



The Think Institute presents

# Worldview Theft

What It Is & How to Stop It

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## How Many Worldviews Are There That ACTUALLY Make Sense of the Real World?

Around this time of year,<sup>1</sup> I always think how strange it would be to have a holiday like Thanksgiving, where the whole purpose is to give thanks to God for His blessings, but to not believe in God. Whom would you thank? And how many of my neighbors actually don't believe in God—don't share my worldview?

If you're a Christian, like me, then you believe that the view of the world and life presented by the Bible is the true one.

The most basic, most fundamental teaching of the Bible is that God is there. The Triune God of Scripture lives. God Himself is the ultimate explanation for why there is stuff like logic, morality, human dignity, the laws of physics and science, etc. You take Him out, and you lose all those things.

Sure, adherents of non-Christian worldviews want to lay claim to all that stuff, but they don't have a leg to stand on. Their worldviews don't provide them an adequate basis to account for—to explain—all that “stuff!” So they must steal from our worldview.

That's what we're talking about today.

To help illustrate the idea of what worldview theft is, and the *wrong* way to go about dealing with it, here is a word picture that I use with my high school apologetics class:

Imagine you come home from church this Sunday, you walk into your room, and your cousin Chris is there in your room, sitting at your desk, tapping away on your computer. This would be weird, but it gets weirder. On the wall above your bed there is a sign, written with your markers, on paper taken from your supplies, reading, "CHRIS'S ROOM."

You look closer at the computer screen and see that he's typing an email to your aunt, explaining *that your room is actually his, and he'll be staying there awhile*. You yell out, "Chris, what are you doing?!" and turning to you, he says, "What are you doing in my room?" "*Your* room?" you respond, to which Chris says, "See that sign on the wall? See how comfortable I am in this chair? Look, I'm even wearing these comfy wool socks I got out of the top drawer over there.<sup>2</sup> I'm even using this laptop to type an email to my mom about how you're never coming back. This is all proof that this is my room. Now kindly leave."

Now, imagine you take out a magnifying glass and begin to examine the sign on the wall, hoping to show that the ink is still damp (indicating it was written recently, and therefore serving as evidence that perhaps Chris *doesn't* own the room). You get out your phone and begin writing an email to your aunt: "Dear Aunt Edna, I know the ownership of what has traditionally been thought of as my room has been called into question recently. However I'd like to present what I believe to be strong evidence pointing to the high probability that the room is actually mine...."

This would be a ridiculous response! After all, Cousin Chris is using *your* laptop to type his email. He used *your* paper, marker and tape to create the sign. He's wearing *your* socks on his feet. It's all your stuff! Instead of arguing with him, a better response would be to pick him up by his belt loops and throw him out the front door!

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<sup>1</sup> I'm writing this around Thanksgiving, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Dude, gross.

Now, I want you to understand something very important: what "Cousin Chris" did here is exactly what non-Christians often do, when they argue against the truth of the Christian message.

In order to make their points, they steal principles, standards, and values that come from Christianity. And you must not let them.

The big idea of this chapter is, "Don't let unbelievers steal from Christianity."

## What Does It Mean to Steal from Christianity?

First, we have to realize that there is nothing in the universe—nothing in all human experience—other than what is from God. This means that scientific principles, laws of logic, moral obligations (things that are "right" to do, or that we "ought" or "ought not" to do) all belong to God.

Let's look at science for a minute. Science is a way of learning new things by asking a question, creating a hypothesis, testing the hypothesis, and drawing conclusions based on the results... after many repeated experiments.

Science requires that the physical laws of the universe (like gravity) work in a reliable, consistent and uniform way, everywhere and at all times (this is called "uniformity in nature."

Furthermore, science also requires that the universe be the kind of place where we can make conclusions about *all* of it based on an experiment done only on a *small sample* of it (this is called inductive reasoning).

These are principles that aren't *proved* by science, but have to be assumed ("presupposed") before we can even do science at all.

As Christians, we have good reason to assume these principles. Jesus Christ has all authority over Heaven and Earth (Matthew 28:18), is faithful and reliable, and he holds everything together by his mighty word (Hebrews 1:3).

This means that, when a non-Christian wants to be *autonomous* ("self-ruled") and disprove Christianity, or the Bible, or the biblical worldview, using science (or logic or morality—more on these later), he has to *assume* the universe is the way the Bible says it is, while denying that it's God who made it that way or Jesus who keeps it that way.

So, the non-Christian must explain why the world behaves exactly like the Bible says it should using principles that come *only* from his non-Christian worldview, and this can't be done.

This is stealing from Christianity.

## How Do Non-Christians Steal From Christianity?

Non-Christians do this when they argue against the Christian message by using teachings of the Christian message, without acknowledging that they come from Christianity or from the God revealed by the Bible.

They may say these principles are "just the way the world works," but that's an arbitrary assertion (remember those from the previous chapter?) given without reason, evidence or explanation.

Here's why this is such a problem for them: if their argument were to be successful in disproving the Christian message, then it would actually undercut the very principle they used in order to disprove it.

Think about it. Biblical Christianity is the foundation for the principles for science. If they use *science* to disprove Christianity, they will have then lost the foundation for science. This means their scientific argument against Christianity is powerless.

Cornelius Van Til, the "godfather" of presuppositional apologetics, compared this to a little child standing on her father's lap in order to slap him in the face. She wouldn't have been able to reach his face without climbing up onto him! In the same way, the non-Christian relies upon the teachings of the Christian worldview, in order to try to disprove that same worldview!

Another example would be a tree-trimmer, sitting out on a large branch, sawing away at the base of the branch he is sitting on. If he is successful in cutting off the branch, he'll fall to the ground—branch, saw and all. *Not a good idea.*

Here are three more examples of how unbelievers may steal from Christianity:

1. **Accusing the Bible's claims of being illogical.** The laws of logic cannot be broken—except by a false claim. If the Bible is illogical, then it is false. But if it is false, then the God of the Bible is not the foundation for logic's unbreakable laws. But then logic's explanation and foundation is... what, exactly?
2. **Accusing God of violating human rights.** This argument tries to say God is not good, because he supposedly breaks human rights. However, human rights depend on human dignity and value, concepts given by God in the Bible. However, if God is not good, then there's no reason to trust what His word says about human dignity. So what is the foundation for human rights?
3. **Accusing the Bible of being anti-science.** We have already seen how the principles of science work perfectly well within the biblical worldview. They are exactly how the Bible says we should expect the world to work. But if the Bible is not true, then what is the foundation for science? No Bible, no science.

## How Can You Catch Non-Christians Stealing From Christianity? And How Should You Respond?

First, you have to learn to spot when a theft is being attempted. See that the unbeliever is appealing to principles that are taught in the Bible (or at least depend on biblical truth). The best way to do this is to study your Bible. Learn what God says in His word. The more you have "hidden God's word in your heart" (Psalm 119:11), the more you'll be able to recognize when someone is \*ahem\* "borrowing" from it.

Second, ask for definitions (e.g. what does the unbeliever mean by "immoral" or "anti-science?").

Third, ask for a standard. Without the God of the Bible, what is the absolute, unchanging, objective standard by which we judge something as "immoral," "unscientific," "illogical," etc.—and say that it's wrong to be those things?

So as an example, say a non-Christian friend says he could never believe in a God who did the things God is recorded to have done in the Old Testament. Here's how you would use these steps.

First, say, "It sounds like you are accusing God of being immoral. Is that right?"

Second, ask, "What do you mean by immoral?"

Third, ask "How do we judge which things are immoral? What standard applies to everyone at all times, even God? How do we know about this standard?"

Is this avoiding the question? No. It's rather taking your unbelieving discussion partner's claim seriously—and showing that you care about him and his views, by asking to understand them better.

Further, it is refusing to be taken captive by philosophy, human tradition, empty deceit and elemental principles of the world (Colossians 2:8).

And finally, this is an act of love. Exposing that your discussion partner is stealing from Christianity is one link in the chain connecting them to Jesus Christ.

After all, if their ideas are self-contradictory and false, then they should repent of that thinking. And if their ideas borrow from the Bible, then they should believe in the Bible's message, at the heart of which is the Gospel.

We will get into how to fully respond in future lessons. For now, you just need to be able to spot when your discussion partner is stealing from Christianity and to respond with good questions.

Let me say it again: in order to do this well, you *must* know your Bible well. You must know how God provides the basis for truth, meaning and goodness, and where in Scripture these things are revealed.

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My name is Joel Settecase. I am a Bible teacher and former pastor, who used to defend the Christian worldview the completely wrong way, until God changed my attitude and my approach. Now I help people to share and defend their faith with confidence, and to pass it on to the younger generation.

You can find this brief guide in audio format on the Worldview Legacy Podcast. Worldview Legacy is the show that helps Christian men become the worldview leaders their families and churches need.

Our goal is to help you build a legacy for your family. You, your kids and wife will be able to confidently articulate the answers to the questions the world is asking, from the Bible, and you will see Jesus change lives as you share your faith.

Each episode, we answer a question (or multiple questions) that people are asking about the Christian worldview, showing where to find the answer yourself and how to teach it to others.

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