

Our Worldview from the Psalms

How to articulate our Biblical Worldview and engage our culture from the Psalms

Jay Wegter

INTRODUCTION: The study of Biblical worldview is not merely a Christian intellectual pursuit, it is a God-centered, worshipful, soul-rejoicing unification of Christian truth and life. It is intensely practical—it emboldens our witness and it deepens our confidence that God’s truth is *total truth* about all of life. In our post-Christian era, it is vital that we recognize that the culture war between Christianity and pagan-secular worldview represents a ‘collision’ between competing cosmologies (*cosmology*: the study of the origin and nature of the cosmos). These two cosmologies are absolutely antithetical. There is no middle ground between them. Both claim to explain reality. That means there is an immense ideological ‘train wreck’ occurring—a deafening collision between naturalism and supernaturalism.

The absolute truth of biblical cosmology is essential in accurately interpreting the universe.ⁱ At the heart of biblical cosmology is the Creator-creature distinction. Central to biblical cosmology is that God is Creator and ‘Definer’ of what He has made. As fashioner of all things He gives existence, designations, definitions, categories, and relations of what He has made. God’s relation to the creation is the ordering principle of the universe and of reality (Acts 17:22-31). Because God is the sustainer and definer of all that He has made, there is no such thing as a reality greater than God—or a reality of which God is but a component (note this error in deism and pantheism). Thus, biblical cosmology is the sole vantage point ‘high enough’ to provide the foundation for a unified cohesive worldview and from which to see man’s place in the universe as the image of God. Biblical cosmology is a totally unified ordering principle—without it, worldview has no foundation and no unity (Rom 11:33-36).

Consequently biblical cosmology is the foundation of the gospel—for the gospel only makes sense in a world in which our omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God is Creator, Owner, Upholder, Lawmaker, Ruler, Redeemer, and Judge. The gospel has no point of contact in a world in which pantheistic/pagan cosmology has replaced biblical cosmology. This is why in our Christian outreach there is an increasingly urgent need to define categories as God does—that He is Ruler, Sustainer, Owner of what He has made—and that the designations and definitions He gives concerning His creation are absolutely essential for accurately interpreting reality.

The problem: false philosophy (Col 2:8). The ‘wrecking ball’ of naturalism has helped produce a post-Christian culture. It has left destruction in its wake. Naturalism has systematically broken down the boundaries set by God. Humanistic cosmologies seek to make man into a god by destroying the distinction between God and man. Philosophic naturalism has so thoroughly permeated our culture that for all intents and purposes it has become our national worldview. Students imbued with Darwinism find themselves ‘metaphysically lost’ in a materialistic/chance universe without a fixed point of reference. 75% of American college students are looking for the meaning of life. And no wonder—how can one find meaning and rationality in a meaningless and irrational universe in which mankind is a cosmic coincidence?

Secular humanism’s “wrecking ball” has redefined creation as a mass of raw material awaiting our efforts to shape it, bringing our own meaning to it. The secularists think of the creation as matter, motion, and impersonal forces with no rational purpose—as if we humans import all rationality and superimpose it on creation. Consider the folly of assuming that mankind has no personal origin, but then demanding that life has purpose. With the rise of modern science came a fascination with quantities—with

measuring things. Accompanying Enlightenment philosophies suggested that all reality may be reduced to a kind of mathematical formula. Concreteness, empiricism, and precision became the most valued attributes of knowledge. In other words, people began to think that the scientific method was the only really valid way to understand the world around us—“real knowledge” was scientific knowledge. “Real knowledge” was empirically verifiable, measurable, and quantifiable.ⁱⁱ

Says Christian sociologist, Ken Myers, church leaders, in an effort to remain relevant, and worried about losing their market share, began to reframe traditional Christian teaching in terms that fit the times. The church pushed its message through the grid of science. In essence, “[t]he belief became common that only science could make the world intelligible. . .”ⁱⁱⁱ

What was the net effect in the minds of most of replacing biblical cosmology with philosophic naturalism? Answer, God as personal, transcendent, and intimately involved with creation was eclipsed and demoted.^{iv} God’s direct involvement in the lives of His creatures was increasingly ruled out. God was no longer linked to all the details of reality; He was marginalized, retired to a private or sub-cultural role—eradicated as a shared basis of thought and experience. In contemporary culture God has been stripped of meaning, leaving popular culture with only a ‘god concept’—a figure doing nothing of real significance. Though evangelicals stressed personal faith and piety, they also began to divide (bifurcate) God’s role—they saw Him as active in redemption, but allowed science to define the creation. This is accepted as benign as long as ‘we have Jesus in our hearts’. But the fallout is deadly serious as we will see.^v

When one allows the Bible to describe salvation and science to comprehensively describe the creation, it produces a tear, or rend, in our thinking. The reason why is the salvation-science (redemption-creation) dichotomy pictures God as having two radically different faces—the side of God that dealt with creation was far less personal than the side of God that dealt with salvation. As a consequence, the Jesus of salvation became very other worldly, subjective, and sentimental. ‘Christian’ faith was unhinged from total truth. Peter Jones observes, “Believing students on university campuses are able offer Jesus as ‘friend’ but have no clue how to proclaim Him as Lord of the cosmos.”^{vi} This prevalent dualism welcomes Jesus as ‘mascot’ but cannot conceive of Him, or proclaim Him, as majestic Lord of the universe. This is the dilemma our Christian students face today on the secular university campus. The loss of biblical cosmology forces them to live with an immense ‘disconnect’ between faith and life.

Modern culture has encouraged and deepened this dualism. The yawning chasm which has divided creation from redemption has separated the physical from the spiritual in the minds of many believers. Through popular culture our youth are bombarded with this dualism. The wonder of creation as the revelation of God’s majesty has been erased, and with it God’s active rule and reign. Reality is nothing more than what you make it. The creation is but raw material by which one may construct the self. The electronic media is dead set on having us forget our Christian worldview as a useless anachronism. Nearly every television program operates with an agenda of displacing Christian worldview.^{vii} The net effect is a palpable separation of our everyday life from our spiritual life.^{viii}

How does this dualism manifest itself in evangelicalism? Redemption tends to be viewed as a private, subjective, personal, preference without an objective basis. As a consequence, it is easy to think that Christ is only concerned about my soul and spirit. Redemption goes inward, and the entire theme of God’s vast plan to restore His creation gets buried. Salvation is viewed as existing in the mind and the heart—as if concrete reality is the physical universe and salvation belongs to the private, and the subjective (salvation is viewed as less real than the ground beneath one’s feet).

Evangelicalism’s accommodation to the modern, or dualistic view, has pushed redemption

further into the ‘upper story.’ Christians are living in a state of détente with the open ‘gash’ of dualism. Much of Evangelicalism has lost the cosmological foundation for redemption. The resultant attitude could be stated as follows: “Facts in the created realm shouldn’t get in the way of bringing people to Jesus.”

Christian students often live with an immense ‘disconnect’ between their professed beliefs and their life experiences. “At one Christian high school, a theology teacher . . . drew a heart on one side of the blackboard and a brain on the other. The two are as divided as the two sides of the blackboard, he told the class: the heart is what we use for religion, while the brain is what we use for science.”^x

This dualism leaves knowledge utterly fragmented—spirituality is partitioned off from the remainder of life. The secular/sacred dichotomy tends to restrict Christianity to the realm of religious truth (and not total truth)—this creates double minds and fragmented lives.^x Bad doctrine always results in bad fruit. Consequently, a huge disconnect exists between ethical life and professed belief—truth and everyday life are ripped apart. The ‘gash’ is deepened through popular culture’s constant drumbeat of individualism as the highest value. Millennials have no idea of the massive ‘*de-sacralization*’ that is taking place in pop culture. This is a deadly symptom of a worldview that separates the physical creation from redemption. A ‘divided Christ’ is Friend, but not Creator and Ruler, Lawgiver and Judge. A pastor friend recently shared with me that in counseling a church member, it took nearly a month of counseling before the person would admit that pornography is a ‘worldview’ about the body and sexuality. This is of course symptomatic of the bleeding *disconnect* between faith and life, between redemption and creation, between truth and practice.

When unbelievers suppress the truth in unrighteousness, truth does not disappear, but it reemerges as a distorted version. What is remarkable is that the categories of human experience have not changed. For instance, categories include: What is sacred? What is worthy of praise? What is right and wrong, what is virtuous? What makes a good citizen? What constitutes human flourishing? What are our human rights and where do they originate? Where did we come from and where are we going? Is truth knowable? What is the basis for morality? Around what principles should a society organize itself?

The book of Psalms is a very powerful corrective to dualistic thinking. It overturns the two-level view of truth. There is no dualism between creation and redemption in the Psalms. Christians need not allow themselves to be intimidated by the agenda of the secularists—as if Christian truth is an inward matter severed from objective fact. We will not be able to prepare the next generation to *define* the faith and *defend* the faith if they have no response to the secularist argument that the creation is nothing more than matter and motion, and natural laws and processes (as if all intellectuals are philosophic naturalists).

The book of Psalms overturns the irrationalism of the secularists, for it is filled with worldview “building blocks.” The book of Psalms fortifies our prayer lives so that they rise above our own heart issues and are able to focus upon God’s majesty. This is only possible if we are committed to knowing His wondrous works, His ways, and His will. The Psalms provide for us a myriad of portraits of our God so that we might become conversant with His majesty, splendor, wisdom, power and holiness. How we need monumental thoughts of God in order to worship aright and order our lives before Him in trust and love. **The following worldview themes from the Psalms give us the necessary vantage point to discern our culture, and ultimately engage our culture:**

1.) The Creator-creature distinction – In secular humanist, postmodern, and pagan circles, this foundational doctrine is under attack today. By dissolving this distinction between Creator and

creature, secularists have placed the Western world on the steep and slippery slope of paganism (nature worship/pantheism). Our worshipping nature demands expression; if we do not worship our Creator, we will worship the creature and the creation (neo-paganism). God's ownership of us and claims upon us flow from the Creator-creature distinction and from our identity as His image and likeness. God's eternal self-existence and our utter dependence upon Him *anchor* our accountability to Him. We ought to meditate on this foundational doctrine in order to understand what we 'owe God'.

Our Creator *exegetes* us: He tells us in His infallible Word who we are; why we are here; what we owe Him; and why our origin and destiny are linked together. We owe Him reverential fear, love, thanksgiving and worship, service and devotion, obedience to His commands, and faith in His promises. Biblical theism is anchored in the Creator-creature distinction—by this truth we understand God's absolute right and ownership of us. "He has made us, and not we ourselves" (Ps 39; 50; 92; 100:3; 146). First graders in Sunday school understand what college students today don't understand—the Creator/creature distinction. Sadly, the college lectern in our public universities has become a 'pulpit' for pantheism/neo-paganism (erasing the distinctions the Creator has made).

2.) The fiat creation of the universe – “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made” (Ps 33:6). God spoke the universe into existence. Henry Morris states that these verses in Psalm 33 are the strongest affirmation of fiat creation in the Bible. It was not just *by the Lord*, but *by the “word of the Lord”* that the heavens were made.^{xi} The universe burst into existence not by scientific laws, not by the 'big bang' but by the infinite power of God's Word. By His Word God has called into existence that which had no previous existence. God made all things out of nothing—God and matter are not 'co-eternal.'

The secularist lives with an unexamined 'faith'—he not able to answer questions such as: “Why is there something rather than nothing?” And, “How is it scientific to assert that everything came from nothing?” “What is the cause of design, beauty, and morality?” “What is the relationship between being and becoming?” He claims rationality and meaning, yet has no basis for it. In his view, truth, order, morality, logic, beauty, design, unity, and purpose are not traceable to the divine mind of an Almighty personal Creator. No wonder Scripture regards him as a 'fool' (Ps 14:1). For, all of creation is upheld by the word of His power every moment (Heb 1:3). The laws by which the creation is sustained are not 'natural laws', they constitute the constant exercise of God's power^{xii} (Job 34:13-15; Col 1:17).

3.) The conflict of the ages –between truth and error, good and evil, sin and righteousness, the godly and ungodly, the chosen nation and the heathen, God and Satan. This present world is filled with groaning, temptations, oppression, conflict, and suffering. The righteous are ever aware that God is their only refuge and that God will assuredly bring to pass His final victory and purposes (Ps 17; 31; 150).^{xiii} By contrast, the unbeliever looks at the cruelty, death, disease, suffering, and injustice in the world—and because he is a 'truth suppressor' he tends to gravitate to the 'absurdity perspective' (namely that life is without ultimate meaning and purpose—and ideas have no consequences). By 'normalizing' sin, the unbeliever denies the nature of evil as a horrendously cruel intruder, traceable to human rebellion. Skeptics deny that sin is the greatest disaster imaginable. The Psalms overturn the folly of this sentiment stating that "there is a reward for the righteous" (Ps 58:11).

Secularists invent their own ethics—but in order to do so, they first deny the existence of an immutable, transcendent Law-giver whose moral code for mankind is the expression of His own unchanging holy character. It is interesting that modern science is mute concerning this ages-long battle

between good and evil (and evil's inception) (Gen 3:15). Though the contest between good and evil is the defining element in our human experience, modern science has really nothing to say about it because of its commitment to the assumptions of materialism. And, materialism has its explanation of good and evil—in the humanities departments of public universities, good and evil are regarded merely as social constructs, with no real objective existence.

By severing the definition of good and evil from the transcendent moral code commanded by our Creator, the secularists, (progressives) can pursue their social experiment and agenda without being encumbered by a fixed moral reference point. Thus, when they make their appeals for inclusion, and for erotic freedom (rights), they speak in pragmatic terms. For, moral 'good' as defined by the secularists, is never anchored in unchanging *moral truth*—instead it is merely 'useful' for human flourishing.

In Jonathan Edwards' 'magnum opus' sermon, "The End for which all Creation exists," he states that the activity of the kingdom of darkness will not thwart God's plan to glorify Himself. Sin is not equivalent to a new reality. Sin is lawlessness and rebellion—and it will reap eternal retribution. Proverbs 21:30, "There is no wisdom, no understanding, no counsel against the Lord." God shall have the last word, for even "The wrath of man shall praise thee" (Ps 76:10). When it comes to explaining the battle between good and evil, and the reason for taking a righteous stand in that war; science is mute.

Concerning our prayer lives, there are numerous Psalms which contain petitions for grace and strength to keep fighting sin and pressing on in personal holiness. One author, P. B. Power, titled his book on the Psalms, "*The 'I Wills' of the Psalms*." His premise is that the Christian cannot be passive—the true response to divine promises is determination and resolution. The Psalms show us the heart devotion of the faithful believer—we receive strength from the Lord that we might act in obedience. The faith which receives enablement from the Lord is proactive—it takes action: *I will trust; I will speak; I will call upon God; I will go in the strength of the Lord; I will praise the Lord*. "From the end of the earth I call to Thee, when my heart is faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I" (Ps 61:2).^{xiv}

4.) The linear nature of human history – increasingly the philosophies of this age are embracing a view of history that is cyclical, "the circle of life" as the song goes in the movie *Lion King*.

Darwinism's 'billions of years' is nothing more than a ploy to worship matter, time, and chance instead of God Almighty. Nature worship is joined to the idea that given enough time, 'she' will work out every problem. Nature 'learns' as she passes through never-ending cycles. It is remarkable that this passes for empirical science when actually it is far more akin to Hindu-istic Buddhism. No wonder this soul-destroying lie is accompanied by spiritual and moral complacency (note the religious philosophies which espouse fate). But God's Word is clear—all history is moving toward (hurtling toward) a predetermined end in which God will judge the world in righteousness (Ps 37; 40; 58; 98). History then will prove to be the record of the honoring and the dishonoring of God and the consequence of each in time and eternity. Every person cannot escape the fact that he or she will be an object lesson for ever (Ps 50:16-22; 119:119; 149:4).

APPLICATION: The biblical linear view of history implanted reverential fear into the hearts of our nation's believing founding fathers. The lives of Christians are to be controlled by the pervading awareness of the Great Assize (Judgment Day) to come—the courtroom of God, when the Judge of all the earth shall bring every deed into account. Character counts—all history is moving toward an inescapable public judgment in which the secrets of men's hearts will be revealed (Rom 2:16). God's righteous Kingdom will fill the earth because unrighteousness will be vanquished from God's creation. What is our response to the holiness of God, the brevity of life, and the Judgment to come? We are to take *refuge in God*. To take

refuge in God is to be righteous by faith in His lovingkindness. True worshippers take refuge in God—knowing that their highest good is joined to the goodness and glory of God. The word ‘refuge’ is used 41 times in the Psalms. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him (see Psalm 17:7; 18:2; 25:20). God regards those who take refuge in Him to be His friends, and He regards those who refuse to do so to be His adversaries (Ps 52:7). Only God can protect you from God (R. C. Sproul). The godly person knows that coming judgment will be comprehensive—every thought, word, and deed. Only God Himself can provide safety. Thus every true believer is aligning his or her life with this inescapable event which will terminate linear history. Our prayer lives ought to be filled with the consciousness that God is working *from* and *for* the perspective of eternity.

5.) The purpose for our creation. –man made in the image of God was created for God. Man was created to be a worshipper. God is our only true home. Man is always looking for that which is worthy of his praise—the reason why is because God created man to be an enthusiastic spectator of excellence. We cannot stop worshipping—it will either be God Almighty or idols that we worship (Ps 135:14-18). Modern unbelievers love the world and not God; they imagine that this present existence is their true home, thus they seek their stability and permanence here—they worship the creation, and not the Creator. Worshippers of the creation tend to disguise their pagan spirituality behind ecology. *Earth First; Agenda 21; WWF (World Wildlife Federation)* have agendas for radical reduction of the human population. “*If I were reincarnated I would wish to be returned to earth as a killer virus to lower human population levels.*” - Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, patron of the World Wildlife Fund. Even the original Gaian, Sir James Lovelock, has taken to calling humans, “*an out of control cancer that Gaia will soon eradicate.*” Earth-worshipping deep ecologists see themselves as created in the image of an animal, thus they lose their glory and dignity (man is just a complex ‘virus’). This upside down philosophy makes man subject to the creation, rather than exercising dominion over it and stewardship of it to the glory of God (Ps 8).

The earth in its present state is temporary. Old Testament believers frequently meditated upon the brevity of life (Ps 90:12)—upon the fact that in light of the eternal kingdom of God, the saints are pilgrims, aliens, transient, and sojourners—essentially without a true home until glory (Ps 39). And, regarding God as our home, author Tom Wells notes, “A pilgrim feels strange in a foreign land . . . he finds his mind repeatedly returning to home.” Many of the Psalms emphasize the theme that God alone is our true home (note ‘*body tenancy*’ in Psalm 39; 49; 90). “Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations” (Ps 90:1). “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God” (Ps 42:1-2)?^{xv}

The ‘beauty of God’ is the only ultimate satisfaction there is—an eternal increasing satisfaction. We will never tire of looking upon the glory of God in the face of Christ. The psalmist alludes to this pleasure in God when he says in Psalm 27:4, “. . . [My desire is] that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord . . .” APPLICATION: What a litmus test for true Christianity—we must test ourselves by how vigorous our hope of glory really is—Romans 8:18-25. This heavenly mindedness was the ‘metric’ that the Apostle Paul set forth as the litmus test of true spirituality (Acts 24:15-16; 2 Cor 5:1-10). In our communing with the Lord, it behooves us to pray as the psalmist does: “Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; *unite my heart to fear Your name.* I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and will glorify Your name forever” (Ps 86:11-12). How true it is that our Lord is a jealous God—no wonder He is so interested in what we love most.

6.) The nature and purpose of the universe –what is the creation? The creation is a theatre for the glory of God (Ps 19), the ‘stage’ for God’s wondrous works – *In Thy light we see light (Ps 36:9)*. God’s Word is our authoritative interpretive grid for all reality. God’s Word (His revelation; His ‘light’) is our authoritative interpretive grid—our ‘universal,’ our hermeneutic by which we interpret human experience. It is a deception to think that we may sit in judgment on God’s Word. His revelation, the Word of Christ, is the ‘grid’ by which we interpret reality. Without the biblical ‘lens’ of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation it is impossible to make sense of the world, or of human experience. Creation in its present state is ‘not normal’ argued Francis Schaeffer. When sinful man sets aside God’s revelation, he is left with only autonomous reason. Thus, when he observes nature red in tooth and claw, and a world ravaged by injustice, victimization, war, and disease, he tends to assume that the ‘law of the jungle’ is ultimate. But in his heart and conscience, he knows that God is his Creator, Ruler, and Judge. The struggle in nature is not self-interpreting; we need God’s interpretive grid in order to understand that the fallen human condition and a cursed creation is temporary.

God’s awesome works in creation, redemption, and providence reveal the excellence of the Creator and move the redeemed to spontaneous praise (Ps 33; 95; 96; 98). Throughout the psalms the believer is depicted as preoccupied with the works of God—the redeemed individual is always extolling, studying, and praising the works of God. God’s works are diligently studied by believers because the works allow us to ‘see’ and tell of God’s perfections (Ps 66; 67; 105; 145). It is a sin to forget God’s works (Ps 106:13ff.). We study God’s works to know God, to worship God, to be wise, and to fear God (Ps 111:1-10).

The natural man is presented with an ‘inerrant’ general revelation in the creation. In other words, the fault of disbelief in the Creator is not a problem with the clarity of the message written into the creation, but with man’s suppression of its message. The believer has a stewardship in regard to the study of God’s works; for their diligent study helps equip us to ‘pass on our faith’ to the next generation (Ps 78:6-8). God’s works in Creation (His general revelation) is joined to the written Word, God’s special revelation (Ps 19). His general and special revelation constitutes *sermons without words* and *sermons with words*. How a person treats general revelation (God’s sermons *without words*) (19:1-6) determines how they will treat God’s special revelation (His sermons *with words*) (19:7-14). In our prayer lives we must be extremely attentive to God’s works in creation and providence. The more aware we are of His works, the more opportunities we will have to praise Him. The creation *gives praise*; but does not receive praise. Every redeemed person ceases worshipping the creation and every redeemed person joins the endless chorus of praise which the creation gives to God.

7.) The fact we live in a moral universe –the Psalms reveal a perfect co-mingling of the physical created order and the moral order in the universe (Ps 19). The Psalms are given to us to sink our foundations deep into the truth of God’s relation to the world. These truths are meant to control our understanding of reality. God is active in our lives. He is active in nature. He is active in history. He is sovereign providential Caretaker of His creation. Throughout the Psalms we find the twin themes of creation and moral order. The creation has order to it that is maintained by God (Ps 96). God is the ruler over what He has made. The Psalms assert that the fixity of creation is simultaneously physical and moral. The Psalms describe the whole creation as ‘the worshipping chorus of God’—praising all of His attributes—not only His power in ordering and upholding the cosmos, but also His character revealed in His holy and righteous government.

This is easily forgotten in our dualistic culture, not only does the creation praise God for His power, wisdom, goodness, and handiwork, the creation also praises God for His holiness, justice, and righteousness. The Psalms proclaim God as establisher of an unbreakable continuity between the physical world and moral order—the world is pictured as delighting in His righteousness. “. . . and the heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is Judge” (Ps 50:6; 72:3).^{xvi} By contrast, the unbeliever conducts his life as if the moral order in the cosmos is less real than the physical order—as if moral order arises solely from personal choice. This mindset goes all the way back to Eden where our first parents are offered the lie that they may be the determiners of right and wrong.

This is Yahweh’s world. He created it, He owns it, and He rules it by His goodness and for His own good pleasure. The world operates in a particular way because it is God’s world and He rules it and guides it. The unbeliever has created an illusory/fantasy world in his mind, but he keeps “bumping up” against reality—against God’s creation structures—beauty, conscience, hunger for love and meaning, and the fact of crime and punishment. Therefore the ridiculous advertisement that one may take a ‘moral holiday’ in Las Vegas is patently absurd. Even the “heavens declare His righteousness” (Ps 97:6).^{xvii}

In my evangelism experience at Western Michigan University, I asked unsaved students if there is a transcendent moral code outside of man to which all humans are accountable. Their dogmatic answers usually went as follows, “Morals are evolving, they are not fixed; they are not universal because there is no standard outside of us.” “The murders at Virginia Poly Tech were not objectively evil—everything ought to be viewed from one’s perspective, even the perspective of the shooter.” The students’ sentiments reveal a worldview about the universe; a view held in blind faith which suppresses the truth; and prefers irrationality!

Regarding our moral universe which God governs: God’s precepts are intended to keep us from self-destruction. To fear and reverence God is to hate sin and turn from it. The proportion of our fear of God is revealed in our level of our hatred of sin (Ps 119:9-16; 53, 38, 45). The Psalms tell us that the Word of God is that which produces fear of God. Wise is the man who immerses himself in Holy Scripture. Because this universe is Yahweh’s creation, there is a common ethical system for all humans. The binary of moral order and physical order permeates every part of the universe. God delights in the exhibition of His glory—this is the chief end for which all things exist, including knowledge (human and angelic sin do not thwart God’s plan that all things exist for His glory). The aim of all creation is that *God’s glory and excellent perfections should be known, esteemed, loved, and delighted in by His creatures* (Jonathan Edwards).^{xviii} In our prayer lives we ought to frequently meditate upon of God’s governance of physical and moral order. God’s justice is inescapable. By faith we ‘see’ Him enthroned (Ps 89:14). This a great comfort to us, the redeemed, who live in a world fraught with tribulations. We rest upon the confidence that God will in finality invade human history and ‘tie up all loose ends’ (Ps 96:13).

8.) The definition of wisdom –there is but one all supreme wisdom—a life wholly dedicated to living unto God. To live wisely in Yahweh’s world is to live according to His justice, and not by fleshly desires, and amoral pragmatism (situation ethics). A life of wisdom is a life of conformity to God’s norm of righteousness—His law. “Blessed is the man whom Thou dost chastise, O Lord, and dost teach out of Thy Law” (Ps 94:12).^{xix} Obedience is to be *universal*—not an obedience found only in select areas of one’s life, but a whole life response to Yahweh. We are to please Him in all areas of life by respecting the divine order He has constructed in the world. Without this there will be moral failure and failure to please God. “Teach me Thy way O Lord, I will walk in Thy truth. Unite my heart to fear Thy Name. I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord my God with all my heart and will glorify Thy Name forever” (Ps 86:11-12).^{xx}

Unbelievers commit folly by rejecting divine wisdom—professing to be wise, they became fools. True liberty is living within God’s design for us. Unbelievers define freedom as casting off God’s design. Today our college students are taught that nothing outside of them defines them—what a formula for arrogance (all pride is based upon ignorance). One of the reasons we fear God is because His righteous character energizes the inescapable reality of moral cause and effect. He has the full authority and intent to judge disobedience. God’s Word was given to us to allow us to recall during times of temptation the boundaries God has set. To be conversant with these boundaries helps the man who fears God to do what is right and what pleases God in times of temptation. “I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; it shall not fasten its grip on me” (Ps 25:12-15; **101:3**).^{xxi} When we embrace God’s blueprint and standard it is not simply an attempt to master a moral code—it is submission to God Himself, to His holy nature—to His loving purposes for us. For God’s commandments constitute His character in code. Knowledge of God’s holiness and obedience to His precepts are bound up together. “Establish Thy Word to Thy servant as that which produces reverence for Thee” (Ps 119:18, **38**, 66).

Wisdom is moral maturity. Wisdom is living life in Yahweh’s world as He intends that it be lived. Wisdom results in stability without fear of harm or misfortune (Ps 4:4-8).^{xxii} The highest goal of wisdom is the knowledge of God (Prov 3:32). To fear Yahweh is to receive and live by His knowledge and wisdom. God’s purpose, His design in the world is to make us like Him in holiness.^{xxiii} It is impossible to make a fool out of God. God cannot be mocked. “When the wicked sprouted up like grass, and all who did iniquity flourished; it was only that they might be destroyed forevermore” (Ps 92:6, 7-9; Gal 6:7). The *sowing and reaping* principle is built into the very fabric of the universe. Moral cause and effect is ineffable. The wheels of God’s justice grind slowly but they grind exceedingly small. God’s justice is more comprehensive than a sinner can possibly imagine; it extends to the thoughts, intents, and secrets of the heart (Ps 73:18-20; 91:8; Heb 4:12; Rom 2:16).

In a moral universe sin is irrational—it is lawlessness and insanity. This is Yahweh’s world, that’s why secret sin is ‘a lie lived out’—there are no compartments in our lives that are not in Yahweh’s world (Ps 26:2; 90:8; 139:7-23). “He who fashions their hearts knows all their works” (Ps 33:13-15). Our secret sins are an ‘open book’ in the sight of heaven. “Our secret sins are in the light of Thy presence” (Ps 90:8). In contrast to the hypocrite who denies, hides, and justifies his sin, the Psalmist wants to be examined by God (Ps 139). Our prayers ought to demonstrate that we are never apathetic about our sin, but assiduous to be rid of it. Our diligence in repenting and showing heart contrition is the proper posture toward Him who is thrice holy.

9.) What is redemption but the condescension of the Creator of the universe –

Salvation is due to the infinite condescension of the Creator in His incarnation (Ps 40) and His crucifixion (Ps 22; 69). It is the Son of God reversing the ruin of sin and mending what He has made. The Son of God is Mediatorial King. He is priest and King after the order of Melchizedek—He is installed by God (Ps 2:6)—He reigns over, and represents His people (Ps 110:1-4ff.). Bless the Lord; our King is also our High Priest. The Redeemer is the only One who can mend the original perfection that was ruined by man’s transgression.

No greater condescension is imaginable than that of the King of the universe giving His life blood to make friends of former enemies. It is the Lawgiver bearing the guilt and punishment of the law-breaker—it is Messiah absorbing into His own being the death, wrath, separation, and misery that was due us. No one flees to God for the refuge of salvation unless they fear God (Ps 34). For the penitent knows to

the depths of his being that God energizes the moral laws of cause and effect; of sin and punishment. The penitent regards it as utter folly to reject the lovingkindness of God (as refuge from self and divine wrath) and to face the vengeance of God in one's own person. The Psalmist captures the irrational 'heart talk' of the impenitent in Psalm 10:13, ". . . he has said to himself, 'Thou wilt not require it.'" In other words, the unbeliever imagines that his soul is *unconquerable*—that God will back down in the end and not prove to be a God of retribution and vengeance. The sinner tells himself, "I have escaped judgment so far; I will escape in the end also."

The progressives of the political left want their version of redemption now. They define that redemption as *economic justice, social justice, and erotic liberty*. This pseudo-redemption demands personal fulfillment now, and punishment ('hell' now) for those who stand in their way. The man who fears God also loves God. Yes, there is paradox here that *God saves us from God*. The book of Psalms is the book of *God our refuge*. God is glorified when we take refuge in Him. It is only the saved man who does so. God favors those who fear Him and take refuge in Him (Ps 147:11). The Lord is a refuge from every potential enemy of our soul. He is a refuge from divine wrath because He Himself is our righteousness (Ps 145:7; 119:114, 142; Is 45:24, 46:13, 61:10; Jer 23:6).

10.) God does all things for the His Name's sake. –God has annexed the honor of His Name to the veracity of His Word. "Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven" (Ps 119:89). "Thou hast magnified Thy Word according to all Thy Name" (Ps 138:2). His Word is so important—our very faculties were created to receive His self-revelation, His Word (Ps 119). The sinner uses a philosophy of fact based upon truth suppression. Therefore his epistemology, or method of knowing is condemned by God as folly and rebellion, deserving of divine wrath (Rom 1:18-23). For God planted understanding in man's being in order that he could receive divine revelation—so that man would understand His Creator, his world, and himself (Job 38:36). God's Word must be the constant occupation of our attention. The psalmist saw his need to be constantly animated by God's Word lest he stray, displease, rebel, and distrust (Ps 119:11, 105, 118-119). The believer is eager to have his life constantly conformed to God's will. Therefore he studies God's Word that he might be filled with the knowledge of God's will. Ongoing repentance means that our lives are always being 'aligned' to God's Word so that we love His truth and have our affections continually conformed to His truth (Ps 101; 111; 115). Since God's reputation (His 'Name') is joined to His Word, our response must be unconditional trust in Him (Ps 33-34). The true believer has a passion to have His life conformed to the will of God found in His infallible Word (Ps 119).

God's Word and Lucifer's 'Wager': unbelievers are hostile to the fact that God's attributes, His character, His zeal for His Name stand behind His inviolate, immutable Word. God binds Himself to His Word—staking His reputation upon the infallibility of His Word. The unbeliever's attitude toward the Word of God mirrors Satan's attitude toward the Word of God—every unbeliever, like Satan, speculates that God is not as good as His Word—not as good as His threats and promises. As Eve did in Eden, every unbeliever treats God's threats and warnings as 'idle threats.' Lucifer works tirelessly to make his own wager or bet (about God's Word) to appeal to sinners—namely that Satan's own definition of freedom can be theirs. That a 'master-less' freedom is possible and desirable (in which case Satan becomes the god of the unbeliever by default—2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2-3). It has been said that Satan has a terrible plan for a person's life. The evil initiates that plan by doing his level best to erode confidence in God's Word.

Sin does not liberate or allow the sinner to transcend his creaturehood. Sin does not create a

new reality. What sin does create is a ‘death spiral’ for those made in the image of God (separation from God forever who is the source of all love, life, light, blessedness, meaning, well-being, and relationship).

Our earth’s moon has a reflected glory—it does not produce its own light. The moon serves the earth in countless ways. It stabilizes earth’s axis, it mixes our oceans temperatures, flushes our bays and estuaries, and sets the reproductive clock of a multitude of earth’s species. In its present orbit the moon serves and the moon reflects—that is its created glory—BUT if the moon left its orbit to wander into deep space it would lose all its glory. It would be useless, lost in the black vacuum of space, a wandering chunk of dust-covered matter without an orbit, a meaningless undignified pock-marked ball of rock.

Much of the church today has ‘domesticated’ God—paring off from the knowledge of God such themes as the wrath; burning holiness; ferocity; and vengeance of God. What men are willfully ignorant of is the fact that God is putting His own character and attributes on display in redemptive history. Every individual will ultimately prove to be an eternal object lesson on where they stood in relation to God’s Word. Those who imitate Satan’s wager will lose all their glory—1 Corinthians 1:19-20—instead of honor and life and blessedness, they will have eternal shame, misery, and dishonor. Neutral ground in this matter is an illusion. Everyone led by the evil one is also a rebel who has ‘thrown down the gauntlet’ before God Almighty. Redemptive history makes it clear that there is no neutrality. The Psalms constantly repeat that there is a total antithesis between those who are of the truth and those who are not. God will exhibit perfect discrimination between these two groups of individuals when He brings history to its consummation. The Genesis flood is a paradigm of this perfect discrimination between believer and unbeliever. The Genesis flood completely removed the illusion of neutrality—He takes away all imagined middle ground. On the last day it will be revealed that there are only two kinds of vessels: vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath—only two destinies: eternal life and eternal death.

What you think of God’s Word is what you think of God Himself. God’s immutable character backs up every word of Scripture. God and His Word are one. God’s Word will be fulfilled—it cannot be broken. Whether in redemption of the believer or damnation of the unrighteous—God will fulfill every threat and promise because He has joined the honor of His Great Name to the perfect fulfillment of His Word. God binds Himself to His Word. God has bound the greatness of His Name to the veracity and immutability of Scripture. God’s honor and glory are leveraged upon the comprehensive fulfillment of His Word. Therefore, for God to not fulfill any part of His Word would mean that He is no longer jealous for the sake of His Name—which is impossible.

The unbeliever pretends that God’s Word is not clear, not infallible, and not authoritative. But we must remember that when the unbeliever hears or reads God’s Word there is an instant work of recognition taking place—the unbeliever knows he is hearing the voice of his Creator. Sinners are willfully forgetful of what God is doing in human history. History is God confirming His Word—bringing to pass every word of it—staking His reputation on the veracity of His Word. God’s universe is held together, ruled, ordered, and governed by God’s Word. No matter how sincere, zealous, pious, wounded, self-sacrificing, or religious a person is—God will not alter or set aside His Word for you. God loves people by giving them His Word and granting them faith in His Word and the power to be transformed by His Word. The reality of redemptive history exists so that God may confirm His Word in a public display or demonstration. Nothing is more absurd than to think that God is not as good as His Word. Sin is spiritual insanity. To know anything about God’s purposes for human history is to see the depth of the folly of thinking there may be a chance that God will not fulfill every jot and tittle of His Word.

Repentance is not merely turning in remorse from moral failure; repentance is a repudiation

(hatred) of one's imagined independence (autonomy) from God—and then falling at the feet of Him who is the Word—God incarnate—and from then on to be ruled by His Word. Diligent attention to God's Word is attention to God's will—we cannot please and honor God unless our minds and hearts and consciences are captive to His Word (Ps 119). As we meditate on His Word and it fills our minds, conscience, and affections, our prayer lives ought to continually manifest a posture of repentance wherein we desist from our own ways and bow in trust and obedience.

11.) God is our Sovereign King --He is to be feared, revered, and held in awe; God favors those who fear Him (Ps 147:11). The Psalms convey a supreme vision of God clothed in majesty, reigning, splendor, awesome in holiness.^{xxiv} Countless churching individuals have but a 'God concept'. They do not pant after God; nor do they hunger and thirst for righteousness. Says John Piper, "People are starving for the greatness of God. But most of them would not give this diagnosis of their troubled lives. The majesty of God is the unknown cure. Show me thy glory!"^{xxv} God is constantly active in His involvement with the creation. He rules over the nations—He appoints their time in history as well as their destruction. No one can thwart His sovereign decree. He creates, controls, judges, wars, blesses. He subdues nations, He is to be feared (Ps 47:2-3, 7-9; 98:2-9).^{xxvi} God does whatever He pleases in the entire universe, "in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps" (Ps 135:6). This is a cause of deep abiding reverence and awe.

The sinner's hatred of God's sovereignty manifests itself in the lust for personal autonomy. The unbeliever loves his imagined independence. It is a dream come true for the evil one when man reasons autonomously that he is an autonomous creature living in an autonomous universe—for that is the height of deception and rebellion. In actuality, autonomy is a soul-damning myth—an impossible dream. For, our Sovereign God created mankind to be dependent, to receive light, to serve. The mind of man was created to receive divine revelation. The reception of which is the only way man's thinking can operate reliably. It has been said that salvation *slays the sinner's imagined sovereignty*.

The Hebrew word for fear is YARAH. It means to hold in honor—to be afraid—to be in awe—to worship—even to be alarmed.^{xxvii} The word 'fear' in the context of fearing God frequently refers to the reverence and awe and respect which God's Person elicits (Deut 10:12-13). The *fear of God* is associated with obedience to His commands—*obey, walk, do, listen, hear, fear, heed*—thus fear of God is inseparable from appropriate moral conduct. Fear of God is also associated with an awe of God which is an essential part of true worship. The fear of God must be learned from His Word. "*Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children'*" (Deut 4:10).

Of Job's fear of God, the Word says that he was blameless, upright, turning away from evil (Job 1:8). The fear of the Lord is wisdom. Proverbs is the main book of the Bible dealing with the fear of God. Fear of God, wisdom, and knowledge are closely associated in Scripture. The theme of Proverbs is the wise man versus the fool. The wise man fears the Lord; the fool is lacking fear of God. In Ecclesiastes, God's absolute sovereignty is a just cause for fear and reverence for God. The fear of God underlies wise decision-making (Eccl 3:14). The whole duty of man is to *fear God and keep His commandments*—consider how 'rational' this is in view of the fact that God will *bring every act to judgment; whether good or evil* (Eccl 12:13-14). A true understanding of *who God is* inspires worship; even trembling (Ps 55:5-6; 90:11). The fear of God inspires moral conduct (Gen 20:11; Neh 5:15). Such fear is *imparted* to God's people in order that they might not sin (Ex 20:20; Jer 32:40). The hard hearted do not have the fear of God (Is 63:17). Jesus

commands men to fear God (Lu 12:5). The fear of the Lord is the first principle of wisdom (Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7). The fear of God is also associated with knowledge (Prov 2:5).

God is a Great King—we must develop an attitude of patient waiting upon Him in our prayer and meditation time. In our culture of immediacy, quickness in gaining answers is a measure of efficiency. Therefore the spiritual discipline of waiting on God is at an all-time low with the rising generation of believers. But the Psalms give us manifold benefits of waiting upon the Lord. Why is waiting upon Him so essential? For starters, what is required of us runs head long up against our lack of personal strength and adequacy, the result is stress. Waiting upon God is the answer to stress. When we wait upon God, we first of all *long for God*. We are slow to realize that our answer is God Himself (and not merely our anticipated change in circumstances). Out of *longing for God* comes *listening to God*. Out of *listening to God* comes *living upon God*. He is the answer to our lack of strength.

As waiting upon the Lord becomes a lifestyle, numerous positive changes in personal character take place. Consider the following changes: Waiting upon the Lord *mortifies our demanding-ness*. It assists in putting to death our entitlement attitude to have our way on our time schedule. Waiting on the Lord *produces a greater trust in the Lord as Provider*. Waiting *makes us increasingly willing to practice positive resignation in the face of God's providence*. It is the true test of our doctrine of God's sovereignty. Waiting *protects us from the often disastrous consequences of impetuosity*. It *leaves room for God to work* (remember, from our perspective, God is incredibly slow, waiting upon Him 'adjusts us to His will').

Waiting *cultivates holy expectation* (as we walk in obedience, we learn to *expect* His blessing, and patiently look for it; this deepens our confidence that God is the Source of every good gift – James 1:17). Waiting *teaches us to receive from the Lord instead of taking for ourselves*. Our tendency to 'grab' dishonors the Giver. God gives to His own in an all-wise way that will keep their love to Him greater than their love for His gifts. Waiting *allows God to leave the mark of His hand upon the blessings He sends* (this is the opposite of saying, "I made it happen"). Waiting *teaches us to please the Lord as our highest ambition* (2 Cor 5:9). Waiting *liberates us from the fear of losing what is most precious to us* (because waiting reinforces the fact that God is the ultimate Giver, and that He is for us, and knows best). Waiting *orders our spiritual priorities by causing us to place delight in the Lord ahead of the desires of our hearts* (Ps 37:4-6).

As those appointed by God to subdue the earth; we like to make things happen. Our secret motto tends to be: *if it's going to be, it's up to me*. There is much "unsanctified ambition" in our flesh. Learning to wait upon the Lord is a spiritual discipline that must be cultivated and learned. For the world around us is preoccupied with *what shall we eat, what shall we wear, where shall we dwell* (Matt 6:31-32). Waiting upon God is not the same as *letting go and doing nothing*. We must therefore distinguish between passivity and *waiting upon God*. First of all, waiting on the Lord is not antithetical to initiative. It is a posture of heart that says in effect *God is the Giver; He does not need my striving to make things happen and fulfill His promise; I will trust in God and depend on Him more than upon my plans. By His Word, and His Spirit, and by wise counselors He is perfectly capable of making it clear what action I should take*.

The Psalms speak continually of the *posture* of the godly man's heart before the Lord; waiting upon God is one of the most common *postures* of heart described in the Psalms. As one traces the theme of *waiting upon God* through the Psalms, it becomes clear that waiting is indispensable to godliness. Waiting upon the Lord is nothing less than the godly man letting God be God. The following Psalms give ample demonstration that waiting upon the Lord honors God and places the believer in the best possible position to know God, to do God's will, and to glorify Him by trust (Ps 4:4-5; Ps 27:13-14; Ps 33:18-22; Ps 37:34).

12.) The Genesis Flood changed the geosphere, the biosphere, and atmosphere –Noah’s flood was the single greatest event to shape earth since creation. The deluge was a judgment for man’s sin. Because man is the ‘crown of creation’ and the steward of creation (Ps 8); in the flood the creation itself also suffered for man’s rebellion. Because man is God’s appointed steward over the works of God’s hands; as mankind goes morally—so goes creation (Is 24).

Man’s willful ignorance of the Genesis flood—the universal judgment of world by water, shapes his rejection of the bodily return of Christ as Judge. Modern unbelievers are *uniformitarian* in their geology, and *uniformitarian* in their denial of past divine judgment. “Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.’ For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God *the* heavens existed long ago and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men” (2 Pet 3:3-7).

Noah’s flood radically altered the surface features of planet earth—mountains and oceans rose and sunk according to Psalm 104:5-9. God sat as “King” at the flood (Ps 29:10). The earth’s sediments speak of a global cataclysm; not of the origin of life. In the epistle of Second Peter, the Apostle speaks of the willful ignorance of the Genesis flood. In the last days scoffers will abound—denying that God has already judged the planet and its entire population once already in Noah’s flood. The first global judgment was by water the second will be by fire says the Apostle Peter. The first global judgment by water (the Genesis flood) is the precursor and paradigm of the final judgment by fire (2 Pet 3).

13.) The Psalms speak of the glory of eternal life –they open the subjects of resurrection and the Kingdom of God. Regarding the resurrection, Psalm 16 stresses that bodily resurrection is the future hope of the redeemed all because of Messiah’s resurrection. Says Henry Morris, we are justified in using Psalm 16 to support the resurrection. The apostles used this Psalm as the keystone of their preaching that the Scriptures foretold Christ’s resurrection (Acts 4:33; 13:35-37).^{xxviii}

Today’s political *progressives* subscribe to a view known as ‘endless democratization’—i.e. that more human rights will become law as time goes on. That man, by social, scientific, and political engineering will ultimately usher in a utopian existence. The natural man wants his ‘heaven’ now. But, every day that sought after utopia is looking more and more like a nihilistic totalitarian dystopia (nightmare) with its omni-gendered, omni-sexual society built upon erotic freedoms, and its accompanying goal of crushing religious freedom (outlawing Christianity). How we long for the coming Kingdom of God!

At the consummation of history the victory of God in Christ will be celebrated by the entire creation. A day is coming when all of creation will be unified in the praise of God—including the inanimate creation. “Praise Him sun, moon, all stars of light, praise the Lord from the earth sea monsters and all deeps” (Ps 148:3, 7; 148). Celebration of God’s victory will be to the ends of the galaxies. Rivers will ‘clap their hands’ (Ps 98:8). Trees will ‘sing’ (Ps 96:12-13). God’s coming Kingdom will be involve a celebration of eternal victory and a restored creation that worships God from one end of the galaxies to the other (Ps 150). Do you pray ‘Kingdom’ prayers? “Kingdom consciousness” must be part of our life or prayer and meditation. For as His redeemed sons, God has invited us His Kingdom plot. Our heavenly treasure is bound up in the reality of God’s coming Kingdom. The Lord’s Prayer is a ‘Kingdom consciousness’ prayer.

14.) The Psalms are ‘real to life’ –they speak to every joy and trial—they constitute an entire anatomy of the soul. Says Steve Lawson, in the Psalms we find the godly man dealing with the heart-rending crunch of life. He is chased by enemies, he faces death, and he struggles with depression. Psalms speaks to every season of life—they are utterly realistic about suffering.^{xxix} As Calvin said in his commentary on the Psalms, “[It is] an anatomy of all parts of the soul.” Psalms takes the attributes of God out of the realm of abstraction and into a glorious interface with the believer (Ps 146). The believer in covenant with God discovers that God has “harnessed” His own attributes for the welfare of His redeemed child. God’s dealings with His people are seen in concrete ways such as forgiveness, protection, guidance, provision, refuge, and hope (Ps 78; 103; 147). The Psalms provide a model for transparency in prayer.

Prayer is not primarily about the believer trying to get God to do something. Prayer is about the saint being adjusted to God’s Person, promises, purposes, precepts and providence. In this sense, prayer is a rectifying activity. It ‘resets’ our faculties to key off of God instead of off of our carnal desires and circumstances. Transparency in prayer is vital to our spiritual health. Each day has enough trouble of its own Jesus said (Mt 6:34). In other words, if you heap tomorrow’s cares onto today’s plate, you are going to be anxious. Transparency in prayer allows every aspect of our being to come into contact with the sufficiency of the Lord. Our mind, affections, conscience, and will must be yielded to God’s will found in His Word. But, there are countless intrusions in life that we permit to generate emotional negativity in our thought life. These negatives must be deliberately brought into contact with God in prayer.

Think of the emotional ‘places’ at which the psalmist meets God: *personal disillusionment, despair, treachery, personal sin, cynicism, depression, sickness, grief, and spiritual stagnancy*. We think of the Psalms primarily as a book of praises, and it is—but the Psalms are also a pattern for us to pray transparently. One of my mentors refers to this kind of prayer as ‘processing’. We have troublesome emotions that need to be ‘processed’. These emotions can be sinful, or merely the agitations of life. But in order for us to have peace and joy restored, these emotions must be allowed to have an interface with God in prayer. Here are some of the negatives that we must learn to ‘process’ in prayer to God: things in life too big for you to carry, scores and injustices you cannot settle, personal weaknesses you cannot reverse, baffling injustices, dishonor, envies and coveting, discontentment, compelling ambitions, broken dreams, unfaithful friends, etc. When the psalmist lays his burdens before God (‘processing’ his negativity), pouring out his heart before the Lord, joyful integration follows—he no longer is split and divided (Ps 62:5-8).

In tragic contrast to the Psalms, the philosophies which dominate our culture today represent a vast evasion from the human experience God intends. 100 years plus years of *Darwinism, psychology, and secularism* have been mingled together producing a deadly time-release poison. *Darwinism* removes God from origins and scientific investigation, *psychology* usurps the role of the doctrine of anthropology for itself by denying that man is the image of God, and *secularism* seeks to order society with man as the measure of all things and the state as the source of our rights. Psychology’s ‘anthropology’ (or doctrine of man) offers a ‘scientific’ explanation of every human yearning, behavior, response, emotion, and motive—all without reference to God or the image of God. Freud has been called, ‘the father of the great psychological excuse’ (no more sin, just repression, ego formation, etc.).

15.) The Psalms anchor human flourishing in heterosexual marriage and the nuclear family –father-led homes are the key to raising up generational God-fearing communities. The worshipping family was the stable building block of a prospering society. There was an ordinance in Israel

that fathers should consistently instruct their families in the knowledge of God and His will and way (Ps 78:1-8).

- 1 Listen, O my people, to my instruction;
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
- 2 I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will utter dark sayings of old,
- 3 Which we have heard and known,
And our fathers have told us.
- 4 We will not conceal them from their children,
But tell to the generation to come the praises of the Lord,
And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done.
- 5 For He established a testimony in Jacob
And appointed a law in Israel,
Which He commanded our fathers
That they should teach them to their children,
- 6 That the generation to come might know, *even* the children *yet* to be born,
That they may arise and tell *them* to their children,
- 7 That they should put their confidence in God
And not forget the works of God,
But keep His commandments,
- 8 And not be like their fathers,
A stubborn and rebellious generation,
A generation that did not prepare its heart
And whose spirit was not faithful to God;

With the godly patriarchy ordained by our Creator came the high calling and privilege of teaching about God and reflecting his love, righteousness, and truth. Holy Scripture makes it very clear how divine truth is to be transmitted generationally—a father is the best spiritual teacher a child will ever have. A man’s children were his sacred trust and source of measureless blessing. His children were compared to ‘olive plants’ around his table (Ps 128:1-4). A man’s children gave him honor in the gate, and his children were compared to ‘arrows in his quiver’ (Ps 127:3-5).

Radical feminism has declared war on heterosexual marriage and the nuclear family. Thus, the feminist ideal constitutes war on man and woman as the image and likeness of God. If the feminist ideal continues to be the agenda of government, society will be redefined along individualistic terms. That destroys culture—for heterosexual marriage is a culture-building mechanism and institution. Feminism’s agenda will undermine order and blessing in society, for God has given us a blueprint for flourishing and it is the traditional family.

Loving God’s truth in the inner man equips believers to speak His truth (Ps 145). The psalmist, in his love for the Lord, is controlled by resolve to speak of God and His works. “One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. On the glorious splendor of Your majesty and on Your wonderful works, I will meditate. Men shall speak of the power of Your awesome acts, and I will tell of Your greatness. They shall eagerly utter the memory of Your abundant goodness and will shout joyfully of Your righteousness. The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in lovingkindness. The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works. All Your works shall give thanks to You, O Lord, and Your godly ones shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your

kingdom And talk of Your power; to make known to the sons of men Your mighty acts And the glory of the majesty of Your kingdom” (Ps 145:4-12). “But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works” (Ps 73:28). “I shall wash my hands in innocence, and I will go about Your altar, O Lord, that I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving and declare all Your wonders” (Ps 26:6-7).

In the Psalms, the godly man rejects the notion that truth for the believer need not rise above mental assent/agreement and admiration—the truth is to be proclaimed. “But as for me, I will hope continually, and will praise You yet more and more. My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness *and* of Your salvation all day long; For I do not know the sum *of them*. I will come with the mighty deeds of the Lord God; I will make mention of Your righteousness, Yours alone. O God, You have taught me from my youth, and I still declare Your wondrous deeds. And even when *I am* old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to *this* generation, Your power to all who are to come” (Ps 71:14-18). Fathers and husbands who are able to wield the Sword of Truth in their relationships are animated by God’s truth in the inner man—they desire what God desires—that is God’s truth in their innermost being (Ps 51:6).

Endnotes:

-
- ⁱ Dave Doveton.
 - ⁱⁱ Ibid.
 - ⁱⁱⁱ James C. Turner, *Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1985) in Ken Myers, “The Problem of Contextualization in a Decadent Culture.”
 - ^{iv} Myers in Turner.
 - ^v Ibid.
 - ^{vi} Peter Jones, “Framing the Issues; Finding our Voices” (Escondido, CA: Christian Witness to a Pagan Planet, think-tank, 2007).
 - ^{vii} Peter Jones, “Who Stole our Sacred Canopy?” *Christian Witness to a Pagan Planet*, (www.cwipp.org, newscwipp # 42).
 - ^{viii} Myers.
 - ^{ix} Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004) 19.
 - ^x Ibid, p. 25.
 - ^{xi} Henry Morris, *Sampling the Psalms* (El Cajon, CA: Master Books, 1978) 49-50.
 - ^{xii} Vern S. Poythress, *Redeeming Science* (Wheaton IL: Crossway Books, 2006) 19-24.
 - ^{xiii} Morris, pp. 11-12.
 - ^{xiv} P. B. Powers, *The ‘I wills’ of the Psalms* (Banner of Truth Trust: Carlisle, PA 1985, first pub. 1858), back flyleaf.
 - ^{xv} Tom Wells, *Come Home Forever* (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 1992) 57.
 - ^{xvi} Ken Myers, “The Problem of Contextualization in a Decadent Culture,” *Gheen’s Lectures*, Southern Baptist Seminary.
 - ^{xvii} Daniel J. Estes, *Hear My Son, Teaching and Learning in Proverbs 1-9*, (Eerdmans, 1997), pp. 22-26
 - ^{xviii} Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, (Banner of Truth, 1974) 1:104.
 - ^{xix} Ibid., p. 36, 38
 - ^{xx} Ibid., pp. 38
 - ^{xxi} Steve Gallagher, *At the Altar of Sexual Idolatry*, (Pure Life Ministries, 1986), pp. 257, 258
 - ^{xxii} Ibid., pp. 69, 75, 83
 - ^{xxiii} Ibid., pp. 84, 98
 - ^{xxiv} Steven Lawson, “Expository Preaching of the Psalms” (2004 *Winterim*, The Master’s Seminary) Lesson one, pp. 1, 7
 - ^{xxv} John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1990) 9, in Lawson, 7.
 - ^{xxvi} Lawson, lesson one, p.17; lesson. two, p. 62.
 - ^{xxvii} NIDOT, 2:527
 - ^{xxviii} Morris, p. 119.
 - ^{xxix} Ibid, lesson one, p. 22.