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Thinking Like A Christian

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Francis Schaeffer Scholarship Essay

In a world with ideas and beliefs as varied as the stars in the sky, it proves difficult to hold on to what you believe to be true. David A Noebel is a well-known American religious leader and writer and in his study, *Thinking Like A Christian*, David charges the modern Christ follower to hold fast to their faith. The study lays a foundation of biblical truth, the lack thereof resulting in the shaky and easily influenced faith we see dominating our culture today. In this essay I hope to accurately portray the profound impact that David Noebel's study had not only on myself, but also on my mentor.

The study, *Thinking like a Christian* is just as it's title suggests: a study analyzing the thought system that is conducive to a regenerate Christ follower. The various sessions me and my mentor had over this study led me to four main realizations. Firstly, the fact that the variety of human worldviews is astounding and far-reaching. In our daily lives we can meet hundreds of people, each with their own beliefs and backgrounds. For example, when serving at the ministry thrift store I work at, I truly never know who I will meet. From the wealthy to the less fortunate, the kind, sensible people to the blunt, rude persons, and even from domestic citizens to international visitors. Each one's background has a profound impact on how that individual behaves in their interactions with me. Because of this fact, one ministerial approach may be sufficient to the one person and completely ineffective to the other. My mentor, Mr. Billy

highlighted the importance that the study places on how worldviews shape every individual's beliefs, especially when it comes to their sense of purpose, creation, future, and what they consider to be "truth". Correctly identifying these worldviews helps me to become a better servant of Christ as I better understand the reasons for an individual's beliefs and can relate to them on a more personal note.

The second point I would like to emphasize from the text is our God's all-reaching influence on not only our society, but the entire world. He is the author, sustainer, and finisher of our reality. Our belief in inalienable human rights comes directly from Him. This is clearly seen in James 1:17 which reads, "[e]very good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change". Mr. Billy pointed out that God's unchanging goodness is the sole source of our world's morals. Without this higher being we would have no basis by which to judge right from wrong. There would be no need for government and no trace of justice found within us. Thankfully, our God has chosen to involve himself in the lives of his creation. He has instituted government to keep man in check and to promote human cooperation. He has given his holy word to guide us in living out righteous lives. He even sent Heaven's greatest gift, his only Son to give us the hope that we need. The words of Micah 6:8 ring true, "He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy...". This involvement is not just fortunate, it is essential to our existence. In our fallen state we desperately need a loving God to shepherd us as the sheep we are.

This fallen state comes from the power and prevalence of sin in our lives and is the driving force for the conflicts and divisions that we see in mankind. Noebel emphasizes this fact

repeatedly in the text and history proves time and time again that when humans are given over to their own selfish desire, horrible things soon follow. Our nature truly doesn't allow for any other outcome. David explains that seeing people as the inherently sinful beings that we are lays out an entirely different, authentic worldview. The opposite view of seeing man as inherently good has never and will never end well. Christ followers must therefore know the truth and live the truth; that we are hopeless without a savior; empty when living apart from His will for our lives.

Thinking Like A Christian challenged me to grow in multiple areas of my life. The apologetics involved in the writing of the study was very apparent to me. It makes me want to better prepare myself to defend the truth of the Gospel that has completely transformed my life and has the power to change the lives of anyone receptive to it. I desire to conform even more to the likeness of Christ and be sanctified in His truth. Noebel emphasises how important taking our thoughts captive is to this effort. What you allow yourself to dwell on in your mind is what the overflow of your mouth will consist of. Living of the world will produce worldly words and actions, while guarding your heart with God's word leads to moral, upright behaviour. "Keep this Book of the Law..." Joshua 1:8 says, "... always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." Herein lies the premise of our study. A biblical worldview must start with biblical literacy. As Noebel states on page 159, "the ability to identify counterfeits- whether money or philosophies - requires knowing what the 'real thing' as well as the fake looks like." We are to apply God's word to our hearts and allow it to completely change the way that we think, feel, act, and as the title suggests: think. With this in practice, we can be truly effective forces, aiding God's purpose for His creation and for our individual lives.

To conclude, I am thankful for Noebel's study challenging and charging us to understand and exhibit a God-pleasing, biblical worldview and will take to heart the important lessons contained in it's pages.