

# Worldviews

## Foundations - Unit 318



### Week 1 – What is a Worldview?

## Session 1 – An Introduction to Worldviews

Weekly Objective:

- To introduce the idea of a worldview and discuss what aspects of a worldview you might recognize.

### **Introduction:**

With more information often comes more perspective.

Perspective then is dependent upon the information that we receive, the more information the better the perspective. For example....

The perspective that we hold and the information that we have amassed need not be correct, it is just what we have gathered or been told often enough for us to believe.

While a worldview is something more deeply held than culture there are some similarities. Mark Sayers in his book *The Vertical Self* says this about culture;

“The way you see yourself and understand your identity is not unique. You feel the way you do because you are a product of a culture that has shaped you to process the world in a particular way.”

Ravi Zacharias’ ideas include;

- What is a Worldview? – The lens or ideas or beliefs through which you ultimately look at reality.
- A worldview will answer the following questions;
  - What is the origin of all things?
  - Where does meaning lie?
  - What determines morality?
  - What is humanity’s destiny?
- Everyone has a worldview
- You test a worldview by exploring the following aspects of the worldview;
  - Logical consistency – are the claims of the worldview logical and consistent?
  - Empirical adequacy – are the claims able to be verified adequately?
  - Experiential relevance – is the worldview relevant to your life?

“A worldview is a network of ultimate beliefs, ideas, values and assumptions about the universe and our part in it that shapes how a person understands their life and experiences (and the lives and experience of others) and how that person acts in response.” James N. Anderson (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDWvnt66j8U>)

“Your worldview represents your most fundamental beliefs and assumptions about the universe you inhabit. It reflects how you would answer all the “big questions” of human existence, the fundamental questions we ask about life, the universe, and everything.”<sup>1</sup>

James Sire, in his book *The Universe Next Door*, says this about worldviews;

A worldview is a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or unconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic make-up of our world.

A world view is composed of a number of basic presuppositions, more or less consistent with each other, more or less consciously held, more or less true.

Each worldview more or less covers the following questions;

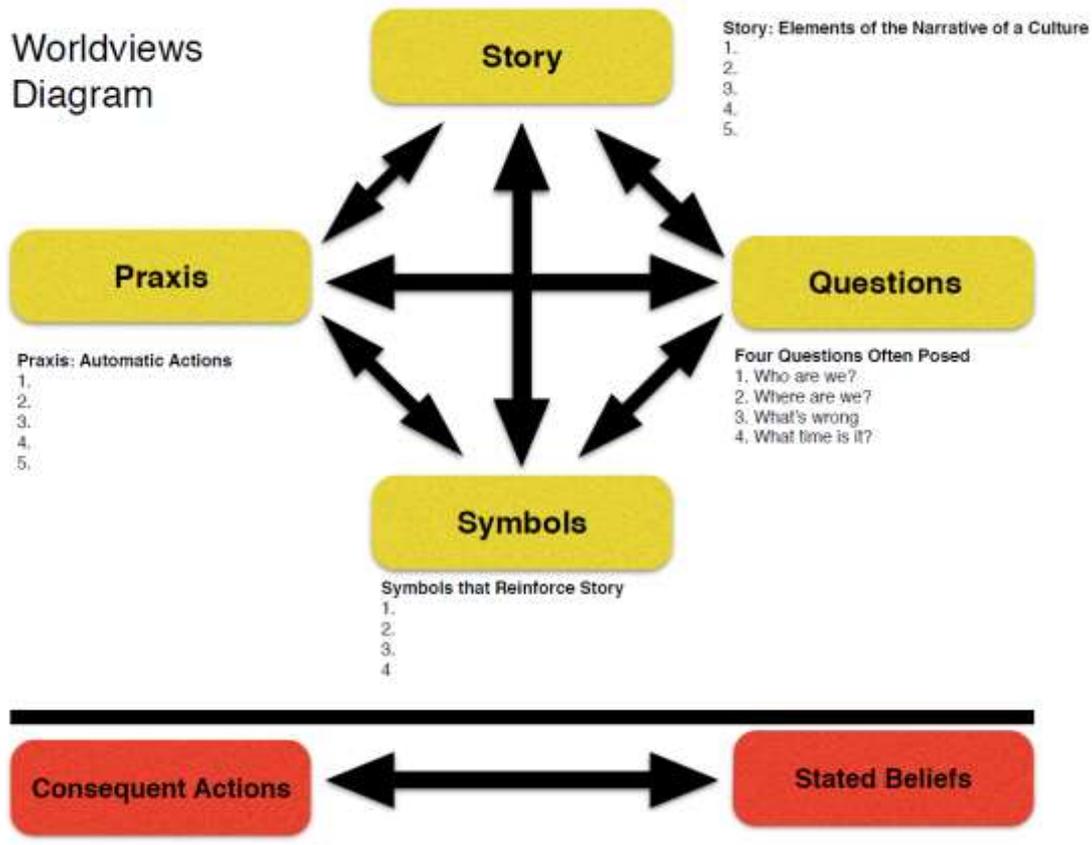
1. What is prime reality - the really real?
2. What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?
3. What is a human being?
4. Why is it possible to know anything at all?
5. How do we know what is right and wrong?
6. What is the meaning of human history?

Tom Wright suggests that as a way of entering into the topic of worldview, begin by answering the following questions:

- What is the **story** that is most prominent in your culture and which dominates the worldview of the people around you?
- What are the powerful **symbols** within your own context that reinforce the story?
- What is the **praxis** (automatic actions) that are evident in your culture that emerge from and reinforce the story?
- What are the answers to the **questions** raised in the [diagram](#) that help to further define your worldview?

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson, James N. *What's Your Worldview? An Interactive Approach to Life's Big Questions* (Kindle Locations 141-143). Crossway. Kindle Edition.



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Of course ultimately your worldview is part of your story and is influenced by your story, or at least the story into which you place yourself. For any person their worldview will be influenced by a combination of the significant stories that they are a part of;

1. The nation’s story in which they live
2. Their own ethnic story
3. Some type of ‘religious’ story – this may be of a number of different types
4. Their own personal family story

These stories will have their own symbols attached and will develop their own praxis. Each of us will relate to a range of symbols and praxis depending upon how we relate to the story.

<sup>2</sup> N. T. Wright, *Worldviews, The Bible and The Believer* ([www.udemy.com](http://www.udemy.com) An online course by Professor Wright)