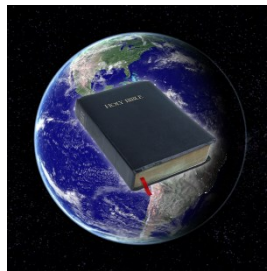


The Bible – What's in it for Me?

by Randall Ricker

The title of the Sermon today is The Bible - What's in it for Me? Some people think of the Bible as a book of "don'ts." That is, what not to do. Don't do this. Don't do that, and I think the Bible is too restrictive and that people should be able to believe whatever they want to and to do as they please. Otherwise, people's feelings might be hurt.

The Bible teaches us the purpose of life, how the world got to be in such a mess, and how everything is going to be made right. The Bible shows us what actions are right and what are wrong. Let's answer the question the Bible, what good is it? What's in it for me?



A Biblical Worldview

We should take has been called a biblical worldview. I know some people who write on this may have different opinions on exactly what it means. We'll talk about it here. The definition of worldview in Merriam Webster Dictionary is: "a comprehensive conception or apprehension (which means understanding) of the world especially from a specific standpoint." A worldview is an understanding of the world, especially from a specific view. There are many worldviews, many viewpoints such as political, economic, and personality. But we are going to talk about a biblical worldview here. Let's talk about what it is.

Why we exist – God's plan

A biblical worldview tells us why we exist. That's a deep question. Why was I born? Why do we exist? Is just to have fun? Are we here just to be good to other people? Or is there something else? There is more than that.

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Our purpose is to become part of God's family, and to live forever. We know why we are here.

Why evils in the world

Why are there so many evils in the world? How did things get so messed up with all the wars, crime, hatred, sickness, poverty, etc? The answer goes back to the incident of the two trees in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve.

Genesis 2:16-17

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Genesis 3:1-6,

1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' " 4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

Adam and Eve wanted to decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong. This is what happened:

Genesis 3:22-24

22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"-- 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

This cut people off from the tree of life. The Bible, history, and even current events show us that most people are cut off from God. They do not have a relationship with God. The people in the Old Testament of the Bible did not have God's Holy Spirit except for a few who were needed: the prophets and a few other people. In New Testament times, and since then, only people who are called to have relationship with God have God's Holy Spirit. Jesus said no one could come to Him unless the Father drew them. That means not everybody is being called now. We should not just look at individual situations and events like the abortion problem, economics, COVID, and wars. For these things people are influenced by Satan the devil, the same one who tricked Adam and Eve.

How the world will be repaired

Let's consider how the world is going to be repaired. Personally, we can have the world, our world, our personal world repaired. You might think of it that way, if we repent are baptized, and receive God's Holy Spirit.



"Sea Lake Pleiku 1966 - Missionary Baptism - Lễ rửa tội ở Biển Hồ Pleiku năm 1966" by manhhai is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Acts 2:38

Then Peter said to them, "**Repent**, and let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**."

When a person is an adult, they can understand our purpose, the purpose of life. They can be forgiven. That is very comforting for a lot of people, realizing that things they have done in life, some bad, some very bad are all forgiven. They can all be forgiven. There is no need for guilt. Then people can learn how to lean on God for protection and help throughout their troubles. What can we do individually to repair our own world? Think of it that way.

Globally things will be repaired when Jesus Christ returns and rules over the earth.

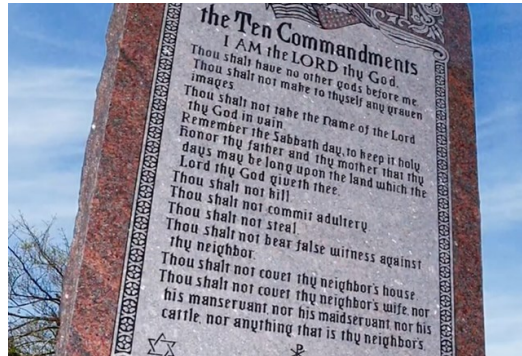
Revelation 11:15

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the **kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ**, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

Jesus Christ will take over and rule the world in a proper way.

Benefits of the Biblical way

Having the biblical worldview, we use the Bible to know what is right and what is wrong. God's way of life can be summarized in the 10 Commandments. The 10 Commandments are then explained by other verses in the Bible. Let's look at the benefits from the Biblical way of life, going through the commandments very briefly.



The 1st commandment

Exodus 20:2-3

2 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 You shall have no other gods before Me.

Once we understand who the real God is and we have no other God's in place of Him, there are all kinds of benefits, one of them being that we realize, as I mentioned before, that we are forgiven of our sins.

Romans 3:23-24

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

We are justified, our sins are forgiven. And that's very important. It is important for all of us, and for some people who are laboring under tremendous guilt, it is even more important for them. They don't need to feel guilty. Having a true God and then having the Holy Spirit really change the way we think.

2 Timothy 1:6-7

6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

It says a sound mind. If we are worrying too much, or we have other various problems, some emotional problems, a lot of that can be solved with God's Holy Spirit. We will

have a better life. We have joy. We have peace of mind. We do not have to worry anymore.

With a belief in God, we have faith in His promises and hope for the future.

The 2nd commandment

Exodus 20:4-5A

4 You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.

If we have the second commandment, we realize that we would be worshipping properly. We will save our efforts and our money to help other people. So often you will see on TV and Internet pictures of golden idols in temples and churches and works of art and statues. They are very expensive. People are spending their money on that. Even in the poorest countries, you have people doing that instead of helping each other with their financial needs. Also, think of the time, the efforts that go into these things, that go into the rituals of various churches and religions. Instead of spending their time on that, people can spend their time helping other people.

Keeping the second commandment, we worship properly, saving our efforts and money to help other people.

The 3rd commandment

Exodus 20:7

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

Using God's name in vain means to misuse God's name. We are not to be using it in a way which shows disrespect to God.

Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

The fear of the Lord: We are not talking about abject terror here. We are talking about proper respect for God. We show respect for God by not misusing His name, by using His name properly. The beginning of wisdom is a benefit of using God's name in the right way.

If we keep the third commandment, we show respect for God, and we begin to be wiser.

The 4th commandment

Exodus 20:8-10A

8 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God.

The Sabbath is a delightful day. Isaiah 58 verses 13 and 14 tells us that. Let's study that for a moment.

Isaiah 58:13-14

13 If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the LORD honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words, 14 Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.

We have one day out of seven to rest from our work. Think of it as if you are sprinting in your race. You can only sprint for a short time, and then you have to rest. You cannot just keep sprinting. We sprint for six days and the 7th day, the Sabbath we get to rest. We can enjoy that day when we can become closer to God. Spend a little extra time in prayer and Bible study. We can spend extra time with family and friends really enjoying the day. It is not a burden. No, it is a joy.

The Sabbath is a day to remind us of God, and to spend time with family and friends.

The 5th Commandment

Exodus 20:12

Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

The apostle Paul expounded on that a little bit in Ephesians 6 verses one through four.

Ephesians 6:1-4

1 Children, **obey your parents in the Lord**, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: 3 "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." 4 And you, **fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath**, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord

Children obey their parents in the Lord. In the Lord means being consistent with the Bible teachings, because sometimes you may have a parent who is abusive and

demanding things that children should not be doing that are contrary to the Bible. In that case children would not be obeying their parents. That does happen. We are talking about parents acting as they should be according to the Bible; then children should obey them. Paul is referring to Exodus 20, verse 12 that we just read. Parents should train their children as God would have you, in a proper way. The father should not be provoking his children. I have a picture of a two-way street sign here because Ephesians 6 is a two-way street when you think of it that way. The children should be honoring their parents, but the parents need to be honorable. Even if the children do not honor their parents, the parents still have to train them as God instructs in the Bible. If the parent is not honorable, the children should obey as required in the Bible, excluding abusive situations, as I just mentioned.

When we keep the 5th commandment, we have a peaceful family life.



"Two-Way Street Sign" by z6p6tist6 is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

The 6th commandment

Exodus 20:13

You shall not murder.

If everyone kept that commandment, there would be no wars, no violent crimes. Jesus Christ even extended this definition of murder in the intent, including hating people or being angry without a cause. Instead of murdering people, whether it is physically or by the intent of the law, we can replace that attitude with love.

1 Corinthians 13:4

Love suffers long and **is kind**; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;

The best approach is love and kindness.

Ephesians 4:31-32

31 **Let all** bitterness, wrath, **anger**, clamor, and evil speaking **be put away from you**, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another**, just as God in Christ forgave you.

We are replacing things like bitterness and anger and all these things. Replace those with being kind and forgiving.

Keeping the 6th commandment we don't harm people; instead we are kind to them.

The 7th commandment

Exodus 20:14

You shall not commit adultery.

The subject of adultery brings us to the subject of male and female genders.

Genesis 1:27

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; **male and female He created them**.

Biologically the gender is defined by the chromosomes. The female has two X chromosomes. The male has an X chromosome and a Y chromosome.

Now there is talk of what I would call non-biblical genders, and people who are trying to adopt the gender of other people not what they were born with. Recently there was an incident where drag queen shows were being sponsored by libraries. The same libraries were asked to allow a lecture based on a book by a Christian author named Kirk Cameron. Even though he was paying all the expenses, they still would not accept him. Finally, one library accepted and 1000 people showed up. We have these non-biblical agendas being publicized very much. Mainstream media and some educators encourage young people to act like the gender they are not born with. Employees can be disciplined if they use the wrong pronoun, if they call someone "he" when the person prefers to be called "she," etc.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed,

but you were sanctified, **but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus** and by the Spirit of our God.

Many sins, some of which are mentioned here, violate the seventh Commandment. The good news is that people can repent or to stop doing it. It says, "but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the spirit," so people can repent. People can change their attitude, can change their actions. Remember Satan, the devil who tricked Adam and Eve is still alive. He is tempting people to not live God's way. We need to be aware of that. We must not approve of non-biblical gender behavior. That does not mean we hate anybody. We certainly should not. We should not encourage the behavior either. Don't let society convince us that everything people do is good, because it is not all good.

Consider high school kids who think they need to pair off. They go steady with one after another, and then they break up. There are all kinds of hurt feelings. Kids do not need to be hurt that way.

Also, violating the 7th Commandment can ruin marriages.

Keeping the 7th commandment avoids hurt feelings in relationships.

The 8th commandment

Exodus 20:15
You shall not steal.

If there is no stealing, there would be no crime. When you have to lock the door, it is just to keep people from getting hurt with whatever might be inside, and not that you would be worried about somebody stealing anything. There is another replacement, replacing stealing.

Ephesians 4:28
Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.



Carpenters work on a slab of wood" by World Bank Photo
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Replace stealing with a giving way of life.

Acts 20:35

I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, **'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'**

It feels good to give. We realize that we are doing something for someone, causing them some benefit. It feels good for us. Think of it that way, and certainly it is the right thing to.

The way of giving is better than getting for ourselves. The way of give is better than the way of get. This has been said.

James 1:27

Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to **visit orphans and widows** in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

The orphans and widows are considered to be the most helpless members of our society, so we help them. We do what we can for them. Who might have been stealing, instead should be giving to them.



Matthew 25:35-36

35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

That is the kind of behavior Jesus Christ expects from us: To be giving people food and drink and clothing, and taking them in, visiting the sick and those in prison. We believe in this very much. In the past we have given contributions to groups where they are providing food for the needy people.

The 8th commandment teaches us the way of giving is better than getting.

The 9th commandment

Exodus 20:16

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

If everyone lived by the 9th Commandment, we could trust everybody. No, we cannot now.

Matthew 12:34-36

34 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For **out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks**. 35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. 36 But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

If we are keeping the 9th commandment, we are trusted by people. We will have a good reputation of being honest. They may not agree with us on everything we do, like if we are keeping the Saturday Sabbath, for example, and the holy days of Leviticus 23. But at least we hope that they would say we are honest people.

Keeping the 9th commandment, we are trusted.

The 10th commandment

Exodus 20:17

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, ... nor anything that is your neighbor's.

Covet means to wrongly desire to desire something that does not belong to you and should not belong to you. Coveting leads to stealing. Or at least it leads to a bad attitude. We have a bad attitude thinking, I deserve to have that house; I should be entitled to that house. Maybe I did not work to earn the money for that house, but I think it ought to be mine. That sort of thing is just an example. Or that car, whatever it might be. We can be envious, jealous of the other person who has something that we do not. A lot of bad attitudes come in when the 10th Commandment is violated.

Luke 12:15

And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.

We can be covetous, wrongly desiring things. We have to realize that our things are not

our life. Our relationship with God is more important, and our relation to other people is more important than things.

Philippians 4:11-13

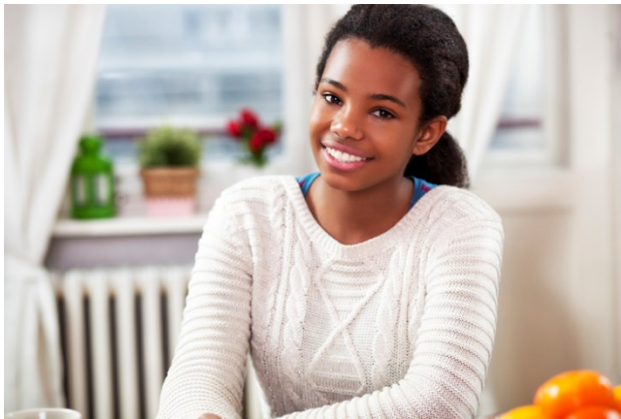
11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned **in whatever state I am, to be content**: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

The apostle Paul wrote this from prison. If the apostle Paul learned to be content in whatever condition he was in, whatever the situation was, even in prison, we can learn that too, and not be covetous.

The 10th commandment shows us what is not important in life.

Benefits from the Biblical way

We know why we were born: to become part of God's family and live forever. We understand why people do bad things. We understand how God will fix everything. We understand from the Bible how to have a happy life.



Pond 5

The more we live by the Bible, the happier we will be.