**How *Thinking Like a Christian* Impacted Me**

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For most of my life, I have been surrounded by Christian ideas. I used to attend church with my grandparents when I was small. I attended several vacation bible school classes in which we exercised and studied the Christian way of life. I was also a part of a Christian football program that influenced and taught Christian ideas. While in school, I encountered peers with Christian and non-Christian viewpoints, and as I grew older, I drifted away from of these things which I feel tainted my views and behaviors. Today, I’m proud to say that my Christian views strengthened because of the *Thinking Like a Christian* course.

Key topics from *Thinking Like a Christian* that influenced my life the most were law, ethics, sociology, and economics. Law affected me by demonstrating that biblical law is more organized than modern laws, which are man-made. Ethics influenced my life by showing me moral absolute and what is right and wrong. Finally, economics showed me the difference between capitalism and socialism and how both have issues that might impact my life. All three of these chapters affected my life differently, and I'm grateful for the learning experience.

The issue of law had a significant impact on my life by demonstrating that our legal system is not flawless since it is man-made. For example, Noebel states, “The reason public trust disappears is simple: when law is not considered sacred, neither is it considered binding. If fallen human beings oversee creating law, one can rest assured that people will constantly recreate the law to better suit selfish interests – either of the lawmaker or of the law-maker’s own constituents” (Noebel & Edwards, 2002, p. 105). This demonstrates the flaws in man-made rules, proving that God's law is superior. Throughout my lectures, it became clear that man-made rules were designed to benefit man, but God's laws were designed to help everyone. Thus, God's law shall be seen as superior to man-made laws, which include several faults. With this, I've come to see that we must allow for grace and that God will provide for us even if we don't feel deserving. This is worthy because I have seen that I may be harsh of people at times, and this has taught me that I, too, should offer grace, just as God does.

The next topic that had a significant impact on my life was ethics. “God always hates evil and loves good. The Bible is of supreme importance because it walks us through the difference between the two, providing framework on which a completely unambiguous ethic must be built” (Noebel & Edwards, 2002, p. 80). This points out there is good, bad, and evil. Of course, nobody likes the bad, and most desire the good. However, I believe I have a greater grasp on the realities of good and evil. Ethics is focused on what is right and bad rather than what society desires. Learning about the significance of ethics in the Christian way of life motivates me to do better for others. Furthermore, I am more conscious of how God's character grounds Christian ethics. Christian ethics teaches me how to live a life of obedience and connection with God for the glory of God. Obeying God can add amazing rewards into our life.

During the time I focused on sociology, I was able to understand how Christianity portrays man as a creation with the ability to choose between right and bad in order to build society. According to the Christian viewpoint, every individual is valued and capable of making a meaningful contribution to society. Some sociologists believe that the individual is essentially powerless in the face of societal influences. However, the Christian views every individual as free and hence capable of affecting society.

The final topic that had a considerable influence on my life was economics. Economics influenced my life because it incorporates a checks and balances system, so no one has too much power. Within the Christian perspective, the main objective of economics is the desire for freedom to seek one's position in God's world and achieve peace. Noebel points out, “Christians believe the best economic system assures checks and balances that guarantee the protection of human rights” (Noebel & Edwards, 2002, p.134). This resonated with me because it guarantees the protection of human rights, with which I really agree. Economics provides individuals freedom while still being fair to others, something I believe is quite important. Another quote that echoed with me was, “The Bible declares that man is sinful. Another biblical concept, the concept of justice, also plays an important role. The most desirable economic system promotes justice” (Noebel & Edwards, 2002, p. 134). Upon reading this, it really made me think about my actions and identify with sins I may have committed or currently commit routinely. Understanding more about sin, I’m more aware of my actions. I also know not to be so hard on myself as people sin every day, and I am not the only one. I can be more forgiving to myself and others. No one is perfect, and we all make mistakes and have flaws, but as a Christian, all I can do is try to stay on the right path.

 While touching on sin, it’s vital to mention guilt. Some Christians may feel significant guilt for committing any sin, even one that may be considered minor in another’s eyes. It was interesting to compare the feeling of guilt among modern thinkers to Christian followers. I realized how Christians are more understanding as to why guilt happens and also how to cope with it. I think as I continue my journey through Christianity at Louisiana College (LC), I will continue to learn how to handle any feelings of guilt in a more Christian way and get past such feelings. I also will be able to help others that might have similar feelings.

Overall, the instruction really altered my way of thinking and personal habits. Even though I had Christian ideas and influences from my childhood, this reading helped me refocus on those convictions. I wasn't sure about my views at first, but I discovered I agree with many Christian practices after going through the course with my leader. It helped me widen my understanding of religious ideas and religion in general. I also believe it gave me a sense of purpose that I had not previously discovered.

I’m confident the learning helped prepare me for my journey at LC. As I participated in this study, I became more enthusiastic about attending LC. I look forward to learning more and re-establishing myself on the Christian road while surrounding myself with like-minded individuals. It has also shown me certain qualities that I can bring to the football field. I recognized how much I'm going to enjoy going to chapel and being closer to God. I cannot wait to get started.

Noebel, D., & Edwards, C. (2002). *Thinking like a Christian*. Broadman & Holman.