

# PARENTS' DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION GUIDE

for

## The b4worldview Course

A support tool from the *b4worldview* team



## Session One: Introduction

In Session One we ask many questions that prepare the student to fully explore the assumptions that influence their worldview. Often, we asked the student questions that do not necessarily have a right or wrong answer, but used to open the student's mind to discovery. Many vital concepts about life will be best discovered as the student goes through the course. Therefore, the student is presented topics repeated and associated with different other topics in a less orderly structure of content material than the student may be familiar with in more traditional learning approaches.

The following questions help to review the discovery process the student begins in Session One:

1. Why do you have stress? Anger? Disappointment? Fear?

Why do you get your feelings hurt?

What makes you happy?

APPLICATION: Read Philippians 4:12. Think about how much your feelings depend on your circumstances. Now read Romans 14:23. The last part of this verse defines sin as anything that you depend on that occurs in your physical circumstances. Based on this definition, can you explain why "getting your feelings hurt" is sin?

2. How would you describe your worldview (not what is worldview)?

What makes life virtuous? What makes life "full" (abundant)? How do you account for "evil"?

APPLICATION: Read John 10:10. How much do your ideas about "the good life" depend on your view of yourself (self-concept, identity). Read Romans 12:2. Think about the first part of this verse now. What does it mean "to conform to this world"? Read 1 John 5:19. Is it possible your understanding of "evil" may be influenced by a flawed worldview about what is good and real.

3. There are many difficult questions and life choices every person faces. Think a moment at what a few of these are for you. Write them here.

Explain how you make choices about life.

APPLICATION: Explore the difference between practical and principled decisions. Practical approaches view outcomes and their known effects (often selective and limited). Principled approaches depend on applying basic truths, knowing that you cannot predict all outcomes so you trust that whatever happens is for the best.

4. You were asked questions about how you view truth, faith and change. The course will use your answers to guide you through different paths of instruction. But for now, how do you feel about truth? You think it is more dependent on specific people and situations or more absolute across people and situations?

APPLICATION: Relate your “Head” knowledge (what you say you believe) about truth to how you make decisions (question 3 above). Are there any inconsistencies? Discuss how difficult applying absolute truth is in decision-making.

5. What does “faith” mean to you?

APPLICATION: Read Hebrews 11: 1. Have students focus on the notion that faith is “evidence not seen”. Spend time thinking about how you get evidence you cannot observe. Identify some things you trust that you cannot see, such as what is right or wrong, someone’s love, a friend’s motives.

6. How do you deal with change?

APPLICATION: Explore your willingness to change. Is it based on the conditions of the change or do you ever think God is inviting you to change? Think about the second part of Romans 12:2. What does “be transformed” mean? How does the need for certainty about the outcome of changing keep you stuck in the status quo?

7. In situations dealing with your family, or school or work, in what ways do focusing on rewards and punishment affect you?

APPLICATION: Review Matt 20, parable of the landowner. Like the workers who worked all day, why do you think it is natural to want to see the Kingdom of God through lenses of reward and punishment rather than focusing on the King?

8. You were asked in session one “where do ideas come from?” Think about your mind for a minute. Is it more of a generator of ideas or more of a receiver of ideas? We spend much effort training our minds to generate knowledge, how do we train our mind to receive it?

APPLICATION: Read Philippians 2: 3-8. How did Jesus humble Himself? In what ways can we relate our idea about ideas with “humility of mind”? Read Romans 8: 26 and John 5:19, 30 and discuss how Scripture describes us as “receivers,” even Jesus.

9. Now relate this idea about the mind back to the topic of faith. How do activities of the mind, such as rational inquiry and critical thinking, work on unseen evidence (faith)?

APPLICATION: Read John 20:29. Explain how you think about and even come to conclusions about things you cannot see.

NOTE: There was much to consider in session one since it introduces many of the topics that will be explored in other sessions. If you could not complete the application questions for session one, there will be opportunities to revisit the ones you failed to cover adequately in later sessions.

## Session Two: Identity

In session two the student is directed to focus on the topic of “identity”. Use the following questions to discuss ideas covered in session two to better understand how the topics apply to each student personally.

1. Which of the three types of identity do you feel influences you the most? Which identity provides your sense of value or self-worth?  
Social identity – culture, family, geographic  
Personal identity – personality, job, physical qualities  
Natural – male vs female, age, human nature

APPLICATION: What does 2 Corinthians 5:13 “In Christ you are a new creation” mean to you?

2. How do you use “I am ONLY human” as an excuse for your mistakes and flaws? Consider how you understand your identity based on what you do.

APPLICATION: Read Romans 8:5. How would you describe your Spiritual identity?

3. How do you respond to those who say that “people are basically good”?

APPLICATION: Read Romans 5:8. In what ways do you still identify with the way you were before you received the redemptive work of Christ?

4. If you have time and didn’t finish questions from Session One, you may want to go back and visit what you haven’t covered.

## Session Three: What is “Life”?

One of the most foundational questions each person must answer is “what is life?” This involves reconciling the visible and invisible world not only “out there” but also “in here.” What makes me ME? Just because something exist, does that make it real? Explore these questions as a way to better understand what you REALLY (actually) believe about life and living it abundantly.

1. How do you feel about and explain your 3 life forms, body, soul, and spirit?

APPLICATION: Find Scripture that references one of more of the 3 life forms. Here are some examples: 1 Thess 5:23, Matt 16:26, 2 Corinthians 4:7 and 5:1

2. How would you explain the role of the physical world? Relate your views to what Paul is telling us in 2 Corinthians 4: 16-18

APPLICATION: Discuss how the Incarnation of Christ helps us understand how the purpose of the physical world glorifies God and points us to God’s invisible Kingdom: Col 1: 26-27, Hebrews 1:3, Hebrews 2:17

3. Psychology is the study of the soul. The soul is often considered the central command center of your thoughts, feelings and choices. Discuss how your soul is either influenced by the body (outcomes occurring in physical circumstances) or by the spirit (powers at work in the invisible realm).

APPLICATION: Read Romans 8: 9. Consider that when we focus on outcomes, we are giving priority to the flesh vs priority to the Spirit, where we focus on the Kingdom and the Sovereignty of the King.

4. In what ways do you view your life through the lenses of your circumstances? How do you look to what you can get from this world to satisfy your soul?

APPLICATION: Read John 12:25. “hate” is a word referencing priority. Is Jesus simply challenging us to not see life through the world’s system? Is this about priority?

5. Which of the 6 needs of the soul amazes you most as you consider that God chooses to provide what your soul needs without you trying to do things to get the need met by the world around you?

APPLICATION: Ask the students to think of a Scripture that explains that God meets the need they selected above. Examples, Joy (1 Peter 1: 8 and John 16:22), Purpose (2 Corinth 5:9 and Philippians 2:13), Freedom (John 8:32 and Ga 5:1, 13), Hope (1 Peter 1: 3 and Romans 5:2), Esteem (1 John 3: 1 and John 3:16), and belonging (1 Peter 2: 9 and Ephesians 5: 25-27). Then ask each student how they apply this scripture to their soul’s satisfaction when their circumstances are difficult? Finally, can you state the 7 “I am’s” Jesus claims in John? In what way are they metaphors or pictures Jesus provides to identify with column B satisfaction (bestowment)?

6. What role does emotion play in the lives of Christians? Do you hear preachers and theologians say emotions have no place in the Christian’s life? How do you feel about that?

APPLICATION: Read 1 Peter 4: 1-2. The word “suffer” appearing 14 times in 1 Peter refers to the deep personal emotional experience associated with an external stimulus. Actually, the root for “suffer” is the same as for “passion (pascho).” Emotion is deep and meaningful, but neither positive nor negative. This passage (and others like it) suggest that Christians, like Jesus, have emotions, especially very deep ones. The issue is to what degree is the influence based on what we see in the visible world, which is the lust of the flesh, vs unseen evidence, which is what we understand about God’s Sovereign will.





4. Based on what you learned about trust, discuss why there is so little of it in your communities and relationships. Review what you learned about how trust makes a community more effective.

APPLICATION: Review the meaning of trust, “willful vulnerability.” Discuss how “walking in the flesh” (focusing on outcomes) increases the need to control and reduces the willingness to be vulnerable. Then look at how “walking in the Spirit” (focusing on the Sovereign King) affects the ability and willingness to trust (choose to be vulnerable) in close relationships. Read Luke 12: 32. How does living in unmerited favor reduce the risk of being vulnerable to others. Read Galatians 4: 8-9. How does experiencing Grace (we are already deemed righteous by God) affect our levels of trust in relationships? What are you vulnerable to that can harm you?

5. Continue to go back to questions from previous sessions you feel you did not adequately discuss earlier.

## Session Five: Living as an Individual

As a human we are subject to many natural influences that make us different, but also make us somewhat “flawed”. Session five explained the way we make sense of and respond to ourselves and situations around us through perception, interpretation, and behavioral selection. Each of these steps involves influences that can filter and bias our responses. The following questions will help explore these influences in greater detail:

1. Discuss times when you saw things one way but later you could see it another. How do you have confidence in what you see when you realize the ways your perception is flawed?

APPLICATION: Read Philippians 3: 1-8. How did Paul’s conversion allowed him to become aware that placing confidence in the flesh was a waste?

2. Describe how your personality can influence you to not see and think clearly about things.

APPLICATION: Personality is neither positive or negative. It is part of our personal identity and does not change when we become Christians. In a sense personality is related to motivational gifts. When walking in the flesh, personality is a tendency to get your needs met from the world around you in a certain way. As a Christian, when your needs are met through Christ and not your circumstances, personality works together with the Spirit to motivate you towards behaviors within God’s will. Read Philippians 2: 13.

3. Biases are one of the most dominant influences of human nature, “walking in the flesh.” Discuss where you see confirmation bias (seeking what agrees with you), attribution bias (placing blame) and stereotyping (artificial associations) active in your soul.

APPLICATION: Read Gal 2:20. What happens to our natural biases when we are “crucified in Christ?” Read Gal 4: 9. Discuss how trusting your natural perceptions and interpretations represent bondage to the futility of this world that is not part of your identity.

4. Social justice dominates our public discourse. What is meant by “social justice”? The word “deserve” has been hijacked by our culture. Some use it to mean goods and services are to be distributed equally, some mean according to need. “Deserve actually means” distributed according to what someone has earned (equity). People use “deserve” and fair to justify all kinds of positions they take on public policy. How does this dominance of terms like justice, fairness and deserve challenge how Christians view the notion of “rights”? Is our obsession with “rights” different than Jesus’ view of your rights in this world?

APPLICATION: Read 1 Peter 2: 9-11. If we are pilgrims and sojourners, exactly what are our rights in this world as expressed in scripture? Read Matt 5: 38-41. Is Jesus telling us that reciprocity and justice is not a guiding principle of His Kingdom? Look up “inalienable” in the dictionary. Did God “bestow on us inalienable rights”? How do we fully grasp Grace as a Kingdom reality if we demand our rights in this world? Discuss what it means to live under provision and privilege of the Father, rather than rights and rewards in this world.

5. Social exchange, the value that passes between us, has been found by social psychologists as the force that holds relationships together. How does it affect trust? Discuss how difficult it is to receive from others if it obligates you to them and creates a demand that makes you less likely to commit in relationships.

APPLICATION: Read Matt 6:1-4. Here Jesus uses charitable giving to explain two contrasting views of rewards. The Kingdom views rewards as flowing from the nature of the reward giver, the King. These are viewed as discretionary rewards as opposed to rewards that depend on what we do (social exchange). Contingent rewards, such as wages, is the world system works. Reflect on how the effects of social exchange and a dependency on reciprocity is a major factor of “walking in the flesh.”

6. Culture is an informal control system of the visible world that influences us to act in ways that keep us legitimate with what others expect of us. Discuss how Christians should understand and relate to culture.

APPLICATION: In John 3:16 we read “For God so loved the world”. Reference here is to the ordered system of the universe. God acted to save the world not because it did things the way He wanted but because it was broken and lost? Read 1 John 2: 15-16. What does it mean to “not love the world”? Why would God “love the world” and tell us not to? Is John challenging our priorities?

## Session Six: Which way is up?

Session six begins the journey of discovering deeper and richer meaning of knowledge, truth, and faith. Here the student explores ways that truth seems relative and then why it seems absolute. The following questions can help students review these concepts about truth:

1. How do you ever know you are going in the right direction with the choices you make in life? In what ways do you depend more on how you feel or views of family or norms of culture to provide you with what is proper and right versus truth?

APPLICATION: Explore this question without trying to settle on a specific answer. The next several questions will follow up on thoughts generated from this question.

2. Session 6 discussed the many ways that absolute truth is easy to grasp in the physical laws, such as gravity and boiling water. Why is it then so difficult to accept truth is absolute in the unseen world and in the moral world? Can you provide a moral law you consider absolute? A Spiritual law?

APPLICATION: This session explains that human nature's obsession with justice makes mutual acceptance of behavior as the basis for what is right, not whether the specific actions of individuals align with any law (i.e., consensual sex and same sex marriage). Ask students to respond to their sense that "if something is fair, then it is Ok" subject to the situation and interpretation. Read 1 Corinthians 1: 18-24.

3. When determining what is true, there seems to be so many qualifiers, such as conditions that make capital punishment right relative to the commandment “thou shalt not kill”. Discuss how you can communicate to others “truth is absolute” when in any specific situation there seems to be views that vary “depending on” certain factors?

APPLICATION: Read John 14:6. The word truth in original language means “disclosure of the actual qualities.” If Jesus is “the truth”, should truth be reasoned (understood) by what is revealed to us by Him rather than us trying to figure it out by what we can reason from what we observe. Remember in session 5 we found how flawed human sense-making is. Discuss the difference between assuming truth about something is determined by the observer of it vs revealed to the observer by its source.

4. The virtue of tolerance and inclusion central to our culture challenges anyone who believes and claims truth is absolute. How do you explain to others that you can accept people who believe truth is relative, but you don’t have to accept their belief as true when it is not.

APPLICATION: Read John 4: 7-30. See if you can gain insight from how Jesus treated the woman to whom He should never had been speaking. What was His “go to” position without ever tolerating (accepting) her beliefs that do not line up with truth?

5. One example of where Christians can engage the secular culture with Biblical concepts without relying on the Bible itself is with the notion of “what makes something good?” Do you recall the session 6 discussion on this point? If so, what impression did the alternative ways to view “good” have on you?

APPLICATION: Read Gen 1: 4. What made the light “good”? Read Matt 19: 16-17. Why would Jesus say this about “good”? Read Romans 8:28 and Ephesians 2:10. How do the 2 different ideas about “good” (outcomes vs source, extrinsic vs intrinsic) affect how we understand what Paul is saying?



## Session Seven: Knowledge, Truth and Faith

This session focuses on three concepts that are very common. These terms are used all the time, but not well understood. Yet, they are fundamental to living an abundant and virtuous life. Let's explore these three topics by discussing how you apply them in the choices you make throughout the course of your life.

1. You learn about the physical world by processing data to gain evidence from what you observe. What kind of knowledge do we call this? What do we call knowledge you gain from the spiritual or invisible world? How do you obtain this type of knowledge? What do you call the evidence you gain from knowledge you cannot see? How well can you describe these concepts to others?

APPLICATION: Read John 17:3. Here Jesus is defining the eternal or "real life." To do so He uses the concept of "gnosis" knowledge or ideas we get through ways that do not involve observation of the physical world (eido knowledge). Have the students identify knowledge they have that involves reasoning, but all the evidence is not observable. Examples, how do you "know" certain kinds of qualities about someone you are in a relationship with that others cannot observe? Do you only rely on what you can observe to fully know anyone? Name other ways you may use your "gut" as evidence to make decisions. Read Hebrews 11: 1 again. Can you see that faith is the evidence of what we know about the spiritual or unseen world?

2. Which of the two forms of knowledge (eido or gnosis) produce the evidence you most likely depend on to make your choices in life?

APPLICATION: Read John 20:24-29. How can you trust evidence you cannot see? How do you explain the knowledge you have that you cannot “prove” through observable evidence?

3. In this session we used the idea of “true north” as being absolute truth, independent of what anyone thinks or feels. We used the compass as the source of knowledge that transcends people’s opinions about which way is north. We have the Bible as a written, observable claim of “truth north” for the spiritual world. What instrument of gnosis knowledge reinforces our eido knowledge so that we can fully trust that what we know is true?

APPLICATION: Read Acts 8:26-39. How did the Spirit work in Phillip’s choices? After hearing the word of God, what caused the Ethiopian Enoch to believe? Read Acts 26: 1 – 28. What kept King Agrippa from believing. He was “almost persuaded.”

4. Let's summarize. When someone claims "they know", are you equipped to say, "what kind of knowledge are you referring to, eido or gnosis?" When someone presents evidence, is it only observable? Do you find that you are drawn into debates that only use observable evidence (science) or are you comfortable and confident to introduce evidence that is not observable (faith)? How would you describe the faith (unseen evidence) in many choices you make?

APPLICATION: Read Romans 3: 21-22. Notice here the progression Paul uses to explain the "manifestation of righteousness". In other words, how can we know for ourselves we are the righteousness of God? Paul says, "through faith", or evidence that we cannot see. Evidence of what? The evidence of Jesus' redemptive work on the cross (vs 24). "For all those who believe." Here "believe" means for those who depend on, rely on or TRUST the evidence. Therefore, trusting (believing) in the unseen evidence (faith) of God's plan of redemption (target of faith) is the way of knowing that we are righteous. According to Paul what role does eido or observable knowledge play in our knowledge we are righteous? Read Romans 10: 14-17. The Jews understood "hearing" as both a physical and spiritual harmonious occurrence that fits together.

5. There may be some questions that the group have discussed that still requires more discussion. If there is time now, please feel free to go back and strengthen your understanding of key concepts before moving on.

## Session Eight: Finding Truth

The world, as evidenced in the dictionaries, does not explain well the words “true” and “real”. In the preceding sessions truth was defined as “the disclosure of the actual qualities” and real was defined as “true everywhere all the time.” The following questions will help firm up ideas about truth and how to find it or “know” that something is true. Remember, as we learned in session seven, “to know” has two components, observable and unobservable ideas that fit together.

1. Can anyone ever prove anything is true using observable data alone? Can you explain the purpose and limitations of science? In what ways is science or any human endeavor futile in determining truth through observation?

APPLICATION: Science can measure physical qualities of an object, such as height and weight, which would be eido knowledge of the object. One limit of science is that it cannot measure unobservable objects, such as purpose and love. The second limit is science cannot measure what is true about the relationship between two objects, it can only measure the likelihood A causes B depending on C. Read John 4: 23-24. We worship or joyfully place our allegiance toward God in spirit, in the unobservable influences on our soul.

2. The issue of unobservable or gnosis knowledge is not unique to Christians. Everyone relies on ideas they cannot get from the physical world. This is why the culture puts so much emphasis on “inner voice” or intuition or “gut level” decision-making. The question is not whether every person relies on gnosis knowledge and the unseen evidence of faith, but what source of the evidence do they trust or depend on. Describe how you identify the source of your unobservable or gnosis knowledge. For example, whose voice is your “inner voice”?

APPLICATION: Read John 10:26-27. How do we train ourselves to “hear His voice”? Discuss how we should develop our minds more as “receivers” than “generators” of ideas. This is one major difference between “walking in the flesh” and “walking in the spirit.”

3. The culture wishes to diminish faith as an effective influence on choices by equating faith with emotion. Even some pastors and theologians get caught in this trap. Emotions occur when the “feeler” part of our soul responds to stimuli. This response is either positive or negative with some level of intensity (weak to strong). The question is not whether we have emotions, but what stimulates them? Consider how a priority on your spiritual identity influences your “feeler” or emotions versus how a carnal identity stimulates emotions based on the circumstances of your physical existence.

APPLICATION: Read Matt 6: 19-21, 31-34. Discuss how emotions such as fear, anxiety, guilt, and even pride come from focusing on our circumstances. Read 1 Peter 4:12-13. Peter is reminding the believer that our life in the physical world is a constant challenge to the source of our emotions. This should not surprise us. God’s glory comes to us as we subject our soul’s “feeler” to His truth and not to what we see and desire from our circumstances. This is the way Jesus’s emotions worked (this is what is meant by “the sufferings of Christ”) and a way we participate in his “sufferings.”

4. So, finding truth is the process of receiving gnosis knowledge containing unseen evidence from God through His Holy Spirit. Then we can see or observe in the physical world evidences of God’s truth that fits what has been revealed to us. Discuss how this happens in your life.

APPLICATION: Read Romans 1: 20-21. All of the physical world can point us to truths about God. However, these are observable evidences that are futile at establishing truth without the unseen evidence (faith) that God reveals to us through gnosis knowledge. We read John 17:3 earlier. Notice the real life (eternal) is gnosis knowledge of God and his Son Jesus whom He sent to us to bring our soul and identity back to Him.

## Session Nine: Conclusion

You have been learning a variety of ways your thoughts, feelings and actions are influenced. It's time to bring it all together as a summary of your core assumptions. You have developed a rationale for two sets of core assumptions, we will call carnal and spiritual, across five factors – reality, truth, trust, satisfaction and justification. This 2 by 5 table summarizes much of what Scripture calls “walking in the flesh” vs. “walking in the Spirit” or “the old man” vs. “the new man”. Jesus tells the story of the man who builds his house on sand vs. rock and what happens to each as the storms of life come. Let's now discuss a few questions that will help you review what we presented to you in session nine, which serves as a recap of the entire course.

1. Assumptions flow from your identity and its respective orientations about yourself and your life. The apostle Paul addresses this in many ways. One especially important reference to frame our identity and life appears when we combine parts of two statements from 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and Galatians 2:20 – “My life is not my own, it's been bought with a price – it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me.” Using what you learned about the three facets of identity (social, personal and natural) and the three forms of life (body, soul, and spirit), explain what happens when you become a “new creation” or you become “transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

APPLICATION: Read 2 Corinthians 4: 7. Can you apply the assumptions of the Spirit to how it feels to “have a treasure in an earthen vessel?” Can you relate to how God's power, not yours, challenges your need to be in control?

2. We gave a simplified way to remember the two minds associated with the two sets of core assumptions. Discuss something you learned that helps you discipline your mind to change from an orientation of circumstances or “the outcome of things” to where you focus on sovereignty of God or “the source of things”.

APPLICATION: Does the call from Matthew 6 to “seek first the Kingdom of God” have a fresh perspective for you in terms of how you view your motivation? Does your natural obsession to explain why things happen the way they do in the physical world affect the way you understand the priority of the Kingdom and thus your identity?

3. Read Ephesians 1:3. You probably have read or heard this many times. The word “blessed” appears 3 times, but with slightly different meaning. The first “blessed” means to “give admiration to” or our heart’s affection to God. The second “blessed” means bestow, noting we adore this God who is a bestower. Bestower of what? This is the third meaning of “blessed”. God has bestowed on us every spiritual provision and privilege in Heaven, which is where God lives and lavishes abundantly. Can you see better why Paul is so full of praise and confidence as he writes to the church? Does it make sense to you that a psychology of identity (mind, emotions, and will) influenced by column B assumptions aligns perfectly with this view of reality?

## Session Ten: Final Course Review

For student reflection (can you explain this ideas to others?)

1. In what common and small ways do I let my ideas about the outcome of my efforts affect how I feel about myself?
2. How does my focus on “fairness” influence how I react to situations in my life?
3. Do I think about reward and punishment in most decisions I make?
4. In what ways am I like the orphan who knows in her head she is adopted but wakes up many days feeling like an orphan?
5. How do “I know that I know” something is true?
6. Do I seem to have to know why things happen as they do? Have I considered this an issue of faith?
7. Can I explain how God’s Sovereignty actually works?

For students to discuss with parents and friends:

1. What did you learn about your b4worldview that you want others to know about or understand better?
2. Do you believe your family operates in Grace versus using exchange as the fundamental framework for interacting with each other?

For example,

- a. How are family finances distributed?
- b. How is control or power exercised?
- c. How are mistakes handled?
- d. Is thankfulness or duty the most dominant motivator?
- e. Is guilt, shame, or fear used to influence one another?
- f. How often and in what ways does judgmentalism show itself?