 3:19.³⁵ The beautiful part of being made “in the image of God” is that Christ is restoring his creation again into his image.

It is essential that believers clearly identify themselves as being created “in the image of God.” As they begin to grasp this concept, their identity and worldview will begin to be transformed. Man stands alone made “in the image of God.” Nothing else in all of creation is similar to mankind.³⁶ By having a proper understanding of these verses, high school students will begin to understand their identity must be grounded in the very nature of God. Since God has set them apart from other aspects of creation, humanity must realize they have been created for the glory of God.

A Biblical Foundation Grounded in Illumination

High school students are under intense pressure to conform to certain worldly expectations and unrealistic standards. These expectations are numerous and expansive. The vast majority of these expectations are determined by the pagan culture in which they live. The culture is void of the transforming power of the gospel of Christ. The culture is self-seeking and self-centered. The voices of influence in their lives, for the most part, do not have a worldview that seeks to honor Christ. Students must understand that God is the one who opens individual’s eyes to salvation. The third foundational component of a biblical worldview is one that begins with an accurate understanding of true wisdom grounded in the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

First Corinthians 2:14-16 provides believers with a great example of the spiritual battle for the understanding of true wisdom. These verses also gives greater

³⁴Boice, *Genesis*, 1:92.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Phillips, *Exploring Genesis*, 45.

insight into this spiritual battle and explain why some students may never see the world with a biblical worldview. Within this brief passage, the apostle Paul clarifies why the world does not understand the things of God.

In order to understand 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 in its proper context, it is important to briefly examine what Paul says about true wisdom in 1 Corinthians 2:6-13. A solid understanding of the origin of true wisdom is vital to the understanding of the difference between a “natural man” and a “spiritual man.” First Corinthians 2:14-16 is an essential passage to understand in the quest to gain a biblical worldview.

True Wisdom

At the heart of a biblical worldview is the question, how does someone begin to understand and grasp truth? In essence, the root of this question is a question of wisdom. In 1 Corinthians 2:6-13, Paul discusses how true wisdom is found and the important truth that man cannot discover true wisdom by his own resources:

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.” These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

John MacArthur writes, “God’s wisdom, the truth about Him and His message for man, is a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age.”³⁷ Many attempts have been made and will continue to be made to explain what true wisdom is and where it can be found. According to verse 7, the wisdom of God is a secret and hidden

³⁷John MacArthur, *1 Corinthians, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1984), 60.

wisdom. It is a wisdom that cannot be humanly discovered. MacArthur continues, “The natural man does not know and understand it, and considers it foolishness, because it is wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom.”³⁸ The eye of man cannot discover truth without a holy and righteous God’s intervention within the heart of man. “Man’s two greatest human resources, empiricism and rationalism, his observation and his reason, are equally useless in discovering divine truth.”³⁹ God’s truth can never be discovered, however, man can receive it because it is freely given.⁴⁰

God’s Illumination

In order for high school students to begin to develop a biblical worldview, they must begin to evaluate their own spiritual condition. With what mindset do they interpret the world? Do they have the mind of a natural, unspiritual man or do they have a mindset of spiritual person? Are they a true believer who has been given true wisdom by the Spirit of God or are they a natural, unspiritualized person seeking wisdom on their own merit and resources? First Corinthians 2:14-16 clearly articulates why individuals do not understand the things of God. God has not opened their eyes and illumined theirs hearts toward God:

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

The natural person. It is extremely important to examine the characteristics of the natural person. The natural person can also be described as an unspiritual man. This is also evident with Paul’s usage of the generic term for “man,” *anthropos*. W.

³⁸MacArthur, *1 Corinthians*, 60-61.

³⁹Ibid., 61.

⁴⁰Ibid.

Harold Mare writes, “The apostle now shows that he is speaking of an unsaved man in general, governed as he is only by his “soulish-human nature, not accepting the enlightenment and truths from the spirit of God.”⁴¹ The natural or unspiritual man belongs to and only accepts the ways of the world. The natural man is characterized by his unbelief and follows the natural patterns of the world as described in Jude 19. He does not long for or accept the things of the Lord and is even one who causes divisions. The things of God seem to be foolishness to the natural man. He cannot understand them because he is spiritually appraised. Everyone who rejects the things of God is living in the world as a natural man.⁴²

Other possible meanings of the phrase “does not accept” include “to reject” or “repudiates.”⁴³ These additional definitions continue to explain how the natural man is a person who is opposite the gospel. To the natural man, spiritual truths such as “sin, guilt, forgiveness, redemption, salvation, righteousness, and eternal life” are meaningless, irreverent, and even foolish.⁴⁴ The natural man is living for himself. He will “never plumb the depths of the Word of God because he has within him the spirit of the world instead of the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁵

The natural man may have great knowledge of the Scriptures and be morally upright. He could be well respected within his community and even stand up for what is right while never fully understanding the deep truths of Scripture. As a non-believer, he

⁴¹W. Harold Mare, *1 Corinthians*, in vol. 10 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 202.

⁴²MacArthur, *1 Corinthians*, 64.

⁴³Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 91-92.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 214.

⁴⁵John Phillips, *Exploring 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 62.

is unable to correctly discern spiritual matters “because they are spiritually discerned.”⁴⁶ The verb *anakrino* that is translated “discern” can also be translated “make judgments” and “subject to man’s judgments.”⁴⁷ “Discern” also “points to the continual process of evaluating the spiritual context in which we live,” and the idea that the believer “guided by the Holy Spirit is able to test the spirits to ascertain whether or not they come from God.”⁴⁸ His eyes have not been opened to the gospel and true wisdom does not reside within him. MacArthur explains, “God must open the eyes of our understanding before we can truly know and rightly interpret His truth. His truth is available only to those with a regenerate spirit and in whom His Spirit dwells, for only the Holy Spirit can illumine Scripture.”⁴⁹

The spiritual person. The Holy Spirit has enlightened the spiritual man. He sees all things with new eyes because God has opened his eyes and revealed himself to him. This spiritual person is “able to examine all things judiciously and give leadership in a sin-darkened world.”⁵⁰ According to John Calvin, “it is the spiritual man alone that has such a firm and solid acquaintance of the mysteries of God, as to he distinguish without fail between truth and falsehood—between doctrine of God and the contrivances of men, so as not to fall into mistake.”⁵¹ The spiritual man has been given the ability to

⁴⁶Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 92.

⁴⁷Mare, *1 Corinthians*, 203.

⁴⁸Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 92.

⁴⁹MacArthur, *1 Corinthians*, 64.

⁵⁰Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 92.

⁵¹John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, trans. John Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 117.

appraise all things spiritually. The Holy Spirit gives the spiritual man guidance along with wisdom and discernment as he begins to use the Scriptures to navigate daily life.⁵²

It is the True Teacher, the Holy Spirit, who helps to enlighten the spiritual man about the things he needs to know and understand. First John 2:27 gives further clarification on exactly how the Holy Spirit gives enlightenment: “But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.” MacArthur writes, “The Holy Spirit takes God’s Word, the Word which He has revealed and inspired, and illuminates it for those in whom He dwells.”⁵³ One of the most amazing components of God revealing Himself to the spiritual man through illumination is that he made it available to all Christians. Any spiritual man, who understands true wisdom and has the Holy Spirit residing within them, can spiritually appraise all things.⁵⁴

The spiritual man’s eyes have been opened to salvation and the glory of God through the work of the Holy Spirit. He has been set a part for a greater purpose and he has received the mind of Christ. As the spiritual man continues to grow in his knowledge of Christ, he will begin to see the world differently. The natural man will never understand these spiritual things; it is great folly to them. David Garland offers a quote from John Calvin: “Calvin’s caustic comments: ‘faced with God’s revelation, the unbeliever is like an ass at a concert.’ It is completely uninterested in the music and disturbs the concert with an irritating commotion.”⁵⁵ The Scriptures are designed to guide and be applied to the spiritual man’s daily life. This truth is evident in the promises

⁵²Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 93.

⁵³MacArthur, *1 Corinthians*, 64.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 100.

of Psalm 119:105: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and light to my path.” In order to have a biblical worldview, one must be a spiritual man, a person who has received God’s illuminating power of the Holy Spirit.

A Biblical Foundation Grounded in Revelation

A biblical worldview must be grounded in the absolute truth of God’s Word. This is the most important foundation element of a biblical worldview. A high view of God and His revealed Word will provide the solid foundation on which a biblical worldview can be solidly established. God has given to his children his divine and final revelation that is designed to guide their life and serve as a lens to which they view the world. If believers of all ages would rest in and adhere to God’s revelation to mankind, their worldview would be shaped accordingly and their life changed.

One of the battles many high school students face during these formative years is the thought that absolute truth does not exist. Believers must view the Scripture as God’s divine revelation and the absolute truth by which mankind lives, which will require faith and for God to open their eyes to the truths revealed within Scripture. One of the most foundational verses that addresses the importance of the Scripture is 2 Timothy 3:15b-17:

... which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

A thorough examination of these verses is essential for the study of a biblical worldview. If a student or any believer grasps and submits to the authority of these verses, their worldview will be shaped accordingly.

Powerful in Content

Second Timothy 3:15b-17 speaks to the powerful nature of God’s holy and inspired Word. One essential truth for students to understand is this life transforming power that the Word of God possesses. According to Hebrews 4:12, God’s Word is

living: “For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” God’s Word is alive and active and has a powerful purpose.

Inspired. Many today believe the Bible to be just another good book, and they are essentially saying they do not believe it to be true. Some skeptics may only believe the Bible is partially true, while many agnostics would “contend that one cannot know if the Bible is God’s Word.”⁵⁶ It is essential for believers to believe God’s Word to be the source of absolute truth. There is no room for compromise on this issue. William Hendriksen and Simon Kistemaker write,

The human authors were powerfully guided and directed by the Holy Spirit. As a result, what they wrote is not only without error but of supreme value for man. It is *all* that God wanted it to be. It constitutes the infallible rule of faith and practice of mankind.⁵⁷

Second Timothy 3:16 is “one of the greatest texts in the New Testament on the inspiration of the Bible”⁵⁸ Second Timothy 3:16 states, “All Scripture is God-breathed.” The phrases of “inspired,” “God-breathed,” and “breathed out by God” can all be used interchangeably as an accurate translation of the Greek word *Theopneustos*. However, when the discussion turns to the sentence structure and the placement “all Scripture,” there is little to discuss. Any other rendering of “all Scripture is inspired or God-breathed” would render the Bible worthless.⁵⁹ MacArthur explains, “Scripture first of all is from

⁵⁶David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville: B & H, 2013), 200.

⁵⁷William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 302.

⁵⁸Ralph Earle, *1 and 2 Timothy*, in vol. 11 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 409.

⁵⁹John MacArthur, *2 Timothy*, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*

God and about God, His self-revelation to fallen mankind.”⁶⁰ In these verses, Paul was reminding Timothy that the Word of God is a practical and indispensable instrument of God’s grace.⁶¹ Without hesitation, students of the Scripture must believe and adhere to Scripture being God’s perfect revelation to mankind and begin to use it as the foundation for their worldview. Scripture is powerful because it is the very words of God.

For salvation. The Word of God is powerful unto salvation. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida state that “Paul consistently used the Old Testament to preach and teach the Gospel.”⁶² Many people are amazed that the Bible itself can lead someone to salvation. The Bible has the power to change the hardest heart and bring hope to the hopeless because it is the very words of God. There is nothing outside of the Bible’s influence. It is the whole counsel of God. During the New Testament days, the apostles constantly preached and taught others the gospels through the sacred writings of the Old Testament.⁶³ Platt, Akin, and Merida continue, “The Bible is a ‘Him Book.’ The Old Testament anticipates Christ, and the New Testament explains Christ. He is promised in the beginning, He is there in the middle, and He is held up at the end as our object of worship for all eternity.”⁶⁴

In writing 2 Timothy 3:15, Paul “makes clear that the words in sacred writings do not in themselves have the power to save but rather that the wisdom they impart leads

(Chicago: Moody, 1995), 142.

⁶⁰MacArthur, *2 Timothy*, 143.

⁶¹Hendriksen and Kistemaker, *Exposition of Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*, 303.

⁶²Platt, Akin, and Merida, *Exalting Jesus*, 197.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid., 198-99.

to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”⁶⁵ Romans 10:17 states “so faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” This verse is clear reminder that Scripture will lead people to repentance and saving faith in Christ Jesus. MacArthur writes, “The truth of Scripture invariably brings a genuine, Spirit-prompted seeker to salvation.”⁶⁶ According to Ephesians 2:8-9, salvation is not by one’s own works or merit, but by the grace of God.

Powerful in Conduct

The Scripture is God’s fully inspired Word that is without error. The Bible possesses the power unto salvation. Second Timothy 3:16 explains this foundational element in light of the Bible being “profitable.” By reading and studying The Word of God, the reader will deepen their love for Christ and His Word, and will grow in progressive sanctification. They will become more and more like Christ. Isaiah 55:11 reminds believers of how profitable the Scripture are: “So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.” The “profitability” of Scripture is evident in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 as it has the power to offer hope to the hopeless and change a heart of stone into a heart that seeks the glory of God. This “profitability” is seen in four distinct ways.

For teaching. The teaching referred to in 2 Timothy 3:16 is no ordinary teaching. MacArthur explains, “*Didaskalia* does not refer to the process or method of teaching but to its content.”⁶⁷ It is the “activity of imparting knowledge concerning

⁶⁵MacArthur, *2 Timothy*, 141.

⁶⁶Ibid., 140.

⁶⁷Ibid., 154.

God's revelation in Christ."⁶⁸ When the Scripture is taught, the Word of God is being proclaimed. A distinct power is associated with the teaching, mainly because the content of the teaching is that of divine instruction or doctrine.⁶⁹ Paul lived in a culture where sound biblical teaching was not common. Heresy had been introduced to the church, so here Paul "emphasized the importance of sound teaching."⁷⁰

For reproof. MacArthur writes that "*elegmos* carries the idea of rebuking in order to convict of misbehavior or false doctrine."⁷¹ The Word of God has the power and ability to expose sin and sinful tendencies. The reproofs or rebukes are often warnings that not only address sin within the heart of an individual but are also in reference to false doctrine. All falsehoods must be pointed out for the protection of the church.⁷² Reproof is necessary for the individual believer's growth in sanctification. Reproof is one of the ways God chooses to bring discipline into the lives of his children. MacArthur states, "Regular and careful study of the Scripture builds a foundation of truth that, among other things, exposes sin in a believer's life with the purpose of bringing correction, confession, renunciation, and obedience."⁷³

⁶⁸Hendrickson and Kistemaker, *Exposition of Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*, 303.

⁶⁹MacArthur, *2 Timothy*, 154.

⁷⁰Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 236.

⁷¹MacArthur, *2 Timothy*, 157.

⁷²Hendrickson and Kistemaker, *Exposition of Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*, 303.

⁷³MacArthur, *2 Timothy*, 158.

For correction. The word *epanorthosis* is only used in 2 Timothy 3:16. It refers to “the restoration of something to its original and proper condition.”⁷⁴ Essentially, it is God’s loving, restorative hand for His children using the power of His holy and inspired Word to bring them back into the spiritual position they have forfeited.⁷⁵ Correction is the other half of God’s redeeming work for those who have accepted his reproof or rebuke. MacArthur explains, “Reproof stresses the negative aspect of pastoral work, correction emphasizes the positive side. Not only must the sinner be warned to leave the wrong path, but he must also be directed to the right or straight path.”⁷⁶ The corrective nature of 2 Timothy 3:16 is further described in Hebrew 4:12 and Jeremiah 17:9-10. The Sovereign and Omniscient God of the universe not only knows the thoughts and intentions of the heart, but He also uses the convicting power of His Word to penetrate to the depths of a believer’s soul to call him to repentance.

Training in righteousness. Training in righteousness is the last component mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:15-17 in reference to the powerful nature of the Scripture. Just as reproofing and correction are connected, so are the tenets of teaching and training in righteousness. The term *paideia* is translated as training carries with it “the original meaning of bringing up and training a child, but it can be used of any sort of training. It also is rendered ‘correcting’ and ‘discipline.’”⁷⁷ The training process God has laid out for believers within the pages of Scripture is designed to shape and mold them into the image of Christ Jesus. It requires discipline and work to grow and live out principles set

⁷⁴MacArthur, *2 Timothy*, 160.

⁷⁵Lea and Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 237.

⁷⁶Hendrickson and Kistemaker, *Exposition of Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*, 303.

⁷⁷MacArthur, *2 Timothy*, 161.

forth in Philippians 2:12. The work of progressive sanctification is never complete. The training of a believer is a continual work of restoration.

Fully Equipped

One of the final components necessary to discuss concerning a biblical worldview is the essential understanding that believers have everything necessary to be competent and fully equipped for the work of the gospel. This truth and promise is displayed in 2 Timothy 3:17 when Paul states, “The man of God, may be competent, equipped for every good work.” The Scriptures are totally sufficient to meet every need of the human heart.

A biblical worldview must be grounded in this very truth. Platt, Akin, and Merida write, “God’s Word meets our deepest needs. It transforms us from the inside out.”⁷⁸ Peter also addresses God’s all sufficient Word in 2 Peter 1:3: “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.” This verse is another example of how God has provided for his children everything they need to grow to become more like Christ. When the Word of God is fully sufficient, nothing can be added to it to make it more complete. Students must fully learn what it means to truly believe that God’s Word is sufficient for “all things that pertain to life and godliness” in order to have a worldview that is consistent with the teachings of Scripture.

Conclusion

A biblical worldview must be grounded within the pages of God’s Word. Students need to learn four foundational components to begin to grasp a biblical worldview. The first foundational component for a biblical worldview is an accurate understanding of how the world was formed. The second component is to understand

⁷⁸Platt, Akin, and Merida, *Exalting Jesus*, 201.

that God created man in His image and for His Glory. The third foundational component is an accurate understanding of true wisdom grounded in the illumination of the Holy Spirit. The fourth foundational component is that a biblical worldview must be grounded in the absolute truth of God's Word. This chapter has set out to further explain Genesis 1:1, Genesis 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 2:14-16, and 2 Timothy 3:15b-17 with the intended purpose that these verses help to lay a foundation for a biblical worldview.

It is essential for a student to understand and believe these important foundational truths from God's Word. Students must have a proper view of God and His creative work, an accurate understanding of how mankind was made in the image of God, be a spiritual man as described in 2 Corinthians 2:14-16, and fully believe that God's Word is inspired and profitable for teaching, reproofing, correcting, and training for righteousness. As these foundational truths are practiced within the daily lives of students, a biblical worldview will have the opportunity to be formed and take root within their lives.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES IN LEADING
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO ADOPT
A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

Introduction

In order to properly understand theoretical and practical issues facing high school students in today's society, it is imperative to begin to understand the ever-changing culture in which they live. Not only are students rapidly changing physiologically and emotionally, they are being influenced by a wide variety of cultural pressures. The thesis of this chapter is to determine and understand various ways high school students must evaluate their current worldview by examining the cultural influences upon their lives so that they can begin to adopt a biblical worldview. To do this, a careful examination of their generational tendencies, an examination of their cultural influences, and an examination of essential tenets of the biblical change process are vital.

The Millennial Generation

Current high school students are closing out what has been labeled by many researchers as the Millennial Generation. Thom and Jess Rainer define Millennials as anyone born between 1980 and 2000.¹ The focus of their research mainly focused on older Millennials of the generation from 1980 to 1991. They interviewed over twelve hundred Millennials across the United States.² The insights gained from this older

¹Thom Rainer and Jess Rainer, *The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation* (Nashville: B & H, 2011), 4.

²Ibid.

population of Millennials are essential to understanding the overall characteristics of the Millennial generation. Rainer and Rainer estimate that there are approximately 77.9 million Millennials born in the United States during this twenty-year span of time.³ They write, “As the Boomers shaped so much of the American culture for the most of the last half of the twentieth century, so the Millennials will for the first half of the twenty-first century.”⁴

Another name given to this generation Generation Y. Researcher Tim Elmore breaks this generation into two sections, Generation Y and Generation iY: “They’re the children of the late Baby Boomers and the Early Gen-Xers—born between 1984 and 2002. And while experts differ on what to call them, all agree they’re bound to change the way we approach life.”⁵ Other names associated with this generation include the Digital Generation, Nexters, Mosaics, and the Bridgers.⁶ Knowing that there are vast differences among segments of this generation, this chapter is primarily focused on the younger portion of this generation. The terms Millennial or Generation Y will be used when addressing the overall generation, while the terms Younger Millennial and Generation iY will be used interchangeably when discussing this younger segment of the population.

According to Elmore, “Generation iY will be the largest in earth’s history, and iY Kids are the largest portion of that generation. Already, nearly half the world’s population is under twenty-five years old.”⁷ Generation iY already composes the most

³Rainer and Rainer, *The Millennials*, 14.

⁴Ibid., 12.

⁵Tim Elmore, *Generation iY: Our Last Chance to Save Their Future* (Atlanta: Poet Gardner, 2010), 18.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., 19.

eclectic and diverse group of people in the nation's history.⁸ The rapid growth of technology is all this Millennial generation understands. They cannot comprehend a world without instant communication and instant gratification.

A Stressed Generation

Students in today's society are constantly feeling the pressures placed upon them. Pressure can come from many sides. Some of the pressure placed on them is necessary; however, they also face a tremendous amount of pressure from their parents and other leaders with expectations to excel at an early age. Parents themselves cave to the inherent pressure to conform their children to a certain mold of expectations.

Parents have placed tremendous amounts of pressure on these students to perform at high levels academically, athletically, professionally, and socially. Elmore states that since children are a reflection of their parents, "parents want a trophy to show off as their offspring enters adulthood."⁹ The pressures placed on children and students have damaging effects. They experience a tremendous amount of pressure early in life, especially during the time when they should be enjoying being a child. However, when maturity is a normal expectation among this generation, they are regressing into childish behaviors. First Corinthians 13:11 is an important reminder for this section: "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reason like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways."

Another potential reason for this stress is one that has been self-imposed. Many children hear from the early stages of development that they are best and their best effort is required from them. They also hear that they are special and have limitless potential. The pressure to live up to these words can become inherently stressful. It is uncertain how this generation will handle stress in the future or how stress will manifest

⁸Elmore, *Generation iY*, 19.

⁹Ibid.

itself in their daily lives and decision-making ability. Some researchers anticipate that this generation will struggle with maintaining commitments. Another anticipated result among this generation is that they will seek to return to their adolescent ways more quickly than even their older Millennials counterparts.¹⁰

A Connected Generation

Life happens at a tremendous pace for Millennials. The technological revolution has enhanced this generation's ability to multi-task at a rapid pace. A common theme as technology advance is to "invite Generation iY to do something faster while also inviting them to spend more time at it."¹¹ Corporations understand many of the core principles that drive this generation. They are very dependent on their devices, so much so that they will sacrifice relational investment, a face-to-face encounter, for virtual relationships defined by speed and quantity. The connectedness to these devices can be somewhat of a fleeing from the real world pressures and their escape from reality.¹²

Young Millennials may be connected to the virtual world, but it comes with a price. Many young Millennials struggle with relational skills. At times, they can be perceived as awkward and lacking confidence. Because of the instantaneous nature of the digital world, it is common for students to lack patience, listening skills, and an ability to resolve conflict.

A Hopeful Generation

Millennials see the world with a different lens than that of previous generations. Society offers Millennials the opportunity to interact with many different ethnicities and

¹⁰Elmore, *Generation iY*, 20.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 22.

¹²*Ibid.*

personalities. Their mindset is one of openness. They see differences as an opportunity to learn. Diversity is fully embraced as a part of the culture in which they live. For many, their friendships reflect and embrace this hope. Their friendships mirror the diversity of the community in which they live. Ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual preferences, social lifestyles, and religious beliefs typically do not affect their relational world. Many of Millennials are open to the investment of older individuals in their lives. Research shows that 40 percent of older Millennials currently have a mentor in their lives.¹³

This hopeful mindset is also lived out as they look to the future. Millennials tend to be upbeat and positive. Rainer and Rainer write, “Nine of out ten Millennials believe it is their responsibility to make a difference in the world.”¹⁴ Millennials are not depending on previous generations or future generations to do what needs to be done; they want to be a part of the solution. In addition to “believing it is their responsibility to make a difference in the world, six out of ten Millennials believe they will make some great contribution in their lifetime.”¹⁵

A Self-Centered Generation

A self-centered or a self-focused generation can be stated about many of the Millennial generation. Parents must realize that they are part of the problem. Researchers have found that younger Millennials are more protected and more served than their older counterparts. Elmore explains that Generation iY has been given “safety seats, safety belts, safety policies on everything. They can’t ride a bike without a helmet, they’ve been discouraged from going places on their own, they’ve been shielded from

¹³Rainer and Rainer, *The Millennials*, 41.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 37.

financial realities, and they've spent much of their childhood inside, in front of a screen."¹⁶ While safety concerns are important, parents have attempted to shelter or micromanage every aspect of their children's lives. It has been detrimental for this generation's development. Elmore further explains,

America has become obsessed with protecting children at all costs, and this generation has suffered from that obsession. We will not let your precious children do anything without a helmet, cell phone, warranty, insurance policy, knee pads, or a guarantee."¹⁷

These statements are a good reminder and a summation of the sheltered lives the Millennial generation has experienced.

The world has become a more dangerous and less trustworthy place in recent years. Safety measures are very much needed. However, this generation as a whole has not been allowed to take risks, learn valuable lessons through difficult experiences, or think critically for themselves. Millennials face a wide assortment of struggles within society, including obesity, nearsightedness, depression, conflict resolution, communication skills, keeping commitments, willingness to take risks, and the difficulty coping with life after they leave the home.¹⁸ Many of these struggles can drastically affect their spiritual growth. It is vital for believers to begin to develop a strategy to fight the spiritual battles and temptations.¹⁹

Many within this Millennial generation are growing up with a strong sense of entitlement and a plethora of self-esteem. Research shows that the past three generations have been increasing their self-absorption. As this generation moved from teenagers to adulthood, they have been labeled as "impatient, demanding, self-centered and short

¹⁶Elmore, *Generation iY*, 22.

¹⁷Ibid., 24-25.

¹⁸Ibid., 22-23.

¹⁹For further study on the topic of battling sin and developing strategies to fight Satan, see Joel R. Beeke, *Fighting Satan: Knowing His Weaknesses, Strategies, and Defeat* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2015), 39-50.

tempered, with a poor work ethic and minimal sense of long-term commitment.”²⁰ Additionally, a term that begun to be associated with them is “slactivist.” Many of them want to be active and make a difference in the world while at the same time are lackadaisical or slack off from the discipline necessary to accomplish such a feat.²¹

A Delayed Generation

One of the growing characteristics of this generation is a delayed or postponement of adulthood. Elmore writes, “The years between eighteen and twenty-five have become a distinct life stage—a strange, transitional ‘no man’s land’ between adolescence and adulthood in which young people stall for a few extra years, putting off adult responsibility.”²² They view this as a time to experiment and try new ideas, jobs, relationships, and more. Many parents enable this behavior by allowing their college graduates to move back home for an extended period of time.

The idea of adolescence is relatively new. Scripture describes individuals as children or adults. This classification was maintained throughout most of history. It was not until 1904, when psychologist G. Stanley Hall coined the term adolescence.²³ Then Erik Erikson “characterized adolescence as a period of exploration and experimentation, a time for kids to try on different roles, a period of coming to terms with one’s personal identity.”²⁴ More recently, “in 2002, the National Academy of Science redefined adolescence as the period extending from the onset of puberty to around thirty years

²⁰Elmore, *Generation iY*, 27.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., 54.

²³G. Stanley Hall, *Adoloscence: Its Psychology and Its Relations Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1907), xiii.

²⁴Elmore, *Generation iY*, 59.

old.”²⁵ Elmore states that for many within this self-absorbed, self-confident generation, “twenty-six is the new eighteen,” which essentially prolongs the adolescence years.²⁶

This delayed or postponement of adulthood is also seen in the average age Millennials are getting married and having children. Robin and Samantha Henig write, “Traditionally, five milestones have been used to define adulthood—completing school, leaving home, becoming financially independent, marrying, and having a first child. Millennials pass through all of Big Five, on average, about five years later” than the generation before them.²⁷ Statistics like these are cause for an alarm. Some researchers claim that it is a product of requiring more education and a wide variety of career choices available to them.²⁸ However, it could also be a product of their self-focused, pressure-filled culture. As the world becomes more specialized, today’s culture is increasingly isolating young people from society instead of integrating them into it.²⁹

A Church in Crisis

The culture of the church has changed drastically in recent years. Differences in specific doctrinal beliefs, interpretation of the Scripture, and the definition of marriage have been some of the issues the church has faced in recent years. Millennials have grown up in the midst of these discussions and controversies. Older Millennials are now rising to leadership and many are beginning to shape the church landscape. Even within the Millennial generation is varying worldviews and purposes of the church.

²⁵Elmore, *Generation iY*, 56.

²⁶Ibid., 58.

²⁷Robin Marantz Henig and Samantha Henig, *Twentysomething: Why Do Young Adults Seem Stuck?* (New York: Hudson Street, 2012), 3-4.

²⁸Ibid., 5.

²⁹Elmore, *Generation iY*, 58.

The National Study of Youth and Religion was a massive study of adolescent spirituality in the United States from 2003 to 2005. One of the tending thoughts was that “the faith of young people may just be the ticket to reclaiming our own.”³⁰ However, from their research, Christian Smith and Melinda Denton state, “We have come with some confidence to believe that a significant part of Christianity in the United States is actually only tenuously Christian in any sense that it is seriously connected to the actual historical Christian Tradition.”³¹ This section examines, according to the research finding, how Millennials view the church, what leads them to these conclusions, what they actually believe, and who or what influences their understanding

A Wake-Up Call

Travis Freeman suggests, “The only difference between the outsider and the Christian is that the Christian gets up on Sunday mornings and goes to church.”³² When the secular world cannot see any distinct differences between the Christian and the non-Christian, the church is in great danger. Freeman continues, “As more and more Christians live as though no distinction exists between them and the more broadly accepted cultural norms, this attitude of irrelevance towards a biblical worldview continues to grow.”³³ As Kenda Creasy Dean examined the research of the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR), she found some alarming trends. The central assertion of her book states,

American young people are, theoretically, fine with religious faith—but it does not concern them very much, and it is not durable enough to survive long after they

³⁰Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3.

³¹Ibid.

³²Travis Allen Freeman, “Preaching to Provoke a Worldview Change: Tim Keller’s Use of Presuppositional Apologetics in Preaching” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 42.

³³Ibid.

graduate from high school. . . . The religiosity of American teenagers must be read primarily as a reflection of their parents' religious devotion or lack thereof, and by extension, that of their congregations.³⁴

These assessments should be a stinging declaration against the American church.

For many years, congregations have tried to figure out why so many recent high school graduates are not continuing to demonstrate their faith in college and beyond. All kinds of questions have been raised and churches have pointed fingers in many different directions. Statistics can be interpreted in a variety of ways, however, the fact is that whatever the percentage, a large number of young adults are disconnecting from their involvement in the local church. Some of these young adults are even walking away from the faith they once professed. Regarding those who walked away, did the gospel transform them or were they essentially Christianized pagans? Many attended a local youth group and the many events the church offered, but were they truly committed followers of Christ? Were these same young adults able to articulate what they believed and why they believed it? According to this national study, many young people simply adopted the faith they saw modeled to them. Unfortunately, it was a model with very little substance and a lot of religiosity.

These Millennials are very observant. They can see the disconnection and difference in what the church says and how the church lives. One of the characteristics is that these teenagers see God as an object instead of the subject, and as an idea instead of a companion. Dean writes,

The problem does not seem to be that churches are teaching young people badly, but that we are doing an exceedingly good job of teaching youth what we really believe: namely that Christianity is not a big deal, that God requires little, and the church is a helpful social institution filled with nice people focused primarily on 'folks like us'—which, of course, begs the question of whether we are really the church at all.³⁵

³⁴Dean, *Almost Christian*, 3-4.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 11-12.

It may not be that this generation is rejecting Christianity, but they could be rejecting the only form of Christianity they know. Churches have offered to this generation is some “kind of ‘diner theology’: a bargain religion, cheap, but satisfying, whose gods require little in the way of fidelity and sacrifice.”³⁶ It is obvious why this type of teaching is so common within churches today. Many churches have decided to take a non-confrontational approach to the Scriptures, thus weakening the foundational beliefs of the coming generations.

Biblical Understanding

Everyone has a worldview or a belief system that guides their thoughts and decisions. Millennials are no different. The church has convinced this generation that it is important to have religious participation without it being necessary for life transformation to occur. Many young people see the church as a place for moral information and place that can teach them kindness and respect. The church has failed at connecting how a biblical worldview must shape every aspect of a person’s life. It is only within recent years, as these Millennials are moving toward adulthood, that churches are beginning to notice the repercussions of their pragmatism. This same worldview has been growing among congregations for decades. Nancy Pearcy describes this worldview:

There is no “Christian Mind”—no shared biblically based set of assumptions on subjects like law, education, economics, politics, science, or the arts. As a moral being, the Christian follows the biblical ethic. As a spiritual being, he or she prays and attends worship services. “But as a thinking being, the modern Christian has succumbed to secularism,” accepting ‘a frame of reference constructed by the secular mind and a set of criteria reflecting secular evaluations.’ That is, when we enter the stream of discourse in our field or profession, we participate mentally as non-Christians, using the current concepts and categories, no matter what our private beliefs may be.³⁷

³⁶Dean, *Almost Christian*, 10.

³⁷Nancy Pearcy, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 34.

If students within the Millennial generation struggle to clearly articulate the core values and doctrines of the Christian faith to which they adhere, how then can they transfer them into daily practice? The problem is of cataclysmic proportion.

Moralistic therapeutic deism. Dean writes, “American young people are unwittingly being formed into an imposter faith that poses as Christianity, but that in fact lacks the holy desire and missional clarity necessary for Christian discipleship.”³⁸ This imposter faith, as labeled by Smith and Denton, is called Moralistic Therapeutic Deism. For Millennials, the faith they exhibited during the research is a loveless version of Christianity.

Moralistic Therapeutic Deism basically has five basic guiding beliefs that characterize this generation’s thoughts and worldview.

1. A god exists who created and orders the world and watches over life on earth.
2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
3. The Central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
4. God is not involved in my life except when I need God to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.³⁹

These results are gathered from a cross segment of American population. Dean explains, “For Smith and Denton, this is a moral indictment on American congregations, not teenagers, which leads them to draw an astonishing conclusion: Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is supplanting Christianity as the dominant religion in the United States.”⁴⁰ With this understanding, it is easy to understand how “three out of four American teenagers claim to be Christians, and most are affiliated with a religious organization—but only about half consider it very important, and fewer than half actually practice their faith as a

³⁸Dean, *Almost Christian*, 6.

³⁹Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 162-63.

⁴⁰Dean, *Almost Christian*, 14.

regular part of their lives.”⁴¹ This bland version of Christianity is all that they know, have experienced, and can comprehend. For this generation, Christianity is “nice to have, like a bank account, something you want before you go to college in case you need to draw from it sometime. What we have not told them is that this account of Christianity is bankrupt.”⁴²

Several observations can be made from this research. First, most teenagers have a positive view of religion. Millennials seem to be more indifferent when it comes to religion. As a whole, they are not hostile toward religion or against it. Society has taught them to be tolerant and open-minded toward everything. Therefore, they are less likely to engage in hard conversation about faith and seldom allow it to become a source of conflict.⁴³

Second, many teenagers mirror their parents faith. One of the more surprising findings in the research was that parental influence still matters to them. Dean states, “While grandparents, other relatives, mentors, and youth ministers are also influential, parents are by far the most important predictors of teenagers’ religious lives.”⁴⁴ This generation of teenagers adheres pretty closely to their parent’s set of beliefs and is content to adopt them. For many churches, this should be alarming. The teenage years are an important time in the developmental process in which they need to begin to own their faith decisions.

A third observation is that teenagers struggle to express their faith or interpret their experiences. When the Millennial generation is asked what they believe, many Millennials defaulted to either no religious beliefs or commonly held church positions.

⁴¹Dean, *Almost Christian*, 18.

⁴²Ibid., 15.

⁴³Ibid., 17-18.

⁴⁴Ibid., 18.

They are unable to clearly articulate exactly what they believed. This is not surprising since they have been given, in many ways, a model of Christianity that is void of the truths of the gospel and how it translates to their daily lives. According to the research, students could clearly articulate other topics such as money, family, sex, and relationship, but when it came to religion, there was a void.⁴⁵

A fourth finding was that a small minority of teenagers, 8 percent, understands their religious faith was important. These students were described as highly devoted. They faithfully engaged in a variety of opportunities within their local church, engaged in daily spiritual disciplines, had a positive outlook on life, and had positive relationships with their parents. Of the students surveyed, Mormon teenagers showed the highest level of religious understanding and faith practiced.⁴⁶

Reaping and sowing. Within this discussion of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, it is quite apparent that many churches across the nation are unfortunately reaping a harvest that has been sown. Dean explains, “Perhaps young people lack a robust Christian identities because churches offer such a stripped-down version of Christianity.”⁴⁷ This stripped-down version of Christianity has been modeled to this generation by both parents and churches. It is possible that parents themselves do not understand the hard truths that the Bible teaches, and if they do, they are unwilling to teach them and live them out in front of their children. Churches must begin to realize and prioritize the biblical commands in order to teach, train, and equip parents to be the primary spiritual and shaping influences in their children’s lives.

⁴⁵Dean, *Almost Christian*, 18-19.

⁴⁶Ibid., 19-20.

⁴⁷Ibid., 36.

Shaping Influences

It is important to consider exactly how experiences and individuals have shaped this generation of young people. Today, Christians live in a very demanding culture. Education, social media, peers, and culture shapes the way people view the world. Society has “forced Christians to place a barrier between their public lives and religious lives, not allowing one to influence the other.”⁴⁸ The church must strive to maintain its cultural distinctiveness and reject the pressure to conform or compromise on issues of the day.⁴⁹ Cultural conformity has had a devastating effect on this generation of Millennials and upon the church.

Both contemporary culture and social media are shaping influences upon this generation. However, Millennials no longer only view themselves as consumers of culture but are beginning to realize they are actually creators of it. In many venues, they have begun to understand that their input is both welcomed and appreciated. They may not realize how the culture is shaping them, but they do see culture as an avenue for self-expression.⁵⁰

Families. One of the more surprising characteristics of the Millennial generation is their love for their families. According to the conclusions drawn from the NYSR, “the best way to get most youth more involved in and serious about their faith communities is to get their parents more involved in and serious about their faith communities.”⁵¹ Within many churches, students have many opportunities to be involved in Bible studies, mission opportunities, and a wide variety of events. Many of these fun outings, fundraisers, choir concerts, retreats, summer camps, and ministry opportunities

⁴⁸Freeman, “Preaching to Provoke a Worldview Change,” 41.

⁴⁹Ibid., 42.

⁵⁰Dean, *Almost Christian*, 125.

⁵¹Ibid., 109.

can have multiple implications. While the design and the intentions of many of these events are good, it is the actual outcome that can become harmful. These events can turn into

opportunities for teenagers to feel good about themselves, or for congregations to feel good about teenagers, or occasions to celebrate middle-class values of achievement, self-expression, and self-determination. No wonder young people have trouble distinguishing the teachings of Jesus from American culture.⁵²

If these teenagers are having a difficult time seeing and understanding the difference, it could be because the congregations too have fallen into cultural norms and deception.

Great reformer Martin Luther wrestled with similar concerns centuries ago and gave a clear explanation of how to address his growing concerns. Dean states that “Martin Luther was convinced that Christian formation began with youth ministry, and he was convinced that youth ministry started at home.”⁵³ Luther further expounded upon his thought by stating, “If ever the church is to flourish again, one must begin by instructing the young.”⁵⁴ Even though Martin Luther penned these words in the 1500s, the importance remains true today. In regard to the Millennial generation, churches and families have ceased to teach basic core tenets of the Christian faith both within homes and within churches.

Church. The church is another shaping influence on the Millennial generation. Faith communities have had a significant impact upon their spiritual development. Students who have a strong biblical foundation did not get there by accident. For these students, “their faith is the legacy of communities that have invested time, energy, and love in them, and where the religious faith of adults (especially parents) inspires the faith of their children.”⁵⁵

⁵²Dean, *Almost Christian*, 110.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 111.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 194.

A church's influence can be either positive or negative. According to the NYSR, it appears that for many Millennials, the church's influence has given them an unbiblical view of Christianity and a weak understanding of the bride of Christ. This influence can be seen in other statistics as well. Within their research, Smith and Denton discovered that about 65 percent of teens thought that "God was a personal being involved in the lives of people today."⁵⁶ They continued to state that 27 percent of teenagers thought that even though God was not involved in the creation of the world that He still created. While about one in every five students believe that even though God was not active in the world today, they feel "close or extremely close" to Him.⁵⁷

One of the essential components of shifting these trends will be for churches to realize their shaping influence on the lives of students and their families. As they believe, reclaim, and teach a biblical understanding of core doctrines of the faith, generations will be impacted for years to come. According to Dean,

Churches help young people develop consequential faith best when they focus, not on who they are—or on why they want young people to be in order to perpetuate their theological brand—but by focusing on who Christ is calling young people to become as he sends them into the world on his behalf.⁵⁸

Connecting to Millennials

The hope that Christ offers with the gospel transcends all generational and cultural boundaries. The Millennial culture is no different. Combining the information gleaned from research and tendency and along with the speaking truth in love, hope can be instilled into a culturally diverse generation. Tim Elmore makes seven interesting observations in how people should connect with the iY generation specifically.⁵⁹

⁵⁶Dean, *Almost Christian*, 163.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid., 195.

⁵⁹Elmore, *Generation iY*, 49-51.

1. They want to belong before they believe.
2. They want to experience before an explanation.
3. They want cause before they want a course.
4. They want a guide on the side before they want a sage on the stage.
5. They want to play before they pay.
6. They want to use but not be used by others.
7. They want a transformation, not merely a touch.

From these observations, the Millennial or iY generation is longing for authentic, transparent relationships fostered in the context of community. The easy-believeism of generations past will not work for their generation. They will not be easily fooled or schemed into believing ideals or a belief system, but when they do believe will be deeply committed to it.

Relational investment is vital among Millennials. It will be at that point where deep truths can begin to be discussed. Their passion to do something life-changing needs to be explored. It will become essential to explore this core value in light of the gospel in context. They will need to be challenged to apply the hard truths of the Scripture and think outside of themselves. They will need to examine how they, in turn, use the hope of the gospel to make a lasting difference among their generation and around the world.

Biblical Change Is Essential

Scripture is sufficient to meet every need of the human heart. The Bible offers all of the hope that is needed to address this ever-changing, increasing difficult dilemma within the church and the Millennial generation. In order to be fully prepared to clearly articulate the gospel to this generation, it is absolutely necessary to consider the difference between external change and true lasting change as described in Scripture.

Faulty Methods

For many years, secular psychologists and theorists have tried different theories and methods to help people change people's habits, tendencies, addictions, and even overall perspectives on life. In most cases, the foundational structure to each of these systems is contrary to the teaching of Scripture. Individuals have tried methods in hopes of bringing about change within their lives. James MacDonald states that these

unbiblical methods are a part of the problem: “If you’ve tried to change and failed, it’s because you’ve tried to change according to an unbiblical method.”⁶⁰

Faulty psychological methods. James MacDonald highlights three faulty psychological change methods. One of the most prevalent methods used within society to change a person’s thinking is the Environmental Method, which was made popular by John Watson and B. F. Skinner. Another term name for this psychological theory is Behaviorism or behavior modification. MacDonald defines Behaviorism as “the idea that the environment conditions a person to behave in certain ways, that you are the result of the environment that you have come from. Therefore, change the environment and you will change.”⁶¹ Millennials have been greatly influenced by their ever-changing culture. Within this perspective, individuals are the victims of the environment around them. Change occurs because of a series of rewards and punishments centered on the individual determining what they want. This method never addresses the root cause.

The second faulty method MacDonald addresses is Psychoanalysis. This psychological theory seeks to remedy problems from the past.⁶² This method was developed by Austrian physician Sigmund Freud. MacDonald writes,

Freud taught that human behavior is determined by painful memories that are buried in our subconscious mind. Freud believed that we force from our conscious mind any awareness of thoughts, needs, or experiences that are unacceptable to us or to others and try to bury them deep inside ourselves.⁶³

Within this theory, man is not held responsible, hope is found within insight and awareness, and self-absorption and a victim mentality are promoted.⁶⁴

⁶⁰James MacDonald, *I Really Want to Change So, Help Me God* (Chicago: Moody, 2000), 26.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 27.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 29.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 30.

⁶⁴Stuart Scott, “Introduction to Biblical Counseling, Part 1” (classroom lecture

The third faulty method of helping people change is humanistic psychology. MacDonald explains, “Humanistic psychology teaches that people are controlled by their values and choices. The goal of this approach is for people to discover and then achieve their own potential.”⁶⁵ This theory for helping people change was developed in the 1960s by Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. According to MacDonald, research shows that individuals who seek change using this method “have a statistically worse chance of seeing transformation than if they did nothing at all.”⁶⁶ Self-help and self-esteem are foundational elements to this theory. Many variations of this theory are prevalent in today’s society. Within this theory, man is viewed as basically good. The power to overcome originates within the individual, and the theory is feelings oriented. Within this faulty method, individuals are taught to “take whatever steps necessary to achieve the goal of being comfortable with oneself.”⁶⁷ These foundational tenets are contrary to a biblical view of man that is found within Scripture.

Other faulty methods. Today’s society is filled with other faulty methods as well. Integrating psychological thought and biblical truths has become common in recent decades. Some counselors seek to only allow their faith and interpretation of Scripture to be visible in their demeanor and character while others seek to blend psychological thought and the Scripture more comprehensively. Within an integrationist method of change, individuals are actually demonstrating a lower view of God and the Scripture while at the same time seeking the wisdom of the world over the absolute truth of the Scripture. It is troubling “to see people who claim to believe in the power of almighty

notes, 80551—*Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, Summer 2007).

⁶⁵MacDonald, *I Really Want to Change*, 31.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Scott, “Introduction to Biblical Counseling.”

God turning to pagan philosophies and ignoring the transforming ministry of the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁸

Not all faulty methods include a professional philosophy or counseling method. Some faulty methods of change are more individualistic. Many people’s default is one of legalism. A legalistic change is very similar to a behavioristic philosophy. When individuals focus on a legalistic change method, the changes that occur are external in nature. Legalism within Christianity becomes “all about conforming to a code of conduct that has been added to the precepts and principles of the Bible and then judging people on the degree to which they conform to the extrabiblical code.”⁶⁹ Legalism has the tendency to hide sinful patterns of Christians by forcing them under the surface and hiding the real truth of who they are.⁷⁰

While not all Christians may struggle with legalism, many people attempt to change under their own strength and determination. This process becomes more evident as individuals seek to suppress their desires and tendencies with the hope of seeing lasting results.⁷¹ Other examples of faulty methods are when individuals seek to change by increasing their knowledge or by simply praying and letting God to do the rest. These methods are hopeless efforts that are centered on pride, a poor understanding of the sanctification process, and result in frustration and emptiness.

Biblical Change Is Possible

Each of these secular models and methods of change attempt to address a deeper core problem. Each of the secular models begins with a flawed foundation and a worldview that does not seek to acknowledge or submit to a sovereign God. The

⁶⁸MacDonald, *I Really Want to Change*, 31.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 34.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 36.

Scriptures are very clear and lay a solid foundation for the change process. Many verses within the context of Scripture are foundational to understanding the biblical change process. Second Peter 1:3 states, “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.” Additionally, Hebrews 4:12 is essential to framing a solid foundation grounded in God’s Word: “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” An accurate interpretation and understanding of Scripture are essential components to the biblical change process and looks very different from what the world offers.

An accurate view of God. Secular models of change do not begin with biblical worldview or biblical foundation. I would be far reaching to comprehend a secular model beginning with a high view of God and the Scripture as the starting point. In most occasions, they possess a low view of God and a high view of worldly wisdom. When Scripture serves as the foundational truth, the Sovereign God of the universe who created all things, knows all things, and controls all things shapes the framework of the worldview. An accurate view of God, including his divine attributes, is foundational to having a correct understanding of the change process. If an individual holds a faulty view of God, it will be “impossible to know Christ and build a life that resembles His.”⁷² If individuals do not view God as holy, just, and righteous, they will never see themselves as they really are; a sinner in need of a savior.

An accurate view of man. An accurate view of man, sin, and the human heart are also essential to the change process. One of the major differences between secular and psychological methods of change and the biblical model of change is their view of

⁷²Stuart Scott, *The Exemplary Husband: A Biblical Perspective* (Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2000), 14.

man. The false systems of the world view mankind as born basically good and something or someone has altered or corrupted life's trajectory. Some systems even view mankind as getting better and better, while in fact Scripture teaches that mankind is getting worse.⁷³ Second Timothy 3:1-5 describes the world as becoming greater lovers of self and more in love with their sin. These claims are contrary to what Scripture teaches about the natural condition of mankind. Jeremiah 17:9 states, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" "God says that apart from His Grace and work, man's heart is bent toward wickedness."⁷⁴ It is this bent toward sin and self that leads every person to chase after idolatrous lusts within their own human heart.

Man was created by God and for God with the distinct purpose of worshipping the holy God of the universe. According to Genesis 3, sin entered the world. Sin is breaking or not keeping God's Law in any way.⁷⁵ Man is also born sinful, separated from God, and in desperate need of a savior. Romans 3:23 explains that everyone is born into sin, and as a result, everyone falls short of God's perfect and holy standard. Sin separates mankind from a holy God. Sin is idolatry and it steals the worship that belongs to God and transfers it to someone or something else.⁷⁶ When sin is explained correctly from Scriptures, mankind can be properly understood in correlation to the Sovereign God of the universe. This biblical understanding of mankind is in stark contrast to the foolish teachings of the world, in which mankind is more greatly esteemed and elevated. These important foundational elements help separate the biblical method of change from every other worldly method.

⁷³Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, 31.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Stuart Scott, "Presenting the Gospel in Its Context: Faithfully Sowing the Seeds according to the Scriptures" (classroom lecture notes, 80551—*Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, Summer 2007).

⁷⁶Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 66-67.

A biblical view of the heart. Scripture teaches that the heart is the control center of life. The Bible describes human beings in two different parts: the inner man and outer man. The outer man can easily be described as the physical body. Timothy Lane and Paul Tripp write, “The heart is the real or essential you. All of the ways in which the Bible refers to the inner person (mind, emotions, spirit, soul, will, etc.) are summed up with this one term: heart.”⁷⁷ The heart also involves a person’s “thoughts, intentions, beliefs, desires, and attitudes.”⁷⁸ Each of these terms is not describing something different but various parts, functions, or descriptions of the inner man.⁷⁹ Lane and Tripp explain, “As much as we are affected by our broken world and the sins of others against us, our greatest problem is the sin that resides in our hearts.”⁸⁰ Many other methods seek lasting change but true and lasting change always comes through God’s transformational work within the human heart.⁸¹

The heart is of great concern for God. Proverbs 4:23 states, “Keep your heart from vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” The heart is the control center of life. God has designed it for worship and to be protected. First Samuel 16:7 also explains that “while man tends to focus on outward appearance and actions, God looks at and tests the heart.”⁸² So many theories and methods seek to understand the heart or plumb the depths of the human heart, but they fail to realize that only God and God alone can know and search the depths of the heart. Romans 1:19-22 gives further explanation to this lack of wisdom and understanding in the world:

⁷⁷Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2006), 17.

⁷⁸Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, 89.

⁷⁹Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, 59.

⁸⁰Lane and Tripp, *How People Change*, 17.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, 88.

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. 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.

An unbelieving world will never understand the things of God and will not seek true heart transformation. Their best efforts will always fall short since there is only one who knows the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

The process of change. Biblical change is possible because of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross and his bodily resurrection: this is the hope of the gospel. The gospel must inform, transform, and guide a believer's worldview, philosophy, circumstances, behavior, thinking, and their view of self.⁸³ Jesus has come to transform the entire heart of a believer, not just one area of life.

There are five key elements to the biblical change process. First, an individual must realize his or her own guilt and sinfulness before a holy God. The only proper response and answer for guilt is forgiveness through repentance. Second, repentance is a necessary component of genuine conversion and it also remains after conversion. Repentance involves turning from sin, comprehending the magnitude of the sin, and choosing to flee from repeating the sin. Forgiveness is third key component to the change process. Not only do believers need God's forgiveness, but they also need to grant and seek the forgiveness of others. Granting of forgiveness to others is a powerful witness of the gospel and also gives testimony to a heart that has been transformed and is being transformed. As they begin to grow in sanctification, the fourth element will be the replacement sinful patterns within their lives. This "putting off" and "putting on" is taught consistently throughout the Scripture.⁸⁴ Stuart Scott clarifies, "Old sinful patterns

⁸³Lane and Tripp, *How People Change*, 23-29.

⁸⁴Stuart Scott, "The Process of Change" (classroom lecture notes, 80551—*Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, Summer 2007).

must be replaced with new godly ones in order for the change to be pleasing to God and to last over time.”⁸⁵ The final element of the change process is one of renewing the mind. According to Philippians 4:6-9, it is vitally important to constantly saturate the mind with truths from the pages of Scripture. Stuart Scott explains the change process: “Once God has drawn a man to seek Himself, opened that man’s eyes to the truth of the Gospel, and reconciled that man with Himself, that man is able to worship the God of the Bible in ‘spirit and truth.’”⁸⁶ Each of these elements are essential components to the change process.

Salvation is the first transformational step in the change process. From that point on the process of progressive sanctification begins. Scott describes progressive sanctification as the

lifelong cycle of sin, repentance, renewal, and growth toward Christlikeness that will only be complete when we meet our Lord (Romans 6-8). This is accomplished through the active discipline of the believer himself, who trusts that the Holy Spirit is energizing his efforts.⁸⁷

Paul explains this continual process growth in Philippians 2:12-13:

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Conclusion

In order to fully understand how an individual begins to change their worldview, it was imperative to gain a better understanding of the Millennial generation. The Millennial generation is the largest generation today. Words such as hopeful, connected, self-centered, delayed, stressed, and many others describe this generation. However,

⁸⁵Scott, “The Process of Change.”

⁸⁶Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, 88.

⁸⁷Stuart Scott, “The Change Process” (classroom lecture notes, 80551—*Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, Summer 2007).

when it comes to faith, they are a generation in crisis. Moralistic Therapeutic Deism has been coined to describe this generation's understanding of the Christian faith. Less than 50 percent of surveyed Millennials actually practice their faith as a regular part of their lives.⁸⁸ For this generation, Christianity is “nice to have, like a bank account, something you want before you go to college in case you need to draw from it sometime.”⁸⁹ The expression of Christianity that many of these Millennials have learned is a form of religion where practice and entertainment have been prioritized over solid biblical and doctrinal teaching and intergenerational involvement. As a result of this ever-changing culture, Millennials are growing up unprepared and ill-equipped for the real world. They have grown up with a worldview void of the gospel and Jesus' call upon their lives. The Millennial worldview has been shaped more by cultural norms and religiosity than by Christ.

Paul Tripp suggested that real problem is that their faith never took root. During their teenage years, many students simply lived within the boundaries of their parent's faith while at home. They often obey and follow the rules that are set for them because they know they should. However, as they transition to college, a noticeable shift occurs. With very little anchoring, their decision-making ability and true motives of the heart are revealed. College does not cause the problem; it is just a conduit that reveals the heart. Good behavior can last for a little while, but it ultimately proves temporary because it has not been rooted in real, transformational heart change.⁹⁰

Through authentic relationships and solid biblical teaching, Millennials can begin to gain a glimpse into the true hope that God has offered in the person of Jesus Christ. They will taste and see that He is good. As they begin to reject the faulty methods

⁸⁸Dean, *Almost Christian*, 18.

⁸⁹Ibid., 15.

⁹⁰Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 64.

of change the world offers, they must begin to embrace the rich truths of the Scripture and the hope the gospel offers. The foundation of their lives must be the living and active Word of God. By using God's sufficient Word as the starting point, a new trajectory will be set for their lives and biblical worldview adopted.

CHAPTER 4

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

Current high school students experience a tremendous amount of pressure to conform to a secular ideology and teaching each and every day. External pressures consistently compete for their attention, seeking to gain an entryway into their thoughts, thus affecting their behaviors. For many years, students have graduated from high school spiritually ill-prepared for the battles that they will experience during the college years. Many students walk into adulthood without a life-transforming relationship with Christ or solid understanding of biblical truth.

The purpose of this project was to lead high school students to adopt a biblical worldview through discipleship at First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia. The project was designed to accomplish three primary goals. The first goal was to evaluate the high school students of First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia, in their understanding of a biblical worldview. The second goal was to equip and disciple high school students during a weekend retreat to begin to adopt and apply the Word of God in real life situations. The third goal was to lead students to commit to expanding their biblical worldview.

This chapter describes the methods used to conduct the project. It discusses the participant selection process, use of pre-project questionnaires, and describes the teaching sessions of the retreat. Upon the completion of the project, students were given the questionnaire again to determine if their worldview was strengthened during the retreat. One of the most important components of the project was whether or not the students would commit to further worldview training.

Promotion and Participant Enrollment

The implementation process began several months prior to the initial promotional material and publication being mailed out. In September 2015, conceptual and foundational elements of the project were discussed with the personnel committee and the Next Generation Pastor Search Team. In January 2016, foundational groundwork was laid by introducing the pastoral staff and other key leadership to the pressing need for the topics addressed within the project to be taught to the upcoming high school students. The retreat concept and topics to be covered were well received by the leadership. In April 2016, a date was set along with the retreat location, cost, and the development of the registration process. Two months prior to the retreat, a save the date promotional card was emailed and distributed to the thirty upcoming and recent high school graduates, each of whom was a resident member or prospect of First Baptist Church. One month prior to the retreat, a registration card was mailed to these same students. Over the next four weeks, students were continually reminded of the upcoming retreat through verbal announcements at student ministry gatherings and through weekly publications of the church. A parent or guardian was required to complete the “Informed Consent with Minors or Members of a Vulnerable Population” participate agreement form prior to the retreat (see appendix 1) as a part of the registration process. Of the thirty possible retreat participants, ten upcoming high school students and one recent high school graduate decided to participate in the two-day retreat.

The Retreat

The implementation of the teaching component of this project occurred during a two-day retreat on June 30 to July 1, in Blairsville, Georgia. During the two-day retreat, students were challenged to examine various scriptures passages to evaluate their own perspective on the world and to continually evaluate their own application of the Scriptures upon their daily lives. The retreat consisted of eight, thirty to forty-five-minute teaching

segments. Students were given the opportunity to ask questions throughout each session as they related to the presented topics.

Opening Session

The opening session was designed to be an introduction to the topics and the entire retreat. The purpose of the introduction was to help prepare the students for the topics presented in later sessions. As the opening session began, students and adult volunteers spent time corporately worshipping God through song and the reading of various Scripture passage. In addition to musical worship, students spent several minutes individually and corporately praying for the retreat and specifically asking the Lord to reveal to them the areas where they needed growth.

As a form of introduction, students were reminded of the dual purpose of the retreat. The main purpose and desired outcome was for each of them to encounter and be transformed by the powerful truth of the gospel and that they would begin to understand the urgency and the necessity of adopting a biblical worldview. In addition to the opening session, they spent three sessions examining the foundational components necessary to adopt a biblical worldview, three sessions of practical application of these foundational truths, and one closing session. The secondary purpose was the implementation of the project. Participants were then given instructions to complete the pre-seminar questionnaire and the pre-seminar worldview survey (see appendix 2). They were to answer each question complete with honesty and without help from other students. The desired result was for each participant to think deeply with both the questionnaire and the survey and to do so independently. Once each student had completed the questionnaire and survey, the opening session was complete.

Session 1

The first teaching session of the retreat focused on helping the students understand and define the millennial generation and to study their religious characteristics.

The second focal point of the session was to help them understand and define a worldview. The last component of the session was to examine and study the biblical passages that give insight into a biblical worldview.

Generational characteristics. Current high school students are closing out what has been labeled by many researchers as the Millennial generation. Researchers Thom Rainer and Jess Rainer define Millennials as anyone born between 1980 and 2000,¹ while other researchers lengthen the span to include 2002. The Millennial generation will redefine the way life is approached.² During this session, students were also reminded that they live in a pressure-filled society that places high demands on the next generation. They are a stressed but connected generation—one filled with hope and self-absorption. Even though they experience life at a faster pace, they delay important decisions pertaining to a career, marriage, and family until later in life.

In reference to the religious beliefs of their generation, it was imperative for the students to understand what studies have shown. The term Moralistic Therapeutic Deism was an important term for them to understand and to unpack. Dean writes, “American young people are unwittingly being formed into an imposter faith that poses as Christianity, but that in fact lacks the holy desire and missional clarity necessary for Christian discipleship.”³ Moralistic Therapeutic Deism has five basic guiding beliefs that characterize this generation’s thoughts and worldview.

1. A god exists who created and orders the world and watches over life on earth.
2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.

¹Thom Rainer and Jess Rainer, *The Millennials: Connecting to America’s Largest Generation* (Nashville: B & H, 2011), 4.

²Tim Elmore, *Generation iY: Our Last Chance to Save Their Future* (Atlanta: Poet Gardner, 2010), 18.

³Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* (Oxford: University Press, 2010), 6.

3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
4. God is not involved in my life except when I need God to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.⁴

Dean explains that “this is a moral indictment on American congregations, not teenagers, which leads them to draw an astonishing conclusion: Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is supplanting Christianity as the dominant religion in the United States.”⁵

Worldview defined. Students were taught that each person has a worldview whether they realize it or not. Worldview was defined as “a set of presuppositions which we hold about the basic make-up of our world.”⁶ These basics presuppositions, or beliefs, concern most important issues in life. It is with them that an individual interprets and judges reality.⁷ A worldview is the lens in which a person views the world.

For believers, a biblical worldview is not automatic and does not come easy. Students were taught not to assume that just because they professed faith in Christ, that they automatically had a biblical worldview. Scripture is God’s special revelation to humanity and holds the final authority. It is absolute truth and believers are to base their worldview solely upon it, thus giving them a biblical worldview. A biblical worldview sees life as it is mandated through the pages of Scripture.⁸ Students were also taught that developing such a worldview would take time, discipline, study, and lots of hard work.

⁴Dean, *Almost Christian*, 14.

⁵Ibid.

⁶N. Allan Moseley, *Thinking against the Grain: Developing a Biblical Worldview in a Culture of Myths* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003), 20.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Thomas Andrew Randle, “Student Perceptions of a Biblical Worldview at a Four-Year Christian College” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002), 7.

Students were reminded of the urgency and pressing need to have their worldview grounded within the pages of the Scripture. David Noebel states, “Too many Christian young people are ill-prepared to lead. The vast majority have no concept of the components of their worldview and stand intellectually naked before left-wing university professors and the liberal media.”⁹ Students must understand that a high view of God and a high view of the Scriptures are foundational components to a biblical worldview.

Scriptural examination. First Corinthians 2:14-16 provided the students a biblical perspective on this topic:

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

This passage provided the students with a clear picture of how the natural man does not understand the things of the Lord. Until the Lord has opened their eyes, the things of God will not be understood and will be seen as foolish. Students were challenged to think specifically about their own journey and even to begin to apply this passage to specific situations they face in everyday life. During the discussion of this passage, many students began to understand why many of their peers do not understand the commitment to Christ.

Session 2

To open the second session, each student was challenged to share his or her definition of the gospel. One of the main purposes of the second teaching session was for the students to leave with a clear understanding of the gospel. Knowing this, students were challenged to begin to develop a clear understanding of the gospel, with the end result of

⁹David A. Noebel and Chuck Edwards, *Thinking Like a Christian: Understanding and Living a Biblical Worldview* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 9.

having a strengthened worldview. As this occurred, they also began to gain a more accurate and biblical view of God, a biblical view of man, and a biblical view of sin.

Many people, including students, could be living with a false hope and assurance of their salvation. Many of these same people have great difficulty articulating the basic components of the gospel. Unfortunately, many have walked an aisle and prayed a prayer many years ago, but their heart was never transformed by the gospel. Others may be in the category of a Christianized Pagan. A Christianized Pagan would be one who understands all of the terminology of Christianity, may have attended many Bible studies, and seeks to grow in knowledge while still embracing all the world has to offer because their hearts are far from Christ. Students were challenged with the reality that these examples are all too commonplace in churches today, even among older generations. Matt Chandler states, “What I found was that for a great many young twentysomethings and thirtysomethings, the gospel had been merely assumed, not taught or proclaimed as central. It hadn’t been explicit.”¹⁰

According to Scripture, saving faith looks radically different. Authentic faith is relational, comprehensive, and life transforming. The gospel story is the good news of Christ. It was vital for students to grasp a clear picture of this good news. Mark Dever clearly articulates his understanding of the gospel:

The good news is that the one and only God, who is holy, made us to know him. But we sinned and cut ourselves off from him. In his great love, God became a man in Jesus, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross, thus fulfilling the law himself and taking on himself the punishment for the sins of all those who would ever turn and trust him. He rose again from the dead, showing that God accepted Christ’s sacrifice and that God’s wrath against us had been exhausted. He now calls us to repent of our sins and trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness. If we repent of our sins and trust in Christ, we are born again into a new life, an eternal life with God.¹¹

¹⁰Matt Chandler and Jared Wilson, *The Explicit Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 13.

¹¹Mark Dever, *The Gospel & Personal Evangelism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 43.

As students began to understand the definition of the gospel, they were challenged to biblically unpack the following words as a way to clearly articulate the good news of Christ.

God. It was essential for the students to have a clear understanding of the nature and character of God. According to Genesis 1:1, God is the creator of all things. Revelation 4:11 also testifies of the character of God: “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.” Not only is God the creator of all things and worthy of all praise, he is also in sovereign control of all things. He is perfectly holy, perfectly just, and will punish sin (1 John 1:5; Rom 2:5-8)

Man. Understanding God was essential, but it was equally important for them to have a solid biblical understanding of man. Genesis 1:26-28 explains the pinnacle of God’s creation, mankind. Man was created good and had perfect fellowship with God. Genesis 3:1-11 describes how sin entered the world and sin’s consequences. From this point forward, man became sinful by nature. Romans 3:23 states that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” All people are born as sinners and are alienated from God. Their hearts are hostile toward him, and if they are left unto themselves, they will choose sin and self every time. However, because of this sinful nature, all people are also subject to the wrath of God. Ephesians 2:1-3 states,

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Christ. It was essential for the students to understand how Jesus Christ, God’s own son, was the plan for redeeming fallen humanity since before the world was made. John 1:1 states, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man. He lived a life free of sin—a

life that one else could live. He was crucified on a cross and bore the wrath of God for sin for all those who would believe in him. He defeated and conquered death, fully exhausting God's wrath toward sin. He rose from the grave on the third day fulfilling what the Scriptures foretold, while securing eternal life for all those who believe in him (John 1:1; 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 7:26; Rom 3:21-26; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Cor 15:20-22).

Response. After describing all that God has done, a response was necessary. Romans 10:9-10 reminds everyone of God's call upon their lives: "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved." Mark 1:15 also testifies of Christ's urgent call: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." It was imperative for the students to understand that their salvation was not dependent upon their own ability or their own merit, but according to Ephesians 2, salvation is a free gift from God. God and God alone initiates salvation. Only God can open the blind eyes of the human heart; only he can make lives new. A response is required. Everyone must respond to the risen Christ, without believing, confessing, repenting, and submitting their heart to the risen Christ, they will be condemned and separated from God for all of eternity in eternal torment.¹²

Students were challenged to explain the gospel by using the words: God, man, sin, and response. They were also challenged to examine their own hearts to see if or how their own salvation account lined up with a biblical understanding of the gospel. Understanding and articulating a biblical understanding of the gospel is foundational to a biblical worldview.

¹²9 Marks, "What Is the Gospel?" accessed on July 27, 2016, <https://9marks.org/answer/what-gospel/>.

Session 3

The focus of session 3 was for students to gain and understand more deeply the importance of adhering to a high view of the Scriptures and accurate view of the human heart. These are essential components to continuing to develop a worldview that is grounded in the Scripture.

Scripture. In order for students to understand the importance of Scripture, they had to first understand the difference between general and special revelation. General revelation was described as the means by which God reveals himself to mankind through the physical universe and the moral order. Special revelation was described as the specific means by which God reveals himself to mankind through the Bible and in the person of Jesus Christ.

Students were challenged to see that life and power is within God's Word. Hebrews 4:12 states, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, to joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." God's living and active, all-powerful Word must begin to shape a believers worldview. Second Timothy 3:16-17 states that "all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." Students were taught that biblical worldview is grounded in the understanding that Scripture is fully inspired by God and He will use it as equipment for journey ahead. The students also examined 2 Peter 1:3-4:

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Students were reminded that Scripture alone must be their guide. There will be absolutely nothing they can add to Scripture to make it more powerful or more applicable to their daily lives. The pages of Scripture provide the believer everything he or she will need in

life. It will also fill the deepest longings of the human heart. Students were reminded that they are to believe His Word is powerful and able to penetrate the hardest of hearts; it is designed to equip His children for every good work and will provide his children with everything they need. The students were challenged to have complete faith in God's unchanging and holy Word. God's Word is completely sufficient for everything a believer will face in this life.

The heart. The second half of the third session directed the students' thoughts and attention to an accurate understanding of the heart. Stuart Scott writes, "Once the condition of a man's heart is remedied (salvation), the vocation (or preoccupation) of his heart should then, and forever, be the worship of God 'in spirit and truth' (John 4:23)."¹³ A biblical understanding of the human heart was described as the control center of living that involves the "thoughts, intentions, beliefs, desires, and attitudes."¹⁴ It can also be labeled as the real "you," according to 1 Samuel 16:7 and Proverbs 4:23.¹⁵

During this session, the students also examined Scripture to gain a better understanding for God's Word in reference to the human heart. Jeremiah 17:9-10 states that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds." Students were reminded that only God himself knows the heart. The human heart is deceitful, wicked, and filled with selfish ambition and desire, and when unto itself, the heart will choose sin.

Another verse that provided further insight into this examine of the human heart was Matthew 12:34b: "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."

¹³Stuart Scott, *The Exemplary Husband* (Bemidji, MN: Focus), 88.

¹⁴Ibid., 89.

¹⁵Stuart Scott, "Addressing Heart Issues" (classroom lecture notes, *80551-Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, Summer 2007).

Students were challenged to consider the many things that overflowed from their lips. They were taught that their words revealed more about the longing and desires of their hearts than they every realized. This same thought was continued in the study of Psalm 139:23-24: “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” Students were challenged as this session closed to spend time asking God to examine their hearts and to begin to study and meditate upon the Scriptures that were discussed.

Session 4

In session 4, students discussed a biblical view of creation as they begin to apply the foundational elements of the biblical worldview they had learned in previous sessions. During the first part of session 4, students were instructed to spend at least thirty minutes praying and reading the Scriptures. Students were challenged to read, study, and meditate upon Psalm 148 and Genesis 1-2. As they concluded their time of devotion, they were challenged to reflect upon what they had read as they were still before the Lord within His creation.

The second part of session 4 focused upon the importance of having Genesis 1-2 as the foundational tenet of a worldview. Students were instructed of the urgency and importance of a tight adherence to the Genesis account of creation. A loose interpretation of the biblical account of creation could alter an individual’s complete understanding of the entirety of Scripture, which would also minimize or negate many of the tenets taught in earlier sessions regarding the need for a high view of God and Scripture within a biblical worldview. It was imperative for students to begin to understand that an accurate view of Genesis 1-2 is absolutely essential in adopting and shaping a biblical worldview.

Students were asked to explain and to discuss the various perspectives of the creation account that they had been taught at school. Many students stated that Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution was taught as fact. In order to keep the dialogue and application going, students were asked to express their current tension between the various

creation accounts or simply if they thought they looked through a biblical lens, a lens based on scientific theory, or if they are struggling somewhere in between.

Students were reminded that the starting point matters. Scripture must be the starting point and the foundational lens for examining all aspect of life, including science. However, many people begin with science and then attempt to fit the biblical teaching into scientific theory. Genesis 1-2 gives believers the foundational truths to establish a biblical worldview based on a literal, verse-by-verse reading of Genesis 1-2. Within this verse-by-verse reading of Genesis, key doctrinal truths were discussed regarding God's sovereignty and eternity. The Trinity, God's power over all of creation, and his purpose in creating mankind were all discussed during this session. Session 4 concluded with a question and answer session centered on various questions from the creation account. These questions included discussions about dinosaurs, the age of stars, Adam and Eve's descendants, and much more.

Session 5

In session 5, a biblical worldview of relationships was the focus. As a means to open up discussion, students were asked to share the various types of potential relationship in which a biblical worldview had the potential to shape. Friendships, parent-child relationship, siblings, dating relationships, marriage, homosexual, and transgender were all among the topics mentioned. Second, students were asked to examine within their own lives whether culture or Scripture actually had the most shaping influence upon their views of these relationships. When students begin to allow Scripture to be the defining and shaping influence upon each of these relationships, they will be noticeable different from society. Students were reminded that 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 addresses this tension, especially how the natural man does not understand the things of God.

Every relationship that a believer has is an opportunity for them to model Jesus, bless others, and live in community with one another. God has placed His children within communities for their good and His glory. Knowing this, the students briefly examined

Proverbs 27:17 and Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. Within these passages, students were reminded of the hope that is offered, that God uses each relationship to grow them in sanctification, and that each of these relationships are designed for a purpose as they live in community with one another. As students were challenged to have a biblical view of friendships, they were challenged to examine whether or not their current friendships were a source of encouragement and edification or were they one of discouragement and distraction.

A biblical view of marriage was an essential component of this section.

Genesis 2:24-25 and Ephesians 5:21-33 gives believers a clear picture of the biblical expectations upon marriage. God has designed marriage to be between one man and one woman for life. Within these passages, students were taught they were to leave their family units and cling to their spouse within biblical marriage. God created the husband and wife to be equal in status but different in roles. Both husband and wife are to be in full submission to Christ. According to Ephesians 5, the husband is to lovingly and sacrificially lead his wife just as Christ leads the church. He is to continually wash her with the Word, serving as her primary spiritual leader. At the same time, the wife is to love, respect, and submit to her husband out of reverence to Christ. These were vital foundational truths for the students to comprehend, especially as society is redefining marriage by the ever-changing cultural norms. When a husband leads his wife in the ways that he is called, the wife will have the opportunity and freedom to become what God has designed her to be.

A biblical view of the parent-child relationship was essential for students to grasp and understand. Ephesians 6:1-4 was examined as a model for this parent-child relationship. So often students focus upon seeking to honor Christ without realizing that if they are not honoring and submitting to their earthly authority, then they cannot be honoring their vertical relationship to God. Ephesians 6 clearly states that children are to “obey their parents in the Lord, for this is right.” Ephesians 6 also provides children with both a warning and a promise. Students were reminded that as they live in submission to

their parents and within the circle of blessing, that things will go well with them, but if they choose to live outside of these parameters, restorative and corrective discipline must occur to bring them back within the circle.¹⁶ Students were also challenged to consider whether their relationship and interaction with their parents was any different than that of their friends who do not profess faith in Christ. One of the primary ways students can demonstrate their love for Christ is to strive for the relationship with their parents to be set apart from those of the world.

Lastly in this session, students examined how Romans 1:18-28 gave a biblical perspective on the homosexual and transgender movements. A biblical worldview that is founded upon a high view of God, high view of the Scriptures, and low view of mankind has a very different perspective on the homosexual and transgender movements than a worldview that has a low view of God and mankind and one that elevates and esteems mankind as innately good. Students were reminded that these differences greatly affect their understanding and interpretations of these movements. Romans 1:18-28 clearly addresses many of the issues at hand and describes them as sinful, when the world would state that they should be embraced because they were born a certain way. Students were reminded of Romans 3:23: “All sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” As students continued to examine Romans 1:22-28, they began to see that these particular sins have been around for centuries and that it was God himself that gave them up to their own lusts and impurities as they “exchanged natural relations for those contrary to nature.” A solid understanding of the fall in Genesis 3 and the doctrine of man are essential components to understanding both homosexual and transgender relationships. Students were encouraged to stand for the truth of Scripture and fight against the culture norms of the day. Students must never forget that hope for each person is found in the saving work of Jesus Christ.

¹⁶Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd, 1995), 148.

Session 6

In session 6, students were challenged to examine how a biblical worldview affects the decisions they make. Before students began to examine Scripture, they were asked, “How should a biblical worldview affect how they live on social media? And how does a worldview affect their everyday decisions?” These two questions were intentionally asked prior to the examination of Scripture to allow God to begin to open up their hearts to the truth and convicting power of Scripture.

Psalm 101:1-4 states,

I will sing of steadfast love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will make music. I will ponder the way that is blameless. Oh when will you come to me? I will walk with integrity of heart within my house; I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless. I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me. A perverse heart shall be far from me; I will know nothing of evil.

Students were challenged to examine various forms of social media, movies, music, and other images that they routinely place before their eyes. A heart that has been transformed by the gospel and seeks to grow in the progressive sanctification process will begin to make difficult choices. A believer’s life should look drastically different from the world. Students were challenged to continually examine their choices in light of these verses. In order to do so, they must begin to ponder the blameless way, seek to walk with integrity of heart, set nothing vile before their eyes, and seek to keep all forms of evil far from them.

Students were reminded that this journey of growing in Christ and applying a biblical worldview to all aspects of life would be difficult. Ephesians 2:8-9 reminds believers that their salvation was not based upon anything they accomplished, but salvation is by grace alone through faith alone. Students were also reminded of the role each believer plays in his or her progressive sanctification process, as Philippians 2:12-13 describes. Students were challenged to not be lazy in their pursuit of Christ, to work hard, and to daily fight against the enemy that lies within the human heart.

Personal application was vital within this session. Students were challenged to take action upon specific areas in which they sensed the Lord leading them to action and

obedience. They were reminded of the biblical commands and promises found within Ephesians 5. As they seek to be imitators of God, they must begin to repent and put off the sins that so easily entangle them as they put on Christ. As they begin to battle these areas of sin, they were given encouragement from Philippians 4:8. Students were allowed a brief time of open discussion before the session closed with a time of praying for them to follow through in obedience.

Closing Session

During the closing session, students were reminded of the two sections of the material presented, sessions 1-3 were foundational elements of a biblical worldview and sessions 4-6 were key areas where a biblical worldview must be applied. Second, students were challenged to choose two or three of the foundational verses for them to begin to memorize after the retreat (see appendix 4). The last component of the closing session was for each student to complete a post-seminar questionnaire and a post-seminar worldview survey (see appendix 3). These questionnaires were identical to the ones given prior to the retreat. They were expected to answer each question with honesty and without any help from other students. The desired result was for each student to think deeply with both the questionnaire and the survey and to do so independently. After the completion of the questionnaire and survey, each student was asked about his or her interest in further study on a biblical worldview.

Conclusion

In response to the need for high school students to adopt a biblical worldview through discipleship, a Biblical Worldview Retreat was developed and taught in the summer of 2016. Students were introduced to the importance of adopting a biblical worldview through discipleship and the foundational components that lay the groundwork for a biblical worldview, along with practical implications of a biblical worldview. For many of the students, this was their first time to consider the importance of a biblical

worldview. For many of them to leave the retreat with a hunger and a desire for further biblical worldview training and further discipleship was a tremendous outcome. This retreat was an important first step for each participant concerning his or her own spiritual growth and development. Additionally, this retreat was designed to be a foundational and eye-opening event that would greatly benefit the overall vision and philosophy of the Next Generation Ministry of First Baptist Church.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

After teaching and discipling students for almost twenty years, I began to notice a pattern among the groups of students I have been blessed to shepherd. So often, one encounters a student who claims to profess faith in Christ and often attends church with great regularity, but their life appears no different than their unbelieving friends. Years ago, I became convicted that many of the students that attend most student ministries may not be believers. They may possess a great knowledge of God's Word, but their hearts may have not been transformed by it. This basic conviction affects the way the church must disciple. Students must understand the gospel and begin to allow it to take root deep within their heart. It is impossible to disciple someone whose heart is not submitted to Christ and who has been given a new purpose and a new hope.

At First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia, the need for discipleship and the adoption of a biblical worldview was great. For years, students had grown up within the church, only to leave for college and to fall into the temptations of the world. Without a solid biblical foundation, this pattern is not surprising. The current group of upcoming high school students at First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia, was an excellent group for this project. Many of them are teachable and eager to grow in their walk with Christ. However, without a biblical foundation, they too could easily follow the patterns of previous generations of students at First Baptist Church.

This project was developed to teach high school students of the necessity and the urgency of the gospel by leading them to adopt for themselves a solid biblical worldview grounded within the pages of the Scripture. This project intended to accomplish this task through a discipleship retreat for upcoming high school students and recent high

school graduates from First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia. The observations and evaluations of the project are the focus of this chapter.

Evaluation of Project's Purpose

This initial idea for the project was first discussed many years ago as Stuart Scott and I discussed the current state of student ministries, along with the difficulties that students and churches experienced. We discussed at great length the real possibility that many students within the average student ministry may lack true saving faith. Our conversation continued to center around the continual need for students to truly embrace the fullness of Christ and the richness of the gospel. The idea moved from a possibility to an urgent need within my context of ministry. Therefore, foundational to this project was a clear understanding of the gospel and true biblical discipleship, which are essential to any form of biblical counseling.

At the time, I was a student pastor in a rural church in Mississippi. There was an urgent need for the students to know and understand the beauty of the gospel and how it shaped their everyday lives. Even as I changed ministry locations, the Lord continued to strengthen and to clarify the need for the implementation of this project. The project was initially designed for a group of students in rural Mississippi. The purpose of the project was also shaped by my experience serving as Pastor for Students and Families at First Baptist Church in Paducah, Kentucky. As I transitioned to Lawrenceville, Georgia, the project was adapted and finalized for a small group of students in the metro Atlanta area. During these experiences, the Lord continued to shape both my theology and my philosophy of ministry. The project's purpose was strengthened as these two tenets grew.

The project's purpose was to lead high school students to adopt a biblical worldview through discipleship at First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia. This purpose was accomplished as 11 students participated in a two-day retreat in the north Georgia mountains in the summer of 2016 where they were taught both foundational and practical elements needed to adopt a biblical worldview. The project's scope and purpose

were appropriate and definitely relevant for this particular time in these participants' lives. The topics addressed within the project were applicable to their current situations and life circumstances. After compiling the pre- and post-seminar questionnaires, it was apparent that this project was taught in a timely manner within their life stage.

Evaluation of Project's Goals

The first goal was to evaluate the high school students of First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia, in their understanding of a biblical worldview. A questionnaire was distributed to each student to help evaluate his or her current understanding of a biblical worldview. This goal was measured by the comparison of data collected from a pre- and post-seminar questionnaire. In order for the first goal to be accomplished, 70 percent of the students needed to complete the evaluation.

The first goal was achieved as the questionnaires revealed that all 11 participants completed the pre- and post-seminar questionnaire process. Furthermore, the questionnaires gave insight into each participants' understanding of the definition of a worldview, the importance of a biblical worldview, and the definition of the gospel. The 11 students acknowledged on the questionnaire that they were followers of Christ. The evaluation of pre-seminar questionnaire revealed that 63 percent of the participants had some prior understanding of the definition of a worldview, while only 36 percent could articulate why a biblical worldview was important. In addition to his or her understanding of a worldview, each participant was asked to give a simple definition of "the gospel." In the pre-seminar questionnaire, 45 percent of the participants' articulated definition of the gospel was consistent with the Scripture, while 55 percent were able to recall two or three verses that are foundational to someone's salvation. Following the two-day retreat, these statistics increased greatly. The post-seminar questionnaires revealed that over 90 percent of the participants increased their understanding of a worldview and 90 percent could also give reasons and application for the importance of adopting a biblical worldview. However, in reference to their understanding and articulation of the

gospel, the results were relatively the same. The understanding seemed to be enhanced in those who articulated it well, while the other participants responses were virtually unchanged.

The second goal was to equip and disciple high school students during a weekend retreat to begin to adopt and apply the Word of God in real life situations. During the retreat, students began to memorize pre-selected Scriptures and their references that would assist them in applying the Word of God to their lives. This goal was evaluated and measured by administering the pre- and post-seminar worldview survey during the retreat weekend. This goal was successfully accomplished when 67 percent of the participants could list three to five Scripture references that were foundational to a biblical worldview.

Throughout the two-day retreat, students were taught various Scripture passages that were foundational to a biblical worldview. The post-seminar questionnaire revealed that 73 percent of the retreat participants listed at least three scriptural references that were foundational to a biblical worldview. This percentage greatly increased from the pre-seminar survey where 45 percent of the participants did not list any verses. Prior to the conclusion of the weekend, students were to complete a list of the verses studied during the retreat for their own personal study and memorization in the future.

The third goal was to lead students to commit to expanding their biblical worldview. This project was limited in the thoroughness of each topic but it was designed as an effective introduction for the necessity of the adoption of a biblical worldview. The aim was for high school students to begin to see and understand the power of Scripture and the foundational element it must be within their lives in order to use Scripture to evaluate every aspect of their thinking. At the conclusion of the project, students were given the opportunity to commit to additional training in expanding their biblical worldview by completing the participant questionnaire. This goal was successfully accomplished when 50 percent of the retreat participants committed to further biblical worldview training.

The third goal was successful in nature as 90 percent of the participants on their post-seminar questionnaire committed to seeking further biblical worldview training. This additional training would be in conjunction with the church's discipleship strategy. The students were encouraged to purchase *Quest for Truth* by Shannon Hurley as a resource to begin their personal study of developing a biblical worldview.

Strengths of the Project

At First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia, there was a great need to help prepare and transition high school students into college and adulthood. For many years at First Baptist Church, students had graduated from high school ill-prepared for the challenges they would face as they entered college. A lack of depth in biblical and theological understanding of the gospel, a lack of specifically knowing how to apply the teachings of Scripture to daily lives and situations, and a lack of desire to prioritize their personal study and consistent involvement in their local church were just a few of the struggles of the current college-aged students at First Baptist Church.

One of the major strengths of the project was the urgency and importance of the topics for this generation of students. Time is of the essence. The earlier a student can begin lay a solid foundation that is saturated with the gospel, the more opportunities they will have to impact eternity for the glory of God. For years, students at First Baptist Church have lacked theological and doctrinal teachings that are relevant to their current situations. This retreat served as an introduction for many of them to a topic that they had never fully considered, so the timing and implementation of this project was perfect.

A second strength of the retreat was that following the retreat students should have had a more thorough understanding of the gospel. Many of them knew basic Bible stories but had not begun to examine their own lives to see if their lives had been and were being transformed by the gospel. Understanding and applying the gospel to their own lives was a major and vital component to the entire project, and one that could not be ignored.

Third, students were taught several passages of Scripture that are foundational to adopting a biblical worldview. Not only were these verses foundational for a biblical worldview, they were also vital for their understanding and the importance of having a high view of the Scriptures. The most powerful aspect of this strength was that it had the ability to make an immediate impact upon their lives. Additionally, as they begin to memorize passages or even recall portions of them, the Scripture has the power to continue to teach and to shape them for years to come.

Throughout the retreat and the discussions within each session, it became quite apparent that many of the participants were already beginning to apply and implement the topics into their daily lives. Therefore, the ability to begin to apply these foundational truths immediately was a great strength. They were not simply hearing the Word being taught, but they were beginning to internalize it for themselves.

Finally, the size of the group was a strength. I originally saw the size of the group as discouraging and as a hindrance. However, it was a great blessing and I quickly realized that these students were exactly who God had providentially designed to be a part of this project. The smaller size allowed for flexibility with the length of each session. Most of the students had been friends for many years and had similar biblical understanding. The size of the group also allowed for lots of honest discussion, especially in reference to the application of these topics upon their daily lives. One additional aspect in reference to the size of the group was that the participants composed a large portion of leadership core of the student ministry. The potential for long-term impact on many generations of students ended up being a definite possibility.

Weaknesses of the Project

Even though the project accomplished many of the stated purposes and goals, no project is perfect. It is healthy to evaluate the project's weaknesses. Some of these weaknesses were more obvious as the project developed while others only came into view in retrospect. If these weaknesses were properly addressed within the same context, richer

results would be produced. If this project were taught in a different context, more variables would need to be adjusted.

The first weakness was quickly apparent during the retreat. There was too much information to thoroughly cover. However, it was essential for students to be introduced to both the foundational and the practical elements necessary for adoption of a biblical worldview. So with minor revisions, this weakness could easily be turned into a strength.

As preparation for the project developed and was nearing the end, I realized that the project was lacking the parent connection. Parents have the ability and the availability to impact and shape their children's lives. Their potential for influence is second to none. It can be both positive and negative. Some type of parental connection would have greatly strengthened this project. Within the follow-up questionnaire, students affirmed this idea. Eight out of the 11 participants affirmed that their parents have a bigger influence upon them than their friends do.

Another weakness was the length and language of the questionnaires. In reference to the participant survey (see appendix 2), adding a few more clarifying questions would be helpful. The students responded well to the stated questions, but adding a few additional questions that seek to gain more specific understanding would greatly enhance the outcome of the survey. Upon further examination and evaluation of the Worldview Survey (see appendix 3), the number of questions could have been reduced and the language more intentional. Some of the survey's length occurred when previous questions were reworded in a later portion of the survey to see if the participant answered in the same manner. This proved helpful on some occasions, especially in reference to applying worldview into certain situations. However, for the average teenager, the rewording, rephrasing, or even the application of the Scripture in a specific situation proved confusing at times.

What I Would Do Differently

One of the first things I would change about the project would be to add one additional phrase to the title. I would insert the phrase “begin to.” During the implementation of my project, I realized that the topics being discussed sparked lots of discussion and thus resulted in a major clash of their current worldview. So a more accurate title and purpose could read “Leading high school students to begin to adopt a biblical worldview through discipleship at First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia.” This change would also help to accurately reflect the ongoing change process of progressive sanctification, as their worldviews are being continually shaped and formed by Christ. The reality of their worldview being drastically altered from the teaching of one retreat was quite ambitious. However, a solid foundation was laid for future study and for the adoption of a biblical worldview.

A second aspect I would have changed would be to involve parents in the discipleship process. In Deuteronomy 6 and Psalm 78, God clearly instructs parents to be the primary disciplers of their children. The church is to encourage and equip parents as in teaching the excellences of God and His mighty attributes to the entire family. Retrospectively, parents could have been involved in many different facets of the project. For one, they could have been included in the actual retreat weekend. Another idea for parental involvement could be that the most effective way to lead students to adopt a biblical worldview is to train parents to have a biblical worldview and to in turn equip their students with the same worldview. Other ideas could also involve having a follow-up parent study, including them in the Scripture memory portion, or even incorporating the follow-up training as a student and family discipleship class.

An additional change would have been to lengthen the retreat. The retreat was advertised as a two-day worldview retreat. Many factors contributed to the length of the retreat, but one of the major factors was the students’ limited availability due to the busyness of their extra-curricular and family schedules. A second limiting factor was the

location of the retreat. A family within the church allowed me to use their lake home at no cost, so the overall price of the weekend was minimal for each student.

Theological Reflections

Many components of this project require some type of theological reflection. Throughout this project, my love for God, His Word, and His church was strengthened. God used this project within my own life to teach me of His excellences and to deepen my belief in the truths that I already believe.

One of the primary foundational truths of this project is the basic understanding that God's Word is completely sufficient for every need a believer will have and in every situation that a believer will encounter. Second Peter 1:3 affirms this truth: "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness." Through this project, my belief in this basic foundational truth was deepened. So often believers never realize that they compromise the gospel and the truth of Scripture as they run to the perceived wisdom the world offers. If Christians believe God's Word to be sufficient, then they must begin to do their part in the progressive sanctification process.

A second foundational truth reflected within this project is a high view of God. God is in sovereign control of all things and faithful to His promises. Within the pages of Scripture, God clearly revealed His perfect plan of redemption and how He will continue to shape and mold believers into the image of Christ. This project greatly increased my love for God and deepened my longing to understand the depths of His Word.

Over the past ten years, these two foundational truths have been cornerstones of my theological development. As I began to cling tightly to these two truths, my view of life and ministry was transformed. This project continually affirmed these truths to my own life and to my philosophy of ministry. Students can learn and must learn the deep, life-giving riches found within the pages of Scripture. This project helped me grown in my theological depth and the application of the text in everyday lives. Many believers,

especially students, need assistance in connecting the stories they have been taught through the years with overall redemptive narrative of the Scripture.

Another area of theological growth was a fresh understanding of the church. The church is the bride of Christ. The church should also stand on the foundational principles of a high view of God and a high view of Scriptures. During this project, I was reminded of the dangers and consequences of churches that minimize the teaching of God's Word. Teaching the hard truths of Scripture is not always well received. The struggles of the millennial generation are largely connected to a lack of solid biblical teaching, intentional discipleship, and authentic Christianity that seek to honor Christ at all costs. Unfortunately, many churches in today's culture have given to the cultural norms and have minimalized the cost of following Christ. This project greatly increased my convictions that students can understand and must be taught solid doctrinal teachings that are grounded in the pages of Scripture.

Personal Reflections

As I reflect upon the entirety of this doctoral project, I am reminded of my initial thoughts and intentions of my project proposal. I had a deep desire for students to know and comprehend the greatness of God and the sufficiency of His all-sufficient Word. I longed for my students to understand these riches. For them to turn away from the idols within their hearts and the foolishness of the world and truly rest in the hope and transforming power of the gospel.

The truths that were communicated within the project have become deep-rooted convictions within me as a follower of Christ and a pastor. As a Student Pastor, I was grieved when I left two groups of students without the implementation of this project. However, as I meet each new group, my desire for them to know these truths was just as urgent. The Lord was faithful as he allowed this project to be presented to a group of students who had a hunger for Christ.

I grew as a pastor in many facets during this project. My understanding of the Scriptures was greatly enhanced while my understanding of the culture was broadened. My ability to communicate and connect with students grew as I studied the millennial generation. As a result of these elements, my one-on-one counseling and discipleship of students benefited greatly. The Lord allowed me the privilege of applying this project's content in small, individual conversations on many occasions even before the project was implemented.

Personally, I have grown as a man, husband, father, and pastor as I have tried to balance family, ministry, and school. There were many days where these elements were not balanced. God was faithful during these days as He used each of them to shape my character. Another shaping influence upon my character during this project was the multiple transitions made. We have moved three times and served in three different churches during the writing of this project. Over the years, I have learned and continue to learn discipline, commitment, and grace. Even though there were many difficult days and long seasons of little productivity, I am very grateful that the Lord allowed me to grow in self-discipline, commitment, and find the joy that comes with completion.

I am extremely grateful that the Lord's grace has been abundant, even as I have been undeserving of it. God's grace and kindness has been evidenced in so many lives throughout the duration of this project. My wife and kids have exemplified grace and love while the seminary has shown me much grace and patience along each step of this journey. I would do many things differently in hindsight, but God used the many things I have learned along the way to shape my character and help me become more like Christ.

Conclusion

The data from this project indicates that there is a great need for more biblical worldview training and discipleship among these students. In comparing the pre- and post-seminar questionnaires and surveys, there is still a tremendous amount of discipleship to be done at First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia. The verbal feedback from the

weekend was extremely positive and the students are excited about the opportunity to continue their training. They loved the content and application of the content into real life situations. The transition from communicating information to the application of information is vital for this millennial generation. They must begin to see why and how these truths from Scripture are important and how they affect their daily lives.

As shepherds of God's people and stewards of His Word, pastors and elders must never shrink back from declaring the whole counsel of God. They must train and equip their people to embrace the urgency demonstrated in Acts 20. Churches and student ministries are filled with individuals who do not know Christ. The church must continually balance evangelism with discipleship and discipleship with evangelism. It is impossible to disciple the lost. Students have the ability to comprehend and apply the richness of the gospel. The church must be faithful to her calling by teaching the Word in season and out, and equipping students to live out the gospel in their everyday lives as they make disciples of all nations.

It was an honor to be a part of this project and I am grateful for the completion of this project. However, I look forward to teaching this material again in the future and to further improve upon the work that has already be completed. I am thankful for each student who participated in the two-day retreat. May God continue to use the content of this project for His glory and honor for many generations.

APPENDIX 1

INFORMED CONSENT WITH MINORS OR MEMBERS
OF A VULNERABLE POPULATION

Agreement to Participate

You are being requested to give permission for a minor or member of a vulnerable population under your legal supervision to participate in a study designed to lead high school aged to adopt a biblical worldview. This research is being conducted by Jason B. Williams for purposes of collecting research and data for his Doctor of Ministry project. In this research, each person will be asked before training and at the conclusion of the training if he or she agrees or disagrees with a specified set of questions pertaining to their worldview. Any information provided will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will a person's name be reported, or a person's name identified with his or her responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary, and the person you are giving approval to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By signing your name below, you are giving informed consent for the designated minor or member of a vulnerable population to participate in this research if he or she desires.

Participant Name _____
Parent/Guardian Name _____
Parent/Guardian Signature _____
Date _____

APPENDIX 2

PRE- AND POST-SEMINAR QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CLASS PARTICIPANTS

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to evaluate how thorough your understanding is of a biblical worldview. This research is being conducted by Jason B. Williams for purposes of collecting data for his Doctor of Ministry project. In this research, you will be asked before training and at the conclusion of the training if he or she agrees or disagrees with a specified set of questions pertaining to their worldview. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this survey and signing your name below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Name _____
Signature _____
Date _____

The first section of this questionnaire will obtain some demographic information about the participants taking the class:

1. Please write your name: _____
2. Do you consider yourself a Christian? Circle one.
Yes No Unsure
3. If you answered yes, please circle the number of yours since you came to faith in Christ:
1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8 9+
4. Please place an "X" by your current age:
_____ 19
_____ 18
_____ 17
_____ 16
_____ 15
_____ 14

APPENDIX 3

PRE- AND POST-SEMINAR WORLDVIEW SURVEY
FOR CLASS PARTICIPANTS

Using the following scale, please place an “X” in the column that best corresponds to your feelings and opinions in response to the following questions:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Somewhat Disagree
- 3 = Agree
- 4 = Somewhat Agree
- 5=Strongly Agree

Question	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
1. I have a biblical worldview						
2. I have confidence in the fact that I am a follower of Christ.						
3. The Bible answers all the difficult questions that I will face in life.						
4. I believe that the Bible allows for some degrees of premarital sex as long as you don't go all the way.						
5. I believe that truth can also be found apart from Scripture.						
6. I have a hard time making decisions.						
7. I believe that mankind was born good but they have been influenced by others people and their surroundings.						
8. I believe that there could be mistakes in the Bible because flawed people wrote it.						

Question	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
9. I believe that I can make good decisions or choices on my own.						
10. Individuals should be allowed to marry whomever they want.						
11. If I am honest, I am more concerned about what my friends think of me than pleasing God.						
12. God created the earth and everything on it in six literal days.						
13. God's Word shapes and influences every decision I make.						
14. God created the world through a process called evolution where humans slowly evolved over millions of years.						
15. Marriage should only to be between a man and a woman.						
16. Communicating only half of the truth is not considered lying.						
17. I believe that the Bible clearly teaches that homosexuality is a sin.						
18. The Bible is completely true.						
19. In order to see if marriage is good for them, it is an acceptable for a couple to live together prior to marriage.						
20. Evolution is taught within the pages of Scripture.						
21. Abortion is acceptable because it is the woman's choice.						

Question	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
22. God is all-powerful but there is no way that he could know everything.						
23. There is no way for anyone to know God's purpose and plan for his or her life.						
24. I believe that I can make a difference in the world.						
25. If someone dies without ever hearing about Jesus, I believe that God will allow he or she to enter heaven.						
26. If I were completely honest, I really do care what others think of me.						
27. The choices I make today will not effect the rest of my life.						
28. I have a hard time trusting God with my future.						
29. The main purpose of college is to have as much fun as possible.						
30. God has designed the church to help meet the needs of people.						
31. People should seek help outside of the Bible for issues like depression, addictions, and anxiety, because the Bible does not discuss those issues.						
32. I will do whatever it takes to be popular and well liked by others.						
33. I make most of my decisions based on my wants and personal desires.						
34. There are several people who know me really well.						
35. Jesus did not have to die on the cross to forgive us for our sins.						

Question	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
36. The goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.						
37. Since everyone should be happy, homosexuality is acceptable.						
38. Good people go to heaven when they die.						
39. If I am honest, I attend church to keep my parents happy.						
40. My friends have a bigger influence on me than my parents do.						
41. My parents are an actively involved in teaching me how the Bible applies to my everyday life.						
42. I sometimes doubt if God is in complete control of all things.						
43. I prayed a prayer with my pastor, so therefore I am a Christian.						

APPENDIX 4

BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SCRIPTURES

This is a list of biblical references is a small sampling of the many possible verses that could be used to shape a biblical worldview. Each participant was asked to consider committing two or three verses to memory as a follow-up assignment from the retreat.

A Sample of Foundational Verses to Help Establish a Biblical Worldview

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Psalms 1

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalms 19:14

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Psalms 101:3-4

I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless. I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me. A perverse heart shall be far from me; I will know nothing of evil.

Jeremiah 17:9-10

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? "I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."

Matthew 12:34b

For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Romans 1:18-24

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. 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. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,

1 Corinthians 2:14-16

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Ephesians 5:1-2

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

2 Peter 1:3-4

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, Jay E. *Competent to Counsel: Introduction to Nouthetic Counseling*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970.
- Anderson, Bernhard W. *From Creation to New Creation: Old Testament Perspectives*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.
- Beeke, Joel R. *Fighting Satan: Knowing His Weaknesses, Strategies, and Defeat*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2015.
- Blum, Edwin A. *1 and 2 Peter*. In vol. 12 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelin, 257-89. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981.
- Boice, James Montgomery. *Genesis 1-11*. In vol. 1 of *Expositional Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006.
- Brandt, Henry, and Kerry L. Skinner. *The Heart of the Problem*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997.
- Budziszewski, J. *How to Stay Christian in College*. Colorado Springs: TH!NK, 2004.
- Calvin, John. *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*. Vol. 1. Translated by John Pringle. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009.
- Carson, D. A. *Christ and Culture Revisited*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B Eerdmans, 2008.
- Chandler, Matt, and Jared Wilson. *The Explicit Gospel*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
- Davids, Peter H. *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.
- Dean, Kenda Creasy. *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church*. Oxford: University Press, 2010.
- DeYoung, Don. *Thousands . . . Not Billions: Challenging an Icon of Evolution, Questioning the Age of the Earth*. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2005.
- Earle, Ralph. *1 and 2 Timothy*. In vol. 11 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelin, 391-418. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981.
- Ellen, Nicholas. *Understanding and Developing a Biblical View of Life*. Mustang, OK: Dare 2 Dream, 2008.
- Elmore, Tim. *Generation iY: Our Last Chance to Save Their Future*. Atlanta: Poet Gardener, 2010.

- Fee, Gordon D. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.
- Fowler, Thomas B., and Daniel Kuebler. *The Evolution Controversy: A Survey of Competing Theories*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.
- Friesen, Garry, and J. Robin Maxson. *Decision Making and the Will of God*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004.
- Frye, Roland Mushat. *Is God a Creationist? The Religious Case against Creation-Science*. New York: Scribner's, 1983.
- Garland, David E. *1 Corinthians*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003.
- Goheen, Michael W., and Craig G. Bartholomew. *Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.
- Goswami, Amit. *Creative Evolution: A Physicist's Resolution between Darwinism and Intelligent Design*. Wheaton, IL: Quest, 2008.
- Graustein, Karl, and Mark Jacobsen. *Growing Up Christian: Have You Taken Ownership of Your Relationship with God?* Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2005.
- Greear, J. D. *Stop Asking Jesus into Your Heart: How to Know for Sure You Are Saved*. Nashville: B & H, 2013.
- Hall, G. Stanley. *Adoloscence: Its Psychology and Its Relations Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1907.
- Ham, Ken. *The New Answers Book: Over 25 Questions on Creation/Evolution and the Bible*. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2006.
- Ham, Ken, and Britt Beemer. *Already Gone: Why Your Kids Will Quit Church and What You Can Do to Stop It*. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2009.
- Ham, Ken, and Greg Hall. *Already Compromised: Christian Colleges Took a Test on the State of Their Faith and the Final Exam Is In*. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2011.
- Hamilton, Victor P. *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Harris, Joshua. *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2003.
- _____. *Sex Is Not the Problem (Lust Is)*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2003.
- Helm, David R., and Jon M. Dennis. *The Genesis Factor: Probing Life's Big Questions*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001.
- Hendriksen, William, and Simon J. Kistemaker. *Exposition of Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*. New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.

- Hiebert, D. Edmond. *An Introduction to the New Testament: The Non-Pauline Epistles and Revelation*. Winona Lake, IN: BMH, 1995.
- Hiebert, Paul G. *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.
- Hindson, Ed, and Howard Eyrich. *Totally Sufficient: The Bible and Christian Counseling*. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2004.
- Jackson, Allen. *Teach: The Ordinary Person's Guide to Teaching Students the Bible*. Birmingham, AL: Clarity, 2008.
- Jones, Leslie S., and Michael J. Reiss. *Teaching about Scientific Origins: Taking Account of Creationism*. New York: Peter Lang, 2007.
- Jones, Stanton L., and Richard E. Butman. *Modern Psychotherapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1991.
- Jordan, James B. *Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the World*. Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1988.
- Keller, Timothy. *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power and the Only Hope That Matters*. New York: Dutton, 2009.
- Kinnaman, David, and Aly Hawkins. *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church and Rethinking Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.
- Kinnaman, David, and Gabe Lyons. *Unchristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity and Why It Matters*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.
- Kistemaker, Simon J. *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993.
- _____. *Exposition of James, Epistles of John, Peter, and Jude*. New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
- Kostenberger, Andreas, Darrell Bock, and Josh Chatraw. *Truth Matters: Confident Faith in a Confusing World*. Nashville: B & H, 2014.
- Kostenberger, Andreas J., and David W. Jones. *God, Marriage & Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004.
- Kraft, Charles H. *Worldview for Christian Witness*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2008.
- Lane, Timothy S., and Paul David Tripp. *How People Change*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2006.
- _____. *Relationships: A Mess Worth Making*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2006.
- Lea, Thomas D., and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr. *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*. The New American Commentary, vol. 34. Nashville: Broadman, 1992.

- Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1963.
- Lundgaard, Kris. *The Enemy Within: Straight Talk about the Power and Defeat of Sin*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1998.
- MacArthur, John. *1 Corinthians. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*. Chicago: Moody, 1984.
- _____. *Right Thinking in a World Gone Wrong*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2009.
- _____. *2 Peter and Jude. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*. Chicago: Moody, 2005.
- _____. *2 Timothy. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*: Chicago: Moody, 1995.
- _____. *Truth Matters: Landmark Chapters from the Teaching Ministry of John MacArthur*. 35th anniversary anthology. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004.
- MacArthur, John, Nathan Busenitz, Scott Lang, and Phillip R. Johnson. *Fool's Gold?: Discerning Truth in an Age of Error*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005.
- MacArthur, John, Richard Mayhue, and John A. Hughes. *Think Biblically! Recovering a Christian Worldview*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003.
- MacDonald, James. *I Really Want to Change . . . So, Help Me God*. Chicago: Moody, 2000.
- Mare, W. Harold. *1 Corinthians*. In vol. 10 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelin, 173-297. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976.
- Mathews, Kenneth A. *Genesis 1-11:26*. The New American Commentary, vol. 1A. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996.
- Matlock, Mark. "From Wacky to Wise." *Youth Workers Journal* (May/June 2006). Accessed June 28, 2009. <http://www.youthworker.com/resources/ministry/11553482/page2/>.
- Miller, Kenneth R. *Only a Theory: Evolution and the Battle for America's Soul*. New York: Viking Penguin, 2008.
- Mohler, Albert. *The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership That Matters*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2012.
- _____. *Culture Shift: Engaging Current Issues with Timeless Truth*. Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2008.
- _____. *Desire and Deceit: The Real Cost of the New Sexual Tolerance*. Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2008.
- Moore, Russell. *Onward: Engaging the Culture without Losing the Gospel*. Nashville: B & H, 2015.

- Morris, Henry M. *5 Reasons to Believe in Recent Creation*. Dallas: Institute for Creation Research, 2008.
- _____. *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976.
- _____. *Some Call It Science: The Religion of Evolution*. Santee, CA: Institute for Creation Research, 2006.
- Morris, Leon. *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 7. Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity, 2008.
- _____. *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1983.
- Moseley, N. Allan. *Thinking against the Grain: Developing a Biblical Worldview in a Culture of Myths*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003.
- Mounce, Robert H. *Romans*. The New American Commentary, vol. 27. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995.
- Newport, John P. *The New Age Movement and the Biblical Worldview: Conflict and Dialogue*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Noebel, David A., and Chuck Edwards. *Thinking Like a Christian: Understanding and Living a Biblical Worldview: Teaching Textbook*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002.
- Peace, Martha, and Stuart W. Scott. *The Faithful Parent: A Biblical Guide to Raising a Family*. Philipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2010.
- Pearcy, Nancy. *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from its Cultural Captivity*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005.
- Phillips, Dan. *The World-Tilting Gospel: Embracing and Hanging on Tight*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011.
- Phillips, John. *Exploring 1 Corinthians: An Expository Commentary. The John Phillips Commentary Series*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002.
- Phillips, W. Gary, and William E. Brown. *Making Sense of Your World: A Biblical Worldview*. Salem, WI: Sheffield, 1996.
- Pink, Arthur Walkington. *Gleanings in Genesis*. Chicago: Moody, 1922.
- Platt, David. *Counter Culture*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2015.
- Platt, David, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*. Nashville: B & H, 2013.
- Powlison, David. "Competent to Counsel? The History of a Conservative Protestant Anti-Psychiatry Movement." Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1996.

- _____. *Seeing with New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition through the Lens of Scripture*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2003.
- Rainer, Thom S., and Jess W. Rainer. *The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation*. Nashville: B & H, 2011.
- Rainer, Thom S., and Sam S. Rainer. *Essential Church?: Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts*. Nashville: B & H, 2008.
- Randle, Thomas Andrew. "Student Perceptions of a Biblical Worldview at a Four-Year Christian College." Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002.
- Robertson, Archibald, and Alfred Plummer. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1911.
- Rosscup, James E. *Commentaries for Biblical Expositors: An Annotated Bibliography of Selected Works*. The Woodlands, TX: Kress Christian, 2004.
- Sailhamer, John H. *Genesis*. In vol. 2 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelain, 1-284. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. *1, 2, Peter, Jude*. The New American Commentary, vol. 37. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003.
- Scott, Eugenie Carol. *Evolution vs. Creationism: An Introduction*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2004.
- Scott, Robert S. *Secret Sex Wars: A Battle Cry for Purity*. Chicago: Moody, 2008.
- Scott, Stuart. *The Exemplary Husband: A Biblical Perspective*. Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2000.
- Skinner, John. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1910.
- Smith, Abbie. *Can You Keep Your Faith in College?* Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2006.
- Smith, Christian, and Melinda Lundquist Denton. *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Steinbronn, Anthony J. *Worldviews: A Christian Response to Religious Pluralism*. St. Louis: Concordia, 2007.
- Stigers, Harold G. *A Commentary on Genesis*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976.
- Stinson, Randy, and Timothy Paul Jones, eds. *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011.
- Tripp, Paul David. *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002.

Vincent, Milton. *A Gospel Primer for Christians: Learning to See the Glories of God's Love*. Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2008.

Whitcomb, John Clement, Terry Mortenson, and Thane H. Ury. *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008.

Wright, Steve, and Chris Graves. *Rethink: Decide for Yourself, Is Student Ministry Working?* Wake Forest, NC: InQuest, 2007.

ABSTRACT

LEADING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO ADOPT A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, LAWRENCEVILLE, GEORGIA

Jason Brian Williams, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Troy W. Temple

This project sought to lead high school students at First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia, to adopt a biblical worldview through discipleship. Chapter 1 details the need for the project, states the goals, and examines the context. Chapter 2 establishes the biblical basis for the project by examining three key areas of study: biblical creation, illumination, and revelation that are foundational for a biblical worldview. Chapter 3 examines the generational characteristics of the millennial generation, the influence of the church upon the millennial generation, and brief overview of secular and biblical methods of change. Chapter 4 explains the implementation of the project. Chapter 5 is an evaluation of the project, including the strengths and weaknesses.

VITA

Jason Brian Williams

EDUCATIONAL

Diploma, Gate City High School, Gate City, Virginia

B.S., Carson-Newman College, 1997

M.Div., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001

MINISTERIAL

Student Ministry Intern, Birchman Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, 2000-2001

Minister to Students and Children, First Baptist Church, Saltillo, Mississippi, 2002-2007

Pastor to Students and Recreation, First Baptist Church, Saltillo, Mississippi, 2008-2010

Pastor of Students and Families, First Baptist Church, Paducah, Kentucky, 2010-2015

Associate Pastor, Director of Next Generation Ministries, First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia, 2015-2016

Director, Crossings Ministries, Jonathan Creek Camp and Conference Center, Hardin, Kentucky, 2016-