

What is a Worldview?

Everyone has a worldview. However, most people don't think much about it, because it usually runs in the background of the mind, at the subconscious level. Simply put, a worldview is a person's mental concept of what is "really real."

The word "worldview," or *Weltanschauung*, was first coined by Immanuel Kant, who combined two German words into one: *Welt*, which means "world," and *Anschaung*, which means, "conception," "idea," "opinion," or "view."

Because a person's worldview makes up his or her concept of what is "really real," it naturally serves as a kind of internal "GPS," by which a person makes sense of what is seen, felt and heard. We all lean on our worldview to make decisions, consciously or subconsciously.

Many worldviews are dramatically different, with concepts of "reality" that are often incompatible. Christianity is a worldview, and so is Hinduism, and Humanism. Other worldviews include Islam, Judaism, Animism, Marxism, Naturalism, and Buddhism—to name some of the more common views of "what is really real."

However, if we take a close look at any worldview, we will find that it consists of underlying beliefs (or assumptions) in five key areas that make up one's Big Picture of "reality." It is relatively easy to grasp someone's worldview (including your own) by considering answers to questions in the following five areas:

1. God: Or, "Ultimate Power and Authority." Is there such a thing? If so, what is this God like? A personal entity? If not, then what? etc.
2. Creation: How did the universe get here? What sustains it all? Is there a spiritual part of reality, or is it all material? etc.
3. Humanity: Who are we? What gives us any unique value? How do we know anything, particularly what is true? etc.
4. Moral Order: Who makes the rules? Do some rules apply to everyone? etc.
5. Purpose: Why do we exist? Is there a reason and a meaning for the world we live in? etc.

Based on the 5 "worldview factors" given above, a biblically-shaped worldview looks something like the "101 Biblical Worldview Truths" developed by the Biblical Worldview Institute, a division of Cascade Christian Schools, in Puyallup, WA. For a copy, click [here](#) (scroll down to the bottom of the home page).

Another way of thinking about "worldview" is to see it in four parts with four corresponding questions, advocated by such worldview teachers as Francis Schaeffer, Abraham Kuyper and Charles Colson :

1. Creation: *Where Did I Come From?*
2. Fall: *What's Wrong with the World?*
3. Redemption: *Is There a Solution?*
4. Restoration: *What is My Purpose?*

The Christian worldview, as shaped by the Bible, provides unique answers to the kinds of questions given above. These answers, in turn, provide a solid foundation for unique attitudes and actions that have shaped history in ways no other worldview can. This is why worldview matters. Particularly the biblically informed worldview.