

Asbury College

Christian Worldview

Student Guide

ACHIEVE

Degree Completion Program



knowledge elements
educational products

(KEEP)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will explore ways in which the student can develop a positive relationship with God as he/she explores the role of general revelation (the creation), special revelation (the Scriptures) and experiences God at work in the modern world.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The student will be able to:

1. Express what is meant by a Christian worldview and how it affects all aspects of life.
2. Identify at least one major aspect of the changing culture which affects our worldview.
3. Discuss how critical thinking is important and necessary to form a genuinely Christian worldview.
4. Distinguish the four basic ways in which knowledge is acquired and explain how important it is to integrate all knowledge to perceive reality more accurately.
5. Describe what it means to know and experience God.
6. Summarize the importance of biblically informed assumptions that determine a person's worldview.
7. Gain and articulate a basic understanding of modernity, its impact on present-day society and "so-called Christian thought," and the challenge to true biblical faith.
8. Explore the basic shape of postmodernism in contrast to modernity and Christian thinking.
9. Comprehend and explain the absolute necessity of special revelation in order to discover truths otherwise unknown so that ultimately humanity can come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.
10. Delineate the many factors that must be considered in the attempt to interpret Scripture properly.
11. Discuss and follow the four steps of sound biblical exegesis.
12. Appreciate and explain the importance of general revelation and how it relates to and informs our understanding of special revelation.
13. Describe the foundational elements of a biblically informed worldview as found in Genesis and be able to adjust and refine his/her own Christian worldview as a result. The student will be able to define the current zeitgeist in relation to these foundational truths in Genesis.
14. Develop a Christian perspective of self, as well as personal and professional issues.

TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Texts:

Curtis, Edward M. *Transformed Thinking: Loving God With All Your Mind*. Franklin, TN: JKO Publishing, 1996. ISBN 0-9645014-3-0.

Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, a division of HarperCollins Publishers, 2001. ISBN 0-06-065292-6.

Packer, J. I. *Knowing God*. 20th-Anniversary Edition. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993. ISBN 0-8308-1650-X.

Course Pack (2008). *Christian Worldview*. Franklin, TN: knowledge elements, inc. Reference Number BT81A-01.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Students in this accelerated course will be evaluated by the College's standard grading system. Refer to the Student Handbook or the College Catalog for further details. The criteria for determining your grade will be as follows:

1. (30%) Completion of assigned written exercises and reading (see Student Assignments pages for exact assignments).
2. (30%) Participation in class discussion and group activities. The criteria will be the quality and quantity of the contribution to the group.
3. (30%) Final Paper—Refer to the next page for information on how the Final Paper is to be prepared. The Final Paper will be due one week after the final class period delivered to the College, sent by e-mail, or postmarked on that date. Turning in the Final Paper late will result in a penalty on the grade for the Final Paper.
4. (10%) Quality of comments, insight and extent of learning as reflected in the student's journal. The student is required to write in the journal at the close of each class session and may add to it at other times such as after reading an assignment or completing an exercise. The journal is to be handed in with the Final Paper.

Attendance: Any class missed must be made up. The student is obligated to contact the instructor to make suitable arrangements in case of any absence or tardiness. Unexcused absences and absences not made up will adversely affect the student's grade.

Late Work Or Work Not Handed In: Any written exercise or the Final Paper handed in after 6 p.m. on the due date will result in a reduction of the grade for that item. Any item not turned in will result in an "F" for that item and a reduction in grade for the course.

FINAL PAPER

Each student must complete a Final Paper. This Final Paper will be in the form of several projects that the student will work on during this course. You may use any material in developing the Final Paper, but every word (unless expressly quoted with appropriate credits given) must be that of the student submitting the Final Paper. Any use of material written by another person without credit given will be considered plagiarism which is a serious offense in the academic community. Plagiarism will result in at least an "F" for the Final Paper.

The student is encouraged to take notes on how to respond to the Final Paper as he/she progresses through the course. This includes making notations in class notes or in the journal. The journal is intended to be a major help in producing the Final Paper and is to be submitted along with the Final Paper. As a result, it is very important that the journal writing be taken seriously. In addition, the journal itself constitutes a part of the student's grade for the course.

The Final Paper is to be submitted in typewritten, double-spaced form on one side only of 8½" x 11" white paper. A cover sheet should clearly indicate the student's name, course name, instructor's name and the date submitted. The Final Paper will be due one week after the final class period.

Write a three-page paper on each of the three topics below. Your paper will integrate the material covered in this course. Each essay should begin on a separate page.

1. On Knowing God

Using the material from the first session related to how we obtain knowledge, show how we gain knowledge about God. Include your perceptions of the role of special revelation, general revelation and personal experience.

2. What Is Truth?

In the trial of Jesus before Pilate, Jesus said, "I came into this world to testify to the truth." To this, Pilate responded with the rhetorical question, "What is truth?" (John 18:37). First, answer the question from your personal viewpoint. Then, contrast your answer with how you think the modernist would answer the question and how the postmodernist would answer it.

3. How My View of God and His World Has Changed

After exploring your thinking on your view of God and looking critically at the current culture, you should have a broader and more perceptive view of your world and the course of your life. Spend some time putting these thoughts on paper in a way that the instructor can see your revised perspective on your Christian worldview.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This accelerated course is one of the foundational courses in the Degree Completion Program. It will require that you, as they say, "put on your thinking cap." God has endowed us with a mind to think. Certainly He expects us to be good stewards of the ability He has so graciously granted to us as His special creation. The evangelical church has done quite well in developing "heart religion" but has sometimes failed in putting sufficient emphasis on developing the "mind of Christ."

With the kind of pervasive media we have today we are constantly being bombarded with all kinds of worldly ideas. After hearing and being exposed to these ideas so frequently, we may tend to see how seriously those ideas do not conform to Paul's exhortation in Philippians 4:8: "Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

You will be challenged in this course to study how God has revealed Himself through general and special revelation. This course of study explores what it means to have a Christian mind over against the modernity and postmodernity of our times. We will study the opening chapters of Genesis to learn some of the most basic truths that help us form a Christian worldview. Your present worldview will be challenged by this course. If you approach this study with a positive spirit, your efforts will be rewarded.

Please be careful to follow all the instructions in your Student Guide. This document, to be considered as a supplementary, required textbook, is your "road map" for the course. You will certainly do much better during these weeks of study if you pace yourself to keep up to date with your weekly assignments and at the same time work on your Final Paper. Your instructor will be available to answer any questions that you may have about the content and procedures in this course.

May your mind be stimulated and your heart warmed!

LOGISTICS CHART

Hour	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
1	Introduction to the Course An Overview of the Changing American Culture	Introduction to the Session Developing a Belief System Knowing God	Introduction to the Session Finding God through Special Revelation	Introduction to the Session General Revelation and Wisdom General and Special Revelation	Introduction to the Session Using the Map
2	Developing a Worldview Break	(continued) The Trinity Break	Steps to Proper Exegesis Hearing God through His Word	General Revelation and Science The Significance of General Revelation for Our Understanding of God Break	Making the Adjustments Living as New Men Break
3	A Definition of Modernism and Modernity The New Postmodern Philosophy	C. S. Lewis's Attempt to Find God Finding God in Christ	(continued) Break The Attributes of God	Experiencing God Finding the Will of God for My Life	God as Creator—Genesis 1–3 Constructing a Christian Worldview
4	(continued) A Biblical View—Romans 1:18-32 Journal Entry	(continued) The Exalted Christ—Colossians 1:13-23; 2:8-23 Journal Entry	(continued) The Power of the Word Journal Entry	(continued) Faith and Our Understanding Journal Entry	(continued) Application of a Christian Worldview Journal Entry Course Evaluation

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

Week One—The Secularization of Western Culture

1. Read the Course Overview in the Student Guide.
2. Read Curtis, pages 1-76, and give written responses to study questions 1, 2 and 4 on page 21; questions 1, 2 and 5 on pages 38-39; questions 1, 4, 5 and 6 on pages 53-54; and questions 1, 3 and 4 on pages 72-73.
3. Read Romans 1:18-32 as it gives a view of the world and be prepared to discuss the issues found therein.
4. Write at least a one-page response to the following quote taken from the Preface of Curtis: "I am worried by the idea, sometimes found in the church, that seriously using the mind and developing the intellect will get us into trouble and that true spirituality involves a kind of uncritical, unthinking mysticism where God simply directs us at every turn."
5. Read "The Idolatry of Novelty" in the Course Pack and give written responses to the following study questions:
 1. How can we make Christianity relevant when the events that brought it into being happened so long ago?
 2. How would you define "spiritual maturity"?
 3. How must the church deal with ancient traditions if they are to be relevant to the modern age?
6. Read the letter from Dr. James C. Dobson in the Course Pack and give written responses to the following study questions:
 1. Define "moral relativism."
 2. How does the issue of slavery illustrate our need to develop standards of right and wrong? Can we afford to be tolerant of evil?
 3. What are the issues on which Dobson says the church must take a stand as being evil?

Week Two—The Place of God in the Christian Worldview

1. Read Lewis, Book II—"What Christians Believe" (Chapters 1-5), and give written responses to the following study questions:

"The Rival Conceptions of God," Chapter 1 from Book II

1. People who believe in God can be divided into two groups. Describe each group and tell how their views differ.
2. If we have a good God, why has the world gone wrong?

"The Invasion," Chapter 2 from Book II

1. What are the two views of our world? What word defines each?
2. Why does Lewis say that goodness must be superior?

"The Shocking Alternative," Chapter 3 from Book II

1. What are the alternatives for the creation of humanity?
2. What is the shocking alternative?

"The Perfect Penitent," Chapter 4 from Book II

1. What is the central belief of Christianity? (In theological terms, we call this atonement. It relates to the cross.)
2. How did Christ become our model?

"The Practical Conclusion," Chapter 5 from Book II

1. What are the three means by which God communicates the Christ-life to us?
 2. What are the objections to this approach to Christianity?
2. Read Packer, the Preface and Chapters 1-6 (pp. 11-72), and give written responses to the following study questions:

Chapter 1, "The Study of God" (pp. 17-23)

1. What are the five foundational principles about the knowledge of God that are vital to this course?
2. What is the definition of God from the Westminster Shorter Catechism?

Chapter 2, "The People Who Know Their God" (pp. 24-32)

1. What is the difference between knowing God and knowing about God? Which one should Christians seek?
2. What first steps must we take to gain knowledge of God?

Chapter 3, "Knowing and Being Known" (pp. 33-42)

1. What is involved in "knowing a horse"? How can this be applied to our relationship with God?
2. What are the three points related to knowing God?

Chapter 4, "The Only True God" (pp. 43-51)

What do you think of Packer's position that Christian pictures or statues of deity violate the command on idolatry (the second commandment)?

Chapter 5, "God Incarnate" (pp. 52-64)

1. What is the "incarnation"?
2. What is the "kenosis theory"?

Chapter 6, "He Shall Testify" (pp. 65-72)

1. How does John 1:1-2 give us a profoundly simple statement of the doctrine of the Trinity?
2. In what two areas do we experience the work of the Holy Spirit?
3. Study Colossians 1:13-23 and 2:8-23, and be prepared to discuss the view it presents of the philosophy of this world and how it should relate to Christianity.
4. Review Curtis, pages 25-38.

Week Three—Meeting God Through the Scriptures

1. Read Curtis, pages 77-130, and give written responses to questions 1 and 7 on pages 90-91, questions 1 and 4 on pages 109-110, and question 4 on pages 128-129.
2. Read Packer, Chapters 7-11 (pp. 75-116), and give written responses to the following study questions:

Chapter 7, "God Unchanging" (pp. 75-81)

1. What are the two worlds we need to link? Is God active in both?
2. What are the six aspects of God that do not change?

Chapter 8, "The Majesty of God" (pp. 82-89)

1. What does majesty declare about God?
2. What does it mean when we say that God is omniscient, omnipotent, and sovereign?

Chapter 9, "God Only Wise" (pp. 90-98)

1. How does Packer define wisdom?
2. How does wisdom relate to omniscience and omnipotence?

Chapter 10, "God's Wisdom and Ours" (pp. 99-108)

1. How did old Reformed theologians classify the attributes of God? What fell under the first group and what fell into the second group?
2. Where can we find wisdom?

3. How is wisdom analogous to driving a car?

Chapter 11, "Thy Word Is Truth" (pp. 109-116)

1. What is the three-fold character of the Torah?
2. For what two reasons does God speak to us?
3. Read Isaiah 40:12-20; 55:8-11; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:10-13; and II Timothy 3:14-16 to gain an understanding of what each says about the Word of God and how it affects our view of God.

Week Four—Understanding God Through Our Experiences of Creation (General Revelation)

1. Read Curtis, pages 131-155, and give written responses to questions 1, 2 and 6 on page 152.
2. Read Packer, Chapters 12-17 (pp. 117-175) and Chapter 20 (pp. 230-242), and give written responses to the following study questions:

Chapter 12, "The Love of God" (pp. 117-127)

1. What three comments does Packer relate to the Flood of Love?
2. How do you explain the love of God and the fact that God punishes sin?
3. How does Packer define love?

Chapter 13, "The Grace of God" (pp. 128-137)

This chapter deals with grace from a very Calvinistic point of view. State in your own terms the three principles Packer sees as connected to this doctrine of grace.

Chapter 14, "God the Judge" (pp. 138-147)

1. What are the four characteristics of a judge?
2. What is the principle of retribution?

Chapter 15, "The Wrath of God" (pp. 148-157)

1. What is the function of the wrath of God?
2. Why are we hesitant to preach about the wrath of God?

Chapter 16, "Goodness and Severity" (pp. 158-166)

1. What is the Santa Claus theology?
2. How is the concept of grace expanded in this chapter?

3. What is the condition of our "continuing in his kindness"?

Chapter 17, "The Jealous God" (pp. 167-175)

1. What are the two parts of human jealousy? Which one is not a vice?
2. What do we mean when we call God a jealous God? What does this say about religious tolerance in a pluralistic age?
3. What is the three-fold objective of God's divine plan?

Chapter 20, "Thou Our Guide" (pp. 230-242)

What are the six pitfalls that Christians face as they are seeking the will of God?

3. Read "The Significance of General Revelation to Our Understanding of God" in the Course Pack, be prepared to discuss its important issues, and give written responses to the following study questions:
 1. How would Curtis limit our use of general revelation?
 2. How have theologians used general revelation in the history of theology? Who was the important theologian that influenced the change in approach?
 3. Give Guthrie's six arguments as to how philosophers and theologians have used their understanding of the world to point us to the existence of God?
 4. Into what two other areas have we found the ideal of general revelation useful?
4. Read Hebrews 11 and be prepared to enter into a class discussion about the role of faith to our understanding of life.

Week Five—Gaining a Christian Perspective

1. Read Curtis, pages 157-179, and give written responses to questions 1, 2, 3 and 5 on pages 176-177.
2. Read Lewis, Book IV—"Beyond Personality: Or First Steps in the Doctrine of the Trinity" (Chapters 1-11), and give written responses to the following study questions:

"Making and Begetting," Chapter 1 from Book IV

1. What does the RAF officer's experience reveal about God?
2. What is the role of Scripture in relation to such experiences? How does this relate to the construction of our personal worldview and what we come to expect in our experience of God?
3. What is the difference between making and begetting? What does it tell us about the deity of Christ?

"The Three-Personal God," Chapter 2 from Book IV

1. What happens when we pray?
2. What does C. S. Lewis mean when he calls theology an experimental science?

"Time and Beyond Time," Chapter 3 from Book IV

1. What does Lewis mean when he says that God is outside of time? How does this relate to his understanding of prayer?
2. If we understand that God is beyond time, what difficulties does it solve?

"Good Infection," Chapter 4 from Book IV

1. How does Lewis understand that the statement "God is love" demands that the Trinity be at least two persons?
2. What is the "good infection"?

"The Obstinate Toy Soldiers," Chapter 5 from Book IV

How does Christ help us overcome our obstinate character?

"Two Notes," Chapter 6 from Book IV

Describe the essence of each of the two notes.

"Let's Pretend," Chapter 7 from Book IV

1. What are the two approaches to pretending?
2. Describe the two discoveries that Lewis makes? How does God affect who we are and what effect does that have on what we can do and become?

"Is Christianity Hard or Easy?" Chapter 8 from Book IV

1. What does Christ demand of each Christian?
2. What is the function of the call to perfection?

"Counting the Cost," Chapter 9 from Book IV

How does the illustration of a father's joy at his child's first steps illustrate God's view of the Christian life?

"Nice People or New Men," Chapter 10 from Book IV

1. How does the problem caused by the fact that people are becoming Christians slowly or ceasing to be Christian affect our view of Christians and non-Christians?

2. What did it cost God to create men who could have rebellious wills (truly free wills)?

"The New Men," Chapter 11 from Book IV

1. What lesson does Lewis draw from our ability to look back on evolution?
2. Why must a man surrender himself to God to attain his greatest potential?
3. Read Genesis 1–3 and be prepared to discuss the worldview that sees God as creator and as an active agent in our world.
4. Read "Other Worlds" in the Course Pack and give written responses to the following study questions:
 1. What is the difference between culture and worldview?
 2. What is the second characteristic of worldview as seen by Burnett?
 3. What is a paradigm?
 4. What is enculturation as used by Burnett?