



## 2020 4Q Education: Lesson 10 Education in Arts and Science

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

### SABBATH

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Read first paragraph, “Education includes...” What does it mean to teach arts and sciences from a biblical perspective?

I would ask, as a psychiatrist, what does it mean to practice psychiatry from a biblical perspective?

What I have found from many Christian mental health providers is that it means the practitioner doesn't oppose the patient's Christian beliefs, or the Christian mental health provider uses Bible verses or Christian books to support certain concepts. When I have asked various Christian practitioners how they integrate their Christianity into their practice of psychiatry or psychology, most haven't. They are just supportive of their patients who want to believe in Christ, but their practice of psychiatry is the humanistic practices they learned in their school.

The lesson points out that it is insufficient to teach various subjects disconnected from the reality of God as Creator and how all life and reality has its origins and its sustenance in God. So, we must learn how to integrate our understanding of various subjects, including science and the arts, into our understanding of God's reality.

For me it all starts with diagnosis—if the diagnosis is wrong, then the treatment is wrong. And diagnosis of what is wrong requires we know what healthy looks like. Thus, the Bible informs us of God's original design for humankind. We must know God's design laws for life—the law of love, liberty, worship, truth, exertion, and the physical laws of gravity and physics etc. As we know these then we can see where sin severs God's design laws and causes damage. Then we can work to bring healing by intervening to restore people back into harmony with God's design.

So the best approach for me is the integrative evidence based approach in which we harmonize Scripture, science/nature and life experiences coming to conclusions that are supported by all three threads, when we have evidence from all three threads.

During my residency for every hour I spent studying the psychiatric theorists, Freud, Jung, Adler and others, I spent 2 hours studying the Bible and other Christian sources to discover the truths that were supported by Scripture and developed my own understanding of the faculties of the mind that is still the most comprehensive of any model out there. Eventually, I wrote the book *Could It Be This Simple? A Biblical Model for Healing the Mind* which is a model for our minds—which is analogous to a computer's software.



I have continued developing this integrated approach and later wrote *The God-Shaped Brain: How Changing Your View of God Transforms Your Life* in which I document how our minds choose our beliefs but our beliefs, including the God we worship, changes our brains which change our health. And only a God of love, and the methods of truth, love, freedom are healing to us.

Sin is always in some way breaking God's designs for life, which is always damaging to us and others and will result in death unless remedied by our Creator.

What about the arts—what are included in the arts?

According to Wikipedia the arts include:

- visual arts (including architecture, ceramics, drawing, filmmaking, painting, photography, and sculpting)
- literary arts (including fiction, drama, poetry, and prose)
- performing arts (including dance, music, and theatre)
- culinary arts (including cooking, chocolate making and winemaking)

And none of those falls into my area of expertise—so class, what would it mean to teach these from a Biblical perspective?

In the second paragraph the lesson states, “we need God's Word to inform the teaching of every discipline, from humanities to molecular biology.”

I agree that without God's Word studying any subject will ultimately lead to false conclusions—but what happens if we study God's Word without the balance of the other domains—science/nature and life experiences? Then we can misread the Scripture and draw all kinds of conclusions that are erroneous, like the earth being the center of the universe, or the earth being flat, etc.

What happens if we read the Scripture through the human imposed law lens? Then we can make all kinds of superstitious conclusions that are not in harmony with reality, like the food one eats can make one morally clean or unclean, or the way one washes their hands can make one morally clean or unclean.

## SUNDAY

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The first paragraph states, “There is evidence of the living God in all of His creation.”

What evidence of the living God from creation have you found to be most conclusive?

- the complexity of life itself?
- the circle of love in all living systems and organism?
- the coded information in the DNA/RNA of all living organism?
- the failure of science to provide any testable and reproducible evidence that life comes from non-living matter, but we have life coming from living matter every day all around us?



Read the second paragraph, “Take the human gestation period...” Do you find this compelling evidence? Would sharing this paragraph with someone who doesn’t believe in God be strong evidence to persuade them? Or might they laugh at it—why might they laugh at this paragraph? Because this is almost superstitious in making associations and meanings that are not objective, but subjective.

- Is nine months of gestation strong evidence for God versus 7 months or 10 months?
- Is human fertilization from one egg versus elephant or whale fertilization from one egg strong evidence for God? Is fertilization from one egg better evidence for God than a cat or dog that has fertilization from more than one egg? Wouldn’t fertilization from more than one egg show more love for more children and greater diversity of offspring and wouldn’t that be more evidence of God?
- Does the fact that the uterus grows under the heart indicate God’s love? Is the pump in the chest the organ of our being that loves? No, we love with our minds as we interpret and choose to love and our brains respond by firing appropriate circuits, which activate various pathways including the vagal nerve that innervates our internal organs we feel that love throughout our bodies. But the love doesn’t originate or even get experienced the chest, it originates in the mind and is processed in the brain, which transmits it to our bodies. We use the terminology with “all my heart” but in the Bible the heart refers to the mind where we think. “Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, ‘Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?’” Luke 5:22 NIV84
- What about the idea that the abdomen extends outward so the mother can see and be aware of the growing fetus, is this strong evidence of God’s awareness of us? If the human mother is obese and doesn’t see her abdomen grow does that mean she will be less aware of her pregnancy? If an obese woman did get pregnant and was unaware of it until she went into labor, should she conclude from this that God must not be aware of her?

I find this entire paragraph extremely poor evidence, that is poorly thought out, with weak associations that project in meaning that is nearly superstitious in nature. It creates associations and attaches meaning not inherent in the objects themselves.

For instance, a critic could say:

- sometimes a fertilized egg ends in miscarriage and death, therefore God is the author of death
- sometimes a fertilized egg results in a molar pregnancy which is a mass of hair, teeth, bone all mashed together without any person so God is the author of chaos
- some women are impregnated by rape so God is the author of rape

No, the much better evidence for me is in understanding God’s design, that it does take two individuals, who when operating as God designed, join themselves together in love and literally give of themselves to pro-create a new being in their image. This is much more objective evidence that confirms Scripture in many ways:

- It does take two individuals—male and female to procreate
- It requires them to actually give something of themselves for this new individual to be created



- As God designed, it is an act of love and is filled with pleasure and joy which bonds the two in closer union
- The Bible account of Eve being created from Adam but then all other humans being born of women who is impregnated by a man is biologically accurate. Adam, with an X and Y chromosome possessed the genetic material for a woman to be created. A woman does not need two X chromosomes, only one; every cell of a woman's body actually turns off one of the X chromosomes. So, Adam's body could be used to create Eve. But Eve could not be used to create Adam. This is quite profound that an ancient writer, without any molecular science, would write the Bible to have a woman coming from a man. All observable human history has every man being born of a woman and in fact, almost all fertility cults make woman the mother of creation, worship the feminine and we even call nature "mother" nature. But, in reality, a woman could never procreate, or be the mother of anything without a man and Eve did not have the genetic information to create a man. So, again the Bible is quite accurate and this is compelling evidence for confidence in the Bible record. Ask the critic to explain it—they can't and are quite taken aback when it is presented to them in this way.
- The coded information in our genetic material and the epigenetic changes we experience through life choices and how these changes are passed along to our children affirm what the Bible says that we create beings in our image and our sins do pass down 3-4 generations through epigenetic alterations that we inflict upon ourselves. No naturalistic explanation exists for how the DNA coded information came about, it requires an intelligence to code information. Further, Darwin's theory of mutations over millions of years has been proven false and the Bible's view of our actions changing us and passing down the generations has been proven true.
- The love and bonding a mother experiences with her child after the child is born and how a loving father will sacrifice for the protection and welfare of his wife and child, which perfectly reveals the Triune love of the Godhead each member selflessly lifting up the others.

So, if we are going to use examples from nature, we need to make them objective and not mystical and superstitious that read in associations that are almost magical in their presentation.

The lesson asks us to read Romans 1:18-20:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

And then the lesson states, "Paul...says that those who reject God will be 'without excuse' on Judgment Day because enough about Him can be learned from what He has made. In other words, they won't be able to plead ignorance!"

If we keep reading in Romans Paul goes on to say that they gave up the knowledge of God and preferred images made with their own hands, and that their minds became darkened, depraved, and



futile. What is being described? What law? Why do their minds become darkened like this? Because of the law of worship—by beholding we are changed! We do change, characterologically and biologically based on what we admire and worship. It is how reality works and is testable and reproducible. Only a God of love as Jesus revealed is healing to us, all other god-concepts are damaging.

Understanding this reality, then what is the “judgment”? Is it a legal judgment or is it the accurate diagnosis of what happens when we violate God’s design laws?

But the question of judgment is confusing because in the Bible there are at least four judgments:

### **The First Judgment:**

- “Let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: ‘That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when **You are judged.**’” Romans 3:4 NKJV
- Satan lied about God.
- Jesus reveals the truth about God.
- **We must judge: Is God like Satan says—or is God like Jesus revealed?** (Elijah Carmel)
- This judgment of ours determines whether we choose to trust God and open our hearts or not.
- “I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give him glory, because **the hour of his judgment** has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.’” Revelation 14:6, 7

### **The Second Judgment:**

- “‘Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will **come to his temple**; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,’ says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; **he will purify the Levites** and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years. **‘So I will come near to you for judgment.’**” Malachi 3:1–5
- This is the Judgment of the Great Physician, diagnosing what is wrong and determining the best therapeutic intervention.
  - God bringing “judgments” upon rebellious people throughout history to alert, to convict, to redeem, to protect, to redirect, and to keep open the avenue for Messiah (Flood, Sodom, captivity).
- Jesus’ work in the heavenly sanctuary to determine (judge):
  1. Who has trusted Him and given Him access to their hearts and
  2. What residual elements of sin remain to be removed in order to perfect them for the resurrection and second coming

### **Third Judgment:**



- “I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to **judge**. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Revelation 20:4–6
- “Do you not know that we will **judge** angels?” 1 Corinthians 6:3
- During the 1,000 years, the saints review the history of what transpired and the lives of the lost and of angels, and judge God’s actions in saving who is saved and not saving who is not saved, which confirms that every lost person is lost because they actually don’t want to be in heaven, so that no doubt is left in any mind as to why the unrepentant are not in heaven.

#### Fourth Judgment

- “I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. ... And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were **judged** according to what they had done as recorded in the books.” Revelation 20:11, 12
- And what is recorded in the books of heaven?
- The names are written there, and in the Bible what does name represent? Character! And what determines our character? Who we have chosen to trust—either opening our heart to Jesus and allowing Him in or clinging to fear and selfishness.
- “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on **the day of judgment** for every careless word they have spoken. **For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.**” Matthew 12:33–37 NIV84
- What is being described? Character—the actual condition of each heart, a diagnosis of what actually is.
- The end of the 1,000 years:
  - New Jerusalem is on earth and the gates are open and no one comes in.
  - The wicked acknowledge they were wrong and God was right—but they attack the city anyway.
  - They then experience the fire of unveiled truth and love and cry for the mountains to fall upon them, reaping what they have sown: eternal non-existence.
  - And all the saved judge that God could have done nothing more to save them.
  - There is no human law court determining guilt or innocence and imposing punishments—that is Satan’s lie.

So what judgment was the lesson referring to? The fourth or final judgment.

And what is the wrath of God? It is what Paul describes in verses 24,26,28, “therefore God gave them up” and what happens when the Life Giver gives them up? What happens when God stops intervening to hold at bay the results of rebellion?



What happens if a parent is holding a rebellious child by the hand who has jumped off the edge of a tall building, and the child is screaming and fighting and kicking and every time the parent pulls the child to the roof the child jumps again and again and again, what happens if the parent finally lets the child go?

Why will the child die in that circumstance—is the parent using power to inflict death on the child, or is death the unavoidable result of violating the design for life—for jumping off a building?

The following is from the book *Hard Saying of the Bible*, by Intervarsity Press, which is a well-done Bible commentary. We are reading their comments on this passage of Romans:

In some sense, God’s wrath is built into the very structure of created reality. In rejecting God’s structure and establishing our own, in violating God’s intention for the creation and substituting our own intentions, we cause our own disintegration. P 542

The human condition, which Paul describes in Romans 1:18-32, is not something caused by God. The phrase “revealed from heaven” (where “heaven” is a typical Jewish substitute word for “God”) does not depict some kind of divine intervention, but rather the *inevitability of human debasement* which results when God’s will, built into the created order, is violated. Since the created order has its origin in God, Paul can say that the wrath of God is now (constantly) being revealed “from heaven.” It is revealed in the fact that the rejection of God’s truth (Rom 1:18-20), that is, the truth about God’s nature and will, leads to futile thinking (Rom 1:21-22), idolatry (Rom 1:23), perversion of God-intended sexuality (Rom 1:24-27) and relational-moral brokenness (Rom 1:28-32). P 543

The expression “God gave them over” (or “handed them over”), which appears three times in this passage (Rom 1:24,26,28), supports the idea that the sinful perversion of human existence, though resulting from human decisions, is to be understood ultimately as God’s punishment which we, in freedom, bring upon ourselves. P 543

In light of these reflections, the common notion that God punishes or blesses in direct proportion to our sinful or good deeds cannot be maintained... God loves us with an everlasting love. But the rejection of that love separates us from its life-giving power. The result is disintegration and death. P 543

Kaiser, W., et al., *Hard Saying of the Bible*, Intervarsity Press, 1996

Read the last paragraph, “Especially in the day and age in which...” I did not like the use of the phrase “from the assumption that God is the Creator...” because I do not believe it is an assumption. I believe the evidence is overwhelming, testable, reproducible, compelling and that we do not assume that God exists and created all things, we can know it to be true because the evidence reveals it.



The evidence includes the examples we have already given above, but every testable element in life is consistent with the biblical worldview and every testable element disproves the godless worldview:

- complexity coming from chaos without intelligent input; or complexity coming from chaos with intelligent input, which does science prove to be true?
- life coming from non-living matter or life coming from other living organisms, which does science prove to be true?
- things adapt and change from over millions of years through mutation to the DNA code or things adapt and change from generation to generation via epigenetics and there are no mutations to the DNA that advance the species? Again science confirms the Biblical model.

Further problems with the godless view of origins are well described in Nancy Pearcey's book *Finding Truth* (I want to thank Marilyn Holm an online listener for gifting me this book) writes:

The origin of the universe has given rise to a puzzle known as the fine-tuning problem. The fundamental physical constants of the universe are exquisitely balanced, as though on a knife's edge, to sustain life. Things like the force of gravity, the strong nuclear force, the weak nuclear force, the electromagnetic force, the ratio of the mass of the proton and the electron, and many other factors have just the right value needed to make life possible. If any of these critical numbers were changed even slightly, the universe could not sustain any form of life. For example, if the strength of gravity were smaller or larger than its current value by only one part in  $10^{60}$  (1 followed by 60 zeroes), the universe would be uninhabitable. (page 25)

Thus, as people who believes in God and creation we stand on solid evidence. We must reject the lies that to believe in God is blind faith, assumption, non-scientific, unreasonable and start speaking the truth that those who reject God and cling to a godless theory of origins are the ones who deny reality, reject evidence, and hold to beliefs based on faith without evidence.

## MONDAY

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The Beauty of Holiness—what is that? What is holiness?

I want to suggest holiness is perfect harmony with God, ultimately in every domain of existence—thus holiness is healthiness. Anything that violates God's design laws for life is unholy and damages and destroys. God, through His agencies, is working to restore us to holiness, which restores us to harmony with God and results in eternal life.

Here are some historic quotes, what do you think?

Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial, in darkness as well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love. AA 51.2





Would this description be living in harmony with God and His design laws for life? Would it be the new covenant of having the law written on the heart and mind?

Consider this quote:

At this time the church is to put on her beautiful garments,—“Christ our righteousness.” [What is this describing? The same author states elsewhere that “When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.” COL311] There are clear, decided distinctions to be restored and exemplified to the world in holding aloft the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. **The beauty of holiness is to appear in its native luster in contrast with the deformity and darkness of the disloyal, those who have revolted from the law of God.** Thus we acknowledge God, **and recognize His law, the foundation of His government in heaven and throughout His earthly dominions.** [What does this mean? What is this law? What kind of law? Is related to the final message of mercy, to worshipping Him who made the heavens, earth, sea? Is it connected to holiness? Is it beautiful to be restored to God’s perfect design for life? Can one be perfect, sinless, flawless, without any defect or deformity while violating God’s law? Is any defect, deformity or flaw beautiful? So, what is the beauty of holiness? Restoration to God’s design, harmony with God’s law, healing!] His authority should be kept distinct and plain before the world; and **no laws are to be acknowledged that come in collision with the laws of Jehovah.** [What does this mean? Does it mean a specific commandment change or does it mean the entire concept of law, that we are not to embrace and teach God’s law as functioning like human law, imposed rules requiring imposed punishments? Do you think it is beautiful to imagine a god that would use power to torture and kill his creatures? But isn’t this what all of Christianity teaches that a holy God must do to unrepentant sinners? Why because they have accepted the lie about God’s law. When we return to worshipping the Creator and present the 3 Angel’s message as we were called to do, then we will glorify God and call people out of that fallen system of confusion.]....  
CET 207.2

What about laws of man that restrict religious liberty, that restrict church attendance where we share the gospel of Jesus Christ—would they be in conflict with the laws of God, the law of love and bringing people to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ so they can experience eternal life?

What if those laws of man that restrict religious liberty, that restrict church attendance are done to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect human life—are they in harmony with God’s law or breaking it?

What is more important to the Christian, more temporal life, or eternal life? What if we exchange eternal life for more temporal life? What if we value our temporal life more than the eternal life of our neighbor? What if we prioritize earthly health over sharing the gospel and allow the government to close our churches to protect earthly life, but we fail to share the gospel with people who never come to a saving relationship with Jesus and thus are lost eternally?



Back to the question of holiness, consider this historic quote:

**True holiness is wholeness in the service of God. This is the condition of true Christian living.** Christ asks for an unreserved consecration, for undivided service. He demands the heart, the mind, the soul, the strength. **Self is not to be cherished.** He who lives to himself is not a Christian.—Christ's Object Lessons, 48, 49. ChS 235.3

Would this include being so afraid of contracting a disease we isolate ourselves away and stop our ministry for God? Would it include shunning lepers or isolating and closing our churches during COVID-19?

What is holiness? Restoration of the law of love into the heart and mind of the individual such that we love like God loves, Jesus said:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: **Love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you, **that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.** He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. [Notice in the context of love Jesus uses the example of design law in nature] If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect** (Matthew 5:43-6:1 NIV84).

What does it mean to love your enemies?

As events unfold and we approach the end of time we will face temptations like Jesus face, persecution, ridicule, imprisonment, perhaps even death—did you hear about more beheadings of Christians by Islamic extremists in the last couple of weeks?

And when we face such outrageous injustice, what is the issue? We are being tempted to fight back, to hate, to be selfish—but it is in the face of these very unjust actions that tempt us, that we who surrender our lives to Jesus, who trust our souls to our Savior will be cleansed from sin and restored to perfect righteousness through the indwelling Spirit—it is then we love like Jesus loves and are children of our Father in heaven.

Read from GSB Chapter 15, p. 205:

October 2, 2006 started out like so many other days in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania: up early, complete morning chores, a hearty breakfast, and then off to school. Thirteen-year-old Marian Fisher and her eleven-year-old sister, Barbie, had no idea what would transpire that day. So off they went, to their one-room school house in Nickel Mines Village, Pennsylvania.



At 10:25 a.m., Charles Carl Roberts IV, a 32-year-old milk truck driver, entered the school carrying a 9mm pistol. He then ordered the boys he found to carry lumber, a shotgun, a stun-gun, wires, chains, nails, tools and other items into the school. Next, he sent out fifteen boys, a pregnant woman, and two women with infants, then nailed two-by-fours and two-by-sixes across the entrance.

He used strips of plastic and lengths of wire to tie the ankles and wrists of the ten remaining elementary-school students, all girls. It is unclear what his true intentions were, but when the police arrived, he became angry, desperate and increasingly agitated. At 11:07 a.m., when it became obvious he was intent on killing the girls, love stepped in.

Thirteen-year-old Marian Fisher stood up and asked to be shot first. Offering her life in the hope her sister and friends would be set free, she was heard by the survivors to say, "Shoot me and leave the other ones loose." The gunman shot and killed Marian. No sooner had her lifeless body crumpled to the floor than her eleven-year-old sister, Barbie, stood up and said, "Shoot me next," hoping to save the other girls. The gunman then shot Barbie. She was wounded in the hand, leg, and shoulder but survived.

Do you see the beauty of holiness contrasted with the ugliness of sinfulness in this story? Do you see love for our enemies in this story? Do you see the righteousness of God in this story?

What about in the world today? What is being promoted as the way to advance, the way to succeed, the way to get ahead?

Read the bottom paragraph, "As with everything..." What is considered beautiful by the world's standard?

The lesson asks, "What are some 'beautiful' things that are not necessarily holy and good?"

## **TUESDAY**

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The lesson asks us to read 1 Timothy 6:9,10 and asks what pursuits does Paul warn us to avoid?

People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. NIV84

What do you hear in this text?

What is the problem with love for money?

If we love money what do we not love?



What kinds of griefs do people experience who love money?

Read second paragraph, “Notice in 1 Timothy...” What kinds of errors are people experts in today?

- godless evolutionism—think of all the experts in the world who teach this lie with such assurance—and then all the lies that stem from this...
- mental health programs and treatments and theories that are from a godless perspective
- human sexuality from a godless perspective—marriage, commitment, fidelity, binary sexuality is just a religious construct and offers no benefit
- pagan views of God, the god that imposes law and must use power to inflict punishment upon sinners and requires legal payment not to—there are many experts in this error
- others?

## WEDNESDAY

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Read first paragraph, “The Bible draws...” What is the basis of all wisdom? God and the knowledge of God, which means His character, His design laws, His methods, purposes, protocols—how reality works and why.

What are some examples of the wisdom of God is seen as foolishness to the world and how the world is truly foolish?

The more you give the more you receive—understanding God’s design law and how love works this is wise. The more love you give the more love you receive. The more breath you give away the more air you take in. But the world it doesn’t make sense, the more you hoard, take, pile up the more you receive, the more you give away the less you have. Thus, the world promotes selfishness, which ultimately isolates and cuts people off from others, and the source of life resulting in death.

Now that the election is over I can point out some foolishness that I saw from many Christians who were claiming to be wise without people accusing me of being political because this information can no longer be used for voting as the election is over. But this information can be used to learn to discern, to become wise and not be taken in by the foolishness of this world’s ways even when it is couched in Christian dogma.

One of the principles of God’s kingdom is that man looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart. This means we cannot truly judge another person’s character or heart, only God can. But more than this, we cannot know a person through the media, we cannot know someone by reports of others, we cannot know someone without actually knowing someone.

In the recent election there were many Christians conducting lectures and writing articles about the character of the various candidates, but as far as I know, not one Christian doing this personally knew



the candidates. This means they were making their conclusions based on a public persona filtered through various media outlets with imperfect and partial information often distorted by the biases of the reporters.

We cannot know a person's character from the media—even when we see that person speak themselves, it is still a public persona, acted and presented for effect. We still don't know the heart.

- Consider the way some take God's actions in the Old Testament and God's own thunderings and threatenings to create a false picture of God—why? Because they don't actually know God. When we know God we see all those same stories in a different light that confirm God's character of love.
- Consider Bill Cosby before his conviction—what would most people have thought of his character? But all of that was a public persona that the evidence presented at his trial exposed as false.

Taking facts of confirmed sin from history as evidence of character—i.e. confirmed visits with a prostitute as evidence of character.

Hmmm...is this wisdom applied or foolishness of the world to think we can use that to know someone's character today based on their sins of the past?

So, if we had confirmed historical facts that someone was a murderer, then we can take that as evidence of bad character and we should not follow them as a leader? Moses, for instance, when he came to lead the people out of Israel—if we were wise we would oppose Moses as having bad character because he was a known murderer? Or David, after Bathsheba and Uriah? When was David's character the most godly, the most mature, before or after Bathsheba and Uriah incident? It was after! That incident brought him to the point of true repentance and he became a man after God's own heart.

So, the Christian that looks to past mistakes, without asking the question of whether there is evidence of Christian repentance and maturing in character is being foolish.

Drawing conclusion based on interpersonal style to determine character—in other words someone who is blunt, direct, doesn't seem to have a lot of empathy, says things that are often hurtful, comes across as rude, must mean that the person has bad character right? Not necessarily—if you don't know them personally, you don't know. What if the person has Asperger's syndrome? I have many patients with this disorder and they all are good-hearted people who really have high morals, want to do the best job they can, but have brains that don't see interpersonal cues, don't empathize like others do, they are direct, and so are experienced by others as blunt, rude, uncaring, mean, when they are not being so—and the higher their intelligence the worse their interpersonal style—even when they are seeking to help people because they care about people.

Did you ever see the program *Bones*, Temperance Brennan was the anthropologist who was very compassionate and caring but was depicted as someone with Asperger's and even though she had a



tender heart she came across as rude and offensive all the time because of how she said things so inappropriately.

So, again, to judge someone's character without actually knowing someone personally is foolish—yet many Christians get caught up in doing this all the time and thus are manipulated by the media and others.

A better approach is to assess the person's ability for the position one is being considered for based on the evidence of effectiveness of their actions for that role. For instance, I have a patient with Asperger's who is a pharmacist and is extremely efficient at their job—accurate, rarely if ever makes an error, has caught multiple errors from other pharmacists and technicians, preventing injury and even death, is able to process prescriptions quickly, more quickly than most other pharmacists—but despite this skill has lost multiple jobs because comes across as rude and uncaring when answering questions because is direct and blunt. Whereas, other pharmacists without Asperger's and with great interpersonal skills, but without as good attention to details have made errors that have injured people yet keep their jobs and people prefer the one that injures them because that pharmacist makes them feel better.

What is exposed in this story? The foolishness of valuing feelings over facts, and how we can be led astray by our feelings into ignoring facts and making false conclusions—thus the Bible teaches that we are tempted by our feelings, but truth sets us free.

## **THURSDAY**

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Read first paragraph, “Many teach that matters possesses...” I agree with this completely, God is the source of all life and He is the sustainer of all life. God is not bound by the laws of nature as they emanate from Him and are sustained by Him. To the degree it works to advance His kingdom God manages the outworking of His laws, but that management is via means and mechanisms of God that interface and connect throughout all reality in ways we cannot fully comprehend and thus are never breaking of His laws or even changing of them, but managing them.

## **FRIDAY**

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read and discuss questions



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

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**SHARING campaign:** November *The God-Shaped Brain: How Changing Your View of God Transforms Your Life*

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