



# THE LIFEGIVING WOMAN

February 2021

Happy February!

It's hard to believe we're already a month into 2021, and what a month it's been.

At the outset of this email, I want to encourage you to stick around to the end because I follow it up with a video for you.

I'm not sure if you remember my initial invitation to this newsletter (I should offer a reward if you do!), but I began by painting a picture of the current terrain we're traversing:

*We live in a time of history that has confused everything about identity.*

*We see Christians leaving the Church, recanting their faith, and believing all manner of twisted philosophies (often subtle).*

*And, we can feel discouraged, tired, ready to throw in the towel in our own race. Life can sometimes look, feel, and *\*be\** downright weighty, daunting, and disorienting.*

*That's part of why we must become women of the Word, women who love theology, women who love prayer... *\*women who love God.\** If we aren't pursuing these things, we'll be easily discouraged at best, and slowly compromised at worst.*

*We must live intentionally, especially as we seek to disciple the next generation of women...because both you and I *\*are\** called to disciple daughters of the faith.*

As I've been praying through the last several months and watching what's going on around me, one word continues to return to me as vitally important.

**Worldview.**

Lifegiving women *must* have a distinctly Biblical worldview. A worldview, most simply put, is the lens through which we view the world. It is how we interpret and respond to life and life's problems. It affects *everything*.

You might respond to my seemingly obvious statement that we need a distinctively Christian worldview with, "Yes! Of course we do." And for that, I'm thankful and relieved to hear it.

But I want to challenge you, just as I've been challenged over the last many months, to prayerfully consider examining your worldview.

What I observed in many Christians in 2020 was a distinct *lack* of Christian worldview. And, lest you be tempted to think I'm being harsh or unfairly critical, let me be the first one to raise my hand say that *I became painfully aware of my own inconsistency, too*.

In my pride, I want to delete that last sentence.

But I don't want to be someone who has a log in her eye and at every turn, is whacking someone with it because I am obsessed with a speck in someone else's eye.

There is inconsistency in my life. *And I hate it*.

So, why don't we pause *together* and ask the Lord to help us examine the lens, the filter through which we're looking at and interpreting the world on two levels. We need to carefully consider our worldview at the macro level, which includes the big issues of life including the cataclysmic world events of the past year, and on a micro level, which includes our everyday thoughts, decisions and circumstances.

This has been a matter of prayer for me over the better part of 2020, and I don't put it before you flippantly. Rather, it is with the desire to build up the body of Christ in the spirit of Ephesians 4,

*"until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."*

### **Our Source of Truth and Authority**

*"Do you really believe that what you believe is really real?"*

That question was posed to me and my 43 classmates in the fall of 2002, during my senior year of college. And yes, [our professor](#) did repeat it so that we could attempt to wrap our minds around what he was asking.

It's a piercing question.

When we *believe*, we put our confidence in something that has a truth claim. To borrow one of my best friend's definitions<sup>[1]</sup>, we "expect or hope *with confidence*." We trust.

What is it exactly that we place our trust in?

How you and I choose to approach major life decisions such as marriage, voting, vocation, whether or not to go to church, etc. are not decisions made in a vacuum, but rather decisions made based on what we believe.

And our decisions in how to relate to one another, whether to exercise or not, how we eat, how we spend our money, etc. are also based on what we believe to be true.

We submit to what we believe and then *we live it out*. What we believe, regardless of who or what it is, *is* our authority. And this is vital to understand because it means that we are far more prone to idolatry than we think we are.

John Calvin famously said that our hearts are idol factories, and as we slow down to do deep heart work, we will quickly agree with him! It is an inescapable reality that human beings always live under authority. It is preposterous to think otherwise.

We're told in Colossians 1:15-20:

*"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."*

Paul asks us if we understand this reality of living under authority in Romans 6:16,  
"

*Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?"*

**I'm making a truth claim here.** I'm claiming that God *is*, and that the Bible is authoritative, infallible, and is supreme over all other wisdom, and I'm basing my belief that we all live under authority on that Word:

- *Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. - Psa 102:25*
- *Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: "I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself, - Isa 44:24 ESV*
- *All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. - Jhn 1:3 ESV*
- *yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. - 1Co 8:6 ESV*
- *The LORD has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble. - Pro 16:4 ESV*
- *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. - Rom 11:36 ESV*
- *And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. - Col 1:17 ESV*
- *And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. - Col 1:18 ESV*
- *For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, - Col 1:19 ESV*
- *and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. - Col 1:20 ESV*

If, for example, our emotions are our authority, then when we feel any given emotion, we can expect to live according to how we feel because we're bringing to that situation a presupposition--we've presupposed (decided beforehand) that our emotions are what is true.

If we believe that we are in some way inferior to another person, we'll act that way. When we believe something to be true, we act on that belief.

Emotions are a part of our God-given design and there's a place for them, just as there is a place for being aware of what others think of us. But, how we think about these things, and how we steward them is directly tied to our worldview.

As Christians, it probably seems obvious to say that God's word is completely trustworthy, and that man is to be in submission to this perfect Word given by the Creator of the World (Ps. 119:4).

But if we're honest, you and I both know that every day there are little ways in which we do not live as if this is what we believe.

Why?

### **The Noetic Effects of Sin**

It might seem silly or obvious to talk about worldview because we're Christians. We assume that we *do* function from a Christian worldview, that we *do* live in submission to His Word. But consider with me for a moment the reality of what theologians call the "noetic effects" of sin.

If "by nature, our mind is unable to see, hear, or believe because the heart, by nature, is hardened by sin...*The mind cannot see clearly*. Its presuppositions, perspective, and agenda are *all* tainted by sinful self-absorption and self-importance. God's truth is suppressed, ignored, denied, and turned on its head because the sinful heart has invested itself in countless idols of righteousness (2 Thess. 2:12)."<sup>[2]</sup>

Sin affects *everything*, including our mind. So, when we come to Christ, we need to *work* to have our mind renewed (Rom. 12:1-2, Eph 4:17-24). We need to pay attention to *what* we think (Pr. 4:23).

Over time, as our heart is *repeatedly* rightly turned **to the Lord**, our thinking will increasingly be submitted to and aligned with His truth.

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. - Rom 12:2 ESV*

This means that as we grow and mature in Christ, our worldview becomes increasingly more accurate because we are taking everything we encounter and are filtering it through the sieve of Scripture. We learn how to interpret life *not by our experience*, our emotions, or the culture, but by what Scripture teaches us.

### **The Work of Cultivating a Christian Worldview**

I emphasize turning our heart *to the Lord* because it is too easy to turn to experts, to friends, to books, etc. to tell us how to interpret life. And this is a big reason why so many Christians are confused today.

Don't get me wrong, faith is meant to be worked out in community. We *should* discuss and work out what we believe in the company and counsel of others. We can and should learn how to hold a Biblical worldview with the help of brothers and sisters in Christ. The Lord commends this, and we need it.

But we must exercise discernment when it comes to who we listen to and learn from. We also need to consider where we place "authoritative" voices in our life. Too often, we look to the world's ways or the world's leaders for guidance, and we actually allow their input to trump God's wisdom. For example, worldly wisdom encourages debt, while Scripture discourages it. "The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender" (Pr. 22:7).

Whether we want to admit it or not, we are all influenced to some degree by the culture we live in. Acknowledging this is a helpful starting point to developing (or further developing) a distinctively Christian worldview.

A key to this process is being in the Word every day. **We should not expect to grow in alignment with the Lord if we are not first seeking His Word.** We need to have the heart of Proverbs 2:1-15:

*My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you,  
making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding;  
yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding,  
if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures,  
then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.  
For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;  
he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,  
guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints.  
Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path;  
for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;  
discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you,  
delivering you from the way of evil, from men of perverted speech,  
who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness,  
who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil,  
men whose paths are crooked, and who are devious in their ways.*

Gaining a Christian worldview doesn't happen all of a sudden. Redeemed thinking and seeing isn't a one and done thing gained upon salvation. It requires *ongoing* honest work. Hard work.

*Willing* work.

### **Practically Speaking**

So, how do we continue cultivating a worldview that is distinctively Christian? I want to suggest that it begins with humility.

Proverbs 9:10 says, "*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.*"

A humble heart is one that, among other things, is willing to be pierced and sharpened both by the Word and by other believers. It is one that is willing to be *shaped* by the Word.

Part of this involves being willing to let others help us see more clearly. This isn't easy and can be a bit painful (a lot painful sometimes). But, if we're willing to endure the pain of it, we'll find that "faithful are the wounds of a friend" (Pr. 27:6).

So, with a humble heart posture, the next thing to do is to evaluate what you're reading, what you're watching, and who you're listening to.

What podcasts, music, news, articles, books do you consume? It's helpful to learn from unbelievers, and the Lord has certainly bestowed grace on them. But when it comes to understanding how to see and process the world at a macro level, and our lives on a micro level, it's imperative that we seek wisdom from **trustworthy** believers.

*"Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm" (Pr. 13:20).*

*"Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my knowledge" (Pr. 22:7).*

But I want to push a little further and say that our **first place** to search out wisdom is in the Word.

Especially in the days we're living in, we must exercise discernment. And the best first way to grow in discernment is to first be reading your Bible every day. As we're in the Word learning truth and what is good, when we encounter things in the world, we'll grow in our discernment:

*"But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil" (Heb 11:13).*

**Scripture contains everything we need to know how to live a godly life.** It is foolish for us to bypass it and go to humans first, believers or otherwise.

*"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire" (2 Peter 1:3-4).*

But we do need other believers, too! We are meant to grow up in community, not alone. So there's a balance to be had.

There are too many resources surrounding a Christian worldview to list here. But, a few helpful starting points include:

- [CARM – Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry](#)
- [Soli de Gloria](#) – this is my college professor that asked us, "Do you really believe that what you believe is really real?" I highly recommend [The Truth Project](#).
- [Stand to Reason](#)
- Classic Books: [How Now Shall We Live by Charles Colson](#) , [The Universe Next Door by James W. Sire](#) , [Postmodern Times: A Christian's Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture by Gene Edward Veith](#) , [Idols for Destruction: The Conflict of Christian Faith and American Culture by Herbert Schlossberg](#)

This is merely an introductory dive into developing a Christian worldview. I want to commend you -- spending time here, going deeper is both worthwhile and imperative. Your time and effort won't be wasted!

In an effort to encourage and spur you on, [in this video](#), I share with you one example of what it might look like to begin developing a Christian worldview on the micro level of our lives.

## A few favorites...

1. Speaking of worldview, I'm working my way through Carl Truman's new book, [The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution](#). Fair warning: this book is not for the faint of heart. Truman is a brilliant scholar, but it also tops out at 432 pages. I have words with definitions that I've looked up sprinkled throughout the pages of my book. Still, I think it's an important read.
2. I've really appreciated Tim Challies' public writing about a very personal matter: [the death of his 20-year-old son](#) last November. His writing is gritty and it's instructive to all of us who would seek to learn from him. This is just one article of many that he's written on his blog.
3. And lastly, a timely song, [We Turn Our Eyes \(You Speak to My Fear\)](#). What an anthem.

*We turn our eyes*

*We turn our eyes*

*See the darkness bow to light*

*And we will rise*

*And we will rise Love has overcome the night*

I hope you have a wonderful February!

Kelly

[1] <http://webstersdictionary1828....>

[2] Troxel, With All your Heart, 46. (emphasis mine)



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