

Harvest Christian Fellowship  
"Theology @ 9" Handout  
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"World" - Facilitator: David Walker

## WORLD

### CHRISTIANS ARE IN SOCIETY TO SERVE AND TRANSFORM IT

World in the New Testament sometimes means what it means in the Old Testament, namely, this earth, the good natural order that God created. Usually, however, it means mankind as a whole, now fallen into sin and moral and moral disorder and become radically anti-God and evil.

A Biblical or Christian worldview is one's total conception of the world from a biblical standpoint. Our basic belief system about the meaning of life, the nature of God, the source of truth is the basis for making daily decisions.

Christians are sent into the world by their Lord to witness to it about God's Christ and his kingdom and to serve its needs.

**John 17:18** - *As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.*

**Matthew 24:14** - *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

**Colossians 1:20-22** - *But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.*

But they are sent into the world without falling victim to its materialism:

**Mathew 6:19-24** - *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" "No*

*one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.*

It's unconcern about God and the next life

**Luke 12:13-21** - *Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'*

*"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."*

And its prideful pursuit of pleasure, profit, and position to the exclusion of everything else.

**1 John 2:15-17** - *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.*

The world is at present Satan's kingdom, and the outlook and mind-set of human societies reflect more of the pride seen in Satan than the humility seen in Christ.

**1 John 5:19** - *We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.*

**2 Corinthians 4:4** - *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Christians, like Christ, are to empathize with people's anxieties and needs in order to serve them and communicate with them effectively. They are to do so, however, on a basis of motivational detachment from this world, through which they are momentarily passing as they travel home to God and in which their single-minded purpose must be to please God.

**Colossians 1:9-12** - *For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the*

*wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.*

**1 Peter 2:11** - *Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.*

Monastic withdrawal from this world is not sanctioned (John 17:15) but neither is worldliness – an internalizing of the earthbound self-absorption of the people of this world (Titus2:12).

Jesus encouraged his disciples to match worldly person's ingenuity in using their resources to further their goals, but he specifies that their proper goals have to do not with earthly security but with heavenly glory.

**Luke 16:9** - *I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.*

God's first requirement of Christians in this world is that they be different from those around them, observing God's moral absolutes, practicing love, avoiding shameful license, and not losing their dignity as God's image-bearers through any form of irresponsible self-indulgence.

**Ephesians 4:17-24** - *So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.*

*That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

**Romans 12:2** - *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

The church's main mandate is evangelism and every Christian must seek by all means to further the conversion of unbelievers.

**Mathew 28:19-20** - *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*"

The impact of one's own life is significant and neighbor-love will constantly lead the Christian into deeds of mercy.

**1 Peter 2:12** - *Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

Christians are called to fulfill the "cultural mandate" that God gave to mankind at Creation.

**Genesis 1:28** - *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

**Psalm 8:6-8** - *You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.*

Man was made to manage God's world, and this stewardship is part of the human vocation in Christ. It calls for hard work, with God's honor and the good of others as its goal.

Knowing that God in providential kindness and forbearance continues, in face of human sin, to preserve and enrich his erring world, Christians are to involve themselves in all forms of lawful human activity, and by doing that in terms of the Christian value system and vision of life they will become salt and light in the human community.

**Matthew 5:13-16** - *You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*

As Christians thus fulfill their vocation, Christianity becomes a transforming cultural force!

\*All of the foregoing material was taken from "Concise Theology" by J.I. Packer, Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem and Doctrine by Mark Driscoll & Gerry Breshear