

Worldview ~ Part 2

Ethics & Biology

by Steve & Carol Ryerson

The First and Last gave a simple, profound, and inclusive command to Peter in their first conversation. He said, "Follow me." In His last conversation with Peter, Jesus said the same thing: "Follow me."

This command is simple because it is short and easy to understand ~ at least on the surface. For Peter, there was a literal, physical part to the command. He actually went with Jesus in His travels throughout Palestine. The spiritual part of what Jesus meant didn't dawn on Peter for some time because Peter would have to experience major changes in his thinking.

This command is also profound. It is deep in its implications. The Lord didn't put any qualifiers on it as to scope or time. Peter found out that Jesus meant "Follow me down to the deepest fiber of your being." Jesus put huge meaning in a brief statement, and He was making a huge commitment to Peter.

"Follow me" was also inclusive. Jesus meant that His disciples were to follow Him in all aspects of their lives for the entire length of their lives. The rich and full message that Jesus gave in Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7 regarding the nature of the Kingdom of God does not leave any aspect of life unaffected.

After the first "Follow me," Peter would learn during his three and one half year mentorship under the Master that following Him was impossible in the power of the flesh. Peter would be embarrassed and humbled several times while he tried to follow the Lord. When he stood on the Day of Pentecost and told the crowd that they needed to repent of their sins, be baptized in Jesus' name, and

receive the gift of the Spirit, he was speaking from experience. That was so despite the fact that it was still the first day of the New Testament Church.

He still had much to learn about what it would mean to follow Him. Working out the practical, day-to-day meaning of a Christian worldview should be concurrent with determining what it means to "Follow me."

In part 1 of this series we wrote about a Biblical philosophy of life. Here in part 2 we will discuss ethics (how we decide what is right) and biology (what is the origin of life). Both of these areas are vital, and they impact our lives daily.

Let's begin with ethics. God hates evil and loves good. In Him there are no ambiguities regarding morality. (Exodus 20, Proverbs 8:13). His solid moral character stands in stark opposition to the immorality and moral relativism that is found, respectively, in the pagan deities and the imagination of man.

Because Jesus Christ, our Creator and Savior, has character, not everything is the same to Him. As Francis Schaeffer said, "Some things conform to His character, and some things are opposed to His character." (Thinking Like a Christian, by David Noebel, Brodman & Holman Publishers, 2002, pg. 81). So, He doesn't look at everything we think, say, and do the same way. He sees how our thoughts and actions are in obedience to or in rebellion against His character.

He wants us to see the right way and walk in it. He wants us to have clarity as to what is right (Matthew 7:13). He wants us to realize that the physical world in which we live is temporary. That means it is very important to

prepare ourselves for the world which will not be temporary, the unseen world of the spirit (II Corinthians 4:18).

When you look around the world at the various ethical codes to which people ascribe you see an amazing similarity. Nearly all societies have codes against lying, stealing, adultery, theft, murder, and assault. Regardless of time, location, or religion these kinds of behaviors are viewed negatively. This suggests that there may be a source outside of man that is responsible for this thinking in mankind. In fact, the Bible teaches us that even people who do not have the Law will sometimes do the things that the Law teaches and that this comes from what God put in their hearts (Romans 2:12-16).

Sometimes modern man wants to believe that there are no moral absolutes. People who profess this will often promote “free love” or “new morality” or a “new moral order” in which people should be encouraged to do what pleases themselves rather than what conforms to a supposed artificial, fixed code. In such cases, the final judge of any particular question is man. If the majority opinion goes in any particular direction, then that is deemed to be right. As opinions change, “right” changes. If the society is not democratic, then whoever has the most guns will determine what is “right”.

Before presenting some specific examples, let’s look at biology. This has to do with the question of where life comes from and how valuable it is.

Jesus and His apostles confirmed the Creation account in Genesis. The Lord said in Mark 10:6, “...from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.” (KJV) Paul taught the early Church in Col. 1:16, “...by Him [Christ] all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” (NKJV)

If a n impersonal force brought into existence all the order and life we see around us, then the story

of Adam and Eve is a myth. If that is the case, then Christ’s allegedly sinless life and His death on the cross are meaningless. The reason is that the Bible specifically correlates Adam’s sin with Christ’s work to remove sin (Romans 5:12-19). That teaching makes no sense without a real man Adam and a real man Jesus the Christ.

The foundation of modern science is the Bible. We say this because the thinkers of the 16th through the 19th centuries who brought us out of superstition regarding the way we view the natural world were doing so based on Biblical assumptions. Philosopher and science historian Stanley L. Jaki notes that “from Copernicus to Newton it was not deism but Christian theism that served as a principal factor helping the scientific enterprise reach self-sustaining maturity.” (Thinking Like a Christian, pg 51). These men were studying the Bible. They saw that God was orderly and acted in a consistent fashion. They then reasoned that the God of order must have created an orderly world. Discovering that order, for most of them, was a spiritual exercise in seeing what God had done.

The more scientists look into the building blocks of life today the more order and intricacy they see. As the complexity of the smallest living things becomes apparent, it is harder and harder to view them as products of chance. Even the smallest bacteria are composed of intricate arrangements of hundreds of billions of atoms.

Walter Brown points out a very important fact that has come to light in recent years. “DNA can only be produced with the help of at least 20 different types of proteins. But these proteins can only be produced at the direction of DNA. Since each requires the other, a satisfactory explanation for the origin of one must also explain the origin of the other. Apparently, this entire manufacturing system came into existence simultaneously. This implies Creation.” (Thinking Like a Christian, pg. 54)

Probably the observation most damaging

to the theory of evolution is one that even an elementary school child can understand. If evolution occurred, then the fossil record should show it. But, it does not. What it shows is a sudden explosion of life forms that are very complex. It does not show transitional forms i.e., the thousands of animals that would be part of one species and part of another. Yes, there are many forms of the same species, but none that are combinations. As Walter Brown said, "If a limb were to evolve into a wing, it would become a bad limb long before it became a good wing." (Thinking Like a Christian, pg.60) The animal would die; thus, the characteristics would not be passed on.

How can we follow Jesus in matters of right and wrong and matters that involve the origins of life?

Consider the question of abortion. Proponents of "a woman's right to choose" to take the life of her unborn child will frequently say things like, "She just can't handle a child right now." Or, "They can't afford any more children." Or, "She was in the middle of her college education; how can she stop now and take care of a child?" All of these arguments are based on human opinions of the quality of life that the mother and child would have if the pregnancy continued. They all propose that if the mother believes her life would be too difficult with a baby, for whatever reason, then killing that baby is justified. They all place man in the role of judge regarding the taking of life. They all ignore Biblical principles of the life's origin.

Consider the question of divorce. (An aside: Do you think that the dating services would be in business if they dealt only with people who have never been married?) A poll taken in August of 1997 by MSNBC asked whether "unhappy parents trapped in a loveless marriage [should] be forced to stay together for the sake of the kids." 48% said, "Yes" and 43% said, "No." 10% were undecided. The question has some unbiblical assumptions packed in it. One implication is that a person's "happiness" has something to

do with whether divorce is right or wrong. Another is that "lovelessness" is a feeling that can't be changed. Another is that being in a situation that makes you unhappy is the same as being trapped against your will. All of these assumptions are contrary to God's teaching on marriage. All of these assumptions come from a worldview that is anti-God.

Consider the question of euthanasia. Passive euthanasia is the withdrawing of medical assistance from someone who, according to the best available medical advice, would not survive without it. Active euthanasia is taking the life of someone whose health makes life difficult. Suppose an expectant mother is told just before delivery that the that doctors say the child will not live more than two years and the child will be in pain with every breath he takes. The child will suffer greatly. The child is born and suffers, and the diagnosis appears correct. What should the parents do? Today, more and more people are saying that "the child should be allowed to die to avoid suffering, both its own and the parents'. " Notice who judges the baby unworthy. Notice that they don't say "killed"; they say aborted. Notice that the stated motive is to relieve suffering. Who wouldn't be in favor of reducing pain? Again, man becomes the judge. The Biblical position here is to do our best to relieve the pain and aid the child. Leave the rest in the hands of God.

God gave us life, and He gave us a reliable guide in matters of right and wrong. If we will seek Him, He will show us the way.