

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN

UPSIDE

A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE OF I JOHN

DOWN

WORLD

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Church*

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Lesson 9
**"Son's View of
The world"**

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

There is a term which indicates a **comprehensive conception** of the world from a specific standpoint and that word is “worldview.”

- Worldview is a particular philosophy or **cognitive orientation** of life and conception of the world.

An individual’s worldview is his **“big picture,”** or harmony of all his beliefs about the world and things associated with it.

- It forms the way of developing and understanding his/her reality.
- One’s worldview is the basis for making daily decisions and extremely important.

An apple sitting on a table is observed by several people (a) A **botanist** who classifies the apple, (b) An **artist** who draws the apple , (c) A **grocer** who sees an asset to sell, and (d) A **child** who sees something to eat.

- How the apple is viewed is influenced by how we look at the world at large.

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- Every worldview, Christian and non-Christian, deals with at least these three questions:
 - 1) Where did we come from? (and why are we here?)
 - 2) What is wrong with the world?
 - 3) How can we fix it?

Whenever we compare religious, philosophical or scientific worldviews we must recognize they all start from different **presuppositions** and cognitive values.

A “Christian worldview” presents the view of the world through the spiritual filters which are imparted to that person by their relationship and fellowship with the God’s ways.

And Christianity seeks to answer three existential beliefs biblically:

- 1) We are God’s creation, designed to govern the world and fellowship with Him (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:15).

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- 2) We sinned against God and subjected the whole world to a curse (Gen. 3).
- 3) God Himself has redeemed the world through the sacrifice of His Son (Gen. 3:15; Luke 19:10) and will one day restore creation to its former perfect state (Isaiah 65:17-25).

A Christian worldview leads us to believe in moral absolutes, miracles, human dignity, and the possibility of redemption.

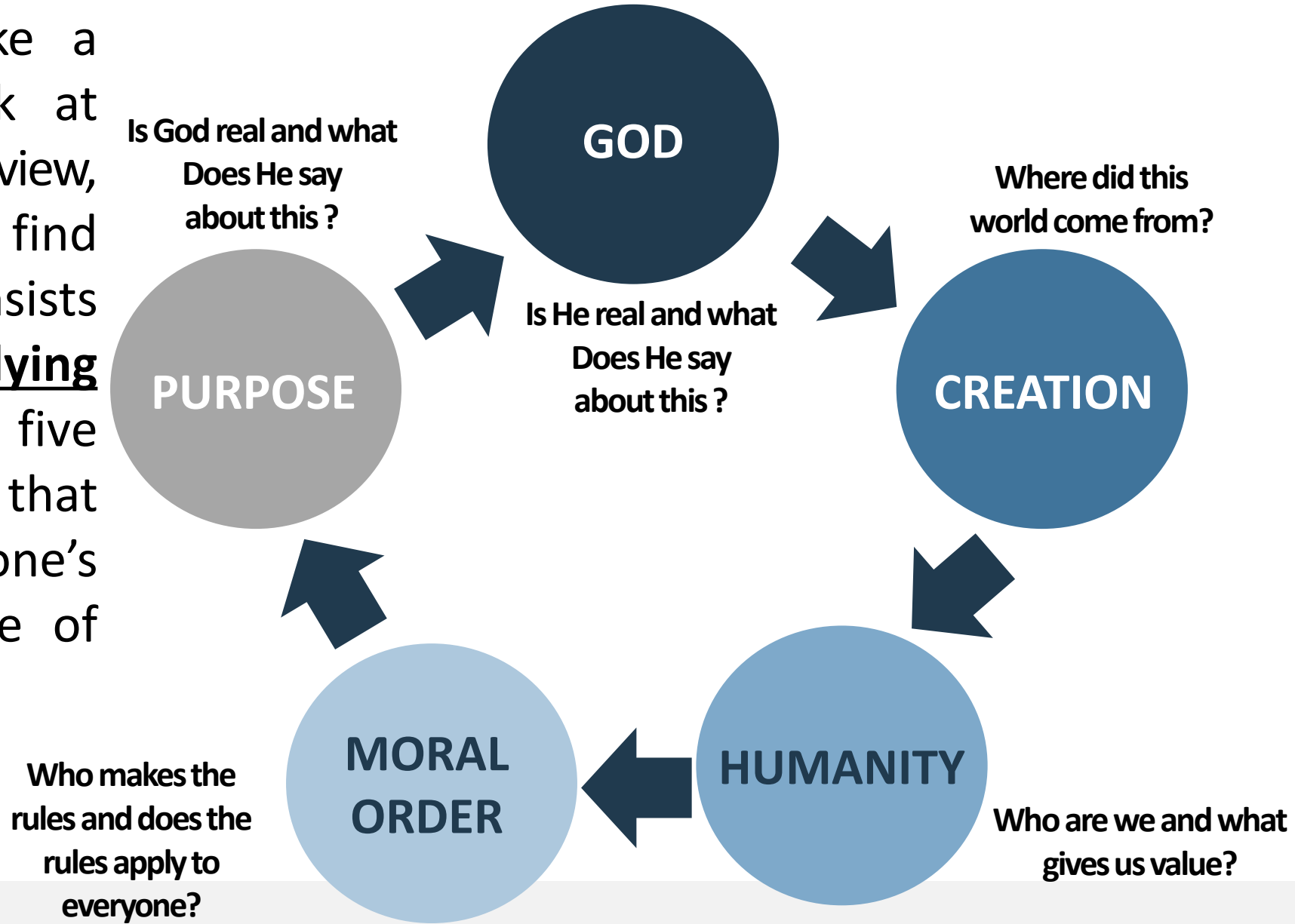
- True Christianity is more than a set of ideas to use at church.
- Christianity as taught in the Bible is itself a worldview.

Ironically, the Bible never distinguishes between a “religious” and a “secular” life; the Christian life is the only life there is.

Jesus proclaimed Himself “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6) and, in doing so, became our worldview.

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If we take a close look at any worldview, we will find that it consists of underlying beliefs in five key areas that make up one's big picture of "reality."



It is relatively easy to grasp someone's worldview by considering answers to questions in the five areas of belief.

A worldview is comprehensive. It affects every area of life.

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We closed last week examining two of the three times admonitions of encouragement to love one another by reviewing foundational facts about God.

I. Who God Is: “God Is Love” (1 John 4:7–8) -- None of these is a *complete* revelation of God, for all of Who is he is past finding out.

II. What God has already done: “He Sent His Son” (I John 4:9–11)

Since love is an action word and because God is love, He communicates His love, not only in words but in deeds.

Continuing looking at what God has already done, as believers we must be convinced that Jesus was manifested to take away our sins’ (I John 3:5)

• **I John 3:8** “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy (*render inoperative*) the works of the devil.”

It was at the cross where God manifested His love when He gave His Son as a sacrifice for our sins.

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This is the first place in the epistle where Jesus is called God's only-begotten Son; for John would mention this repeatedly (**4:15; 5:5; 5:10; 5:12; 5:13; 5:20**)

In John's Gospel in **Ch. 1:14** he initiates the concept by declaring that Jesus was the 'Word that became flesh in order to display God's glory.'

- Only begotten (**monogenēs** – mono/only; ginomai/born' a unique one of a kind)
- The fact God *sent* His Son into the world is one evidence of the deity of Jesus Christ.
- Babies are not *sent* into the world from some other place; they are *born* into the world.
- As the **perfect Man**, Jesus was born, but as the **eternal Son**, He was sent into the world.

Through the unconditional giving nature of God He sent His Son into an upside world to die on the cross to satisfy the penalty for our sin and pay the redemption price for our salvation.

- The world's attitude toward God is anything but love!

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Two purposes are given for Christ's death on the cross: that **we might live through Him (I John 4:9)** and that **He might be the propitiation for our sins (I John 4:10)**.

- **I John 4:9-10** In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we **might live through Him**.¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son **to be the propitiation for our sins**.

[**propitiation** contains both **expiation** (making amends) and **atonement** (cleansing)]

- His death was not an **accident**; it was an **appointment**.
- He did not die as a **weak martyr**, but as a **Mighty Conqueror**.

Jesus Christ died that we **might live** “**through Him**” (I John 4:9), “**for Him**” (II Cor. 5:15), and “**with Him**” (I Thes. 5:9–10).

As sinner's all mankind without Christ has a desperate need is for *life*, because they are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1).

- It is something of a paradox that Christ had to die so that we may live!
- We may never understand the mystery of His death, but we know: He died for us (Gal. 2:20).
- It is important to note that the emphasis is on the *death* of Christ, not on His birth.

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The fact that Jesus was “**made flesh**” (John 1:14) is evidence of God’s grace and love, but the fact that He was “**made sin**” (II Cor. 5:21) ***underscores and highlights that grace.***

For the second time, believers are exhorted to “love one another” (1 John 4:7, 11)

- **I John 4:11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
- This command is no doubt repeated because “love” is the basis of God’s nature
- “God is love; we know God; therefore, we should love one another.”

This exhortation to love one another draws attention to the privilege as well as a responsibility of genuine brotherly love: “If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another” (I John 4:11).

- We are **not saved by loving** Christ; we are **saved by believing on** Christ (John 3:16).
- But after we realize what He did for us on the cross, our normal response ought to be to love Him and to love one another.
- It is critical that Christians grow and advance in their understanding of love.

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- To love one another simply out of a sense of duty is good, but to love out of appreciation (**rather than obligation**) is even better.

This may be one reason why Jesus established the Lord's Supper, the Communion service, for when we break the bread and share the cup, we remember His death.

- It is normative to forget the pain of remembrance of death, but Christ command us to remember His death (I Cor. 11:24-25)
- We should remember our Lord's death in a spiritual way, not merely sentimentally.
- It is easy to experience solemn emotions at a church service and yet go out to live the same defeated life.
- True spiritual experience involves the whole man -- *The mind* must understand spiritual truth; *the heart* must love and appreciate it; and *the will* must *act on it*.

We have discovered **what God is** and **what God has done**; but a third foundation fact takes us even deeper into the meaning of Christian love when we come to know:

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III. What God Is Doing: “God Abides in Us” (1 John 4:12–16)

- In the first two overviews of 1 John 4, we notice God has **said something to us**, and God has **done something for us**, but don't forget, God is **doing something in us!**
- We are not just students reading books, or spectators watching an event, we are **participants** in the great enactment of God's love!
- Warren Wiersbe gives the following example to help us comprehend our involvement:
“In order to save money, a college drama class purchased only a few scripts of a play and cut them up into the separate parts. The director gave each player his individual part in order and then started to rehearse the play. But nothing went right. After an hour of missed cues and mangled sequences, the cast gave up.

At that point, the director sat the actors all on the stage and said: “Look, I'm going to read the entire play to you, so don't any of you say a word.” He read the entire script aloud, and when he was finished, one of the actors said: “So that's what it was all about!” And when they understood the entire story, they were able to fit their parts together and have a successful rehearsal.

[Warren Wiersbe, *Be Real, Turning From Hypocrisy to Truth*, p. 144, 2010, D.C. Cook]

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I John 4:12-16 No one has seen God at any time. **If we love** one another, God **abides** in us, and **His love has been perfected** in us. ¹³By this we know that we **abide** in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of **His Spirit**. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the **Father** has sent **the Son** as Savior of the world. ¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God **abides** in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ And we have known and believed **the love** that God has for us. **God is love**, and he who **abides** in love **abides** in God, and God in him.

- As one reads I John 4:12–16, one may be prompted to ask, “So what it’s all about!”
- There are so many “big ideas” in such a small pericope **(a) Love (b) Abiding (c) The Trinity**

John expanded his gospel declarative of John 3:16 to help us understand what God had in mind when He devised His great plan of salvation.

a) To begin with, God is not satisfied simply to *tell* us that He loves us, or even *show* us that He loves us, He wants to *live in us*.

b) It is interesting to trace God’s dwelling places as recorded in the Bible.

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- In the beginning, God had fellowship with man in a personal, direct way (Gen. 3:8), but sin broke that fellowship.
- It was necessary for God to shed the blood of animals to cover the sins of Adam and Eve so that they might come back into His fellowship.
- One of the key words in the Book of Genesis is *walked*.
- God walked with men, and men walked with God (**Enoch**/ Gen. 5:22; **Noah**/ Gen. 6:9), and **Abraham** walked with God/ Gen. 17:1; 24:40.
- But by the time of the Exodus, a change took place: God did not simply *walk* with men, He *lived*, or dwelt, with them.
- His commandment to Israel was, “And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Exd. 25:8).
- The first of those sanctuaries was the tabernacle and when Moses dedicated it, the glory of God came down and moved into the tent (Exd. 40:33–35).
- God dwelt in the camp, but He did *not* dwell in the bodies of the individual Israelites.
- Unfortunately, the nation sinned and God’s glory departed (I Sam. 4:21).

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- But God used Samuel and David to restore the nation; and Solomon built God a magnificent temple.
- When the temple was dedicated, once again the glory of God came to dwell in the land (I Kings 8:1–11).
- But history repeated itself, and Israel disobeyed God and was taken into Captivity.
- The gorgeous temple was destroyed and one of the prophets of the Captivity, Ezekiel, saw the glory of God depart from it (Ezk. 8:4; 9:3; 10:4; 11:22–23).
- **Did the glory ever return?** Yes—in the Person of God’s Son, Jesus Christ – John 1:14 “And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory”
- The glory of God dwelt on earth in the body of Jesus Christ, for His body was the temple of God (John 2:18–22).
- But wicked men nailed His body to a cross, crucifying “the Lord of glory” (I Cor. 2:8).

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All this was part of God's thrilling plan, and Christ arose from the dead, returned to heaven, and sent His Holy Spirit *to dwell in men*.

- The glory of God now lives in the bodies of God's children – **I Cor. 6:19-20** “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.
- The glory of God departed from the tabernacle and the temple when Israel disobeyed God, but Jesus has promised that the Spirit will abide in us *forever* (John 14:16).

By taking on Himself a human body, Jesus was able to reveal God to us. But Jesus is no longer here on earth. How, then, does God reveal Himself to the world?

- He reveals Himself through the lives of His children. Men cannot see God, *but they can see us*.
- If we abide in Christ, we will love one another, and our love for one another will reveal God's love to a needy world.
- God's love will be experienced *in us* and then will be expressed *through us*.

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That important little word *abide* (or *dwell*, KJV) appears six times in 1 John 4:12–16 and it indicates abiding means to remain in spiritual oneness with Him, so that no sin comes between us.

Because we are “born of God,” we have ***union*** with Christ; but it is only as we trust Him and obey His commandments that we have ***communion*** with Him.

- This abiding is made possible by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 John 4:13).

The OT Jew would look with wonder at the tabernacle or temple, because the presence of God was in that building.

- No man would dare to enter the holy of holies, where God was enthroned in glory!
- But *we* have God’s Spirit *living in us*, and as we abide in this love, and we experience the abiding of God in us.
- John 14:23 “If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him”

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God's love is *proclaimed* in the Word ("God is love") and *proved* at the cross. But here we have something deeper: God's love is *perfected* in the believer.

Even in an Upside-Down World, as followers of Christ, we are now the tabernacles and temples in which God dwells. He reveals His love through us.

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, famous British preacher, had five sons, all of whom became ministers of the Gospel. One day a visitor in their home dared to ask a personal question: "Which of you six is the best preacher?" Their united answer was, "Mother!"

Of course, Mrs. Campbell Morgan had never preached a formal sermon in a church; but her life was a constant sermon on the love of God. The life of a Christian who abides in God's love is a potent witness for God in the world. Men cannot see God, but they can see His love moving us to deeds of helpfulness and kindness.

[Warren Wiersbe, Be Real, Turning From Hypocrisy to Truth, p. 147, 2010, D.C. Cook]

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