

W.E.C. #9 – Having the Correct Starting Point / Authority / Foundation

Questions to Consider:

- What is neutrality?
- Are people born neutral?
- Does neutrality exist?
- What is common ground?
- Does a believer have common ground with unbelievers?

Where does God command every person to start?

Proverbs 1:7 – *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction*

- The beginning = the starting point
- What is the fear of the Lord? – reverent awe and submission
- What is “knowledge?”
 - Can only Christians have knowledge about things?
 - No
 - What about scientists / unbelievers? (are they able to know anything?)
 - Yes
 - So what is the difference?
 - The difference is where a person starts
 - A foolish person does not start with God
 - Therefore – they do not have a sufficient base for
 - why things exist
 - why things are the way they are
 - justification for their own beliefs
- What is a fool?
 - Someone who does not start out with God as their starting point
 - “Fool” – speaking of their behavior
- What does a fool do?
 - Despises the wisdom and instruction of God
 - They willfully suppress the truth of God in unrighteousness
 - They worship anything else in the creation but the Creator

Proverbs 9:10 - *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight*

- The beginning:
 - The starting point
- The fear of the Lord:
 - Reverent awe and submission = worship
- What is “wisdom?”
 - Applying the instruction of God to every aspect of life
- What is knowledge of the Holy One?
 - The correct understanding of who God through His Word
- What is insight?
 - To interpret the world around us from God’s perspective revealed to us in His Word through a regenerated consciousness

Without the reverence a believer has for Christ

- We would all be just as foolish as the world’s system
- We do not have superior mental capabilities
- We do not have profound abilities of insightfulness
- What we have has been given to us by God

The necessity for God’s grace

- **Acts 26:18** - *¹⁸ to **open their eyes**, so that they may turn from **darkness to light** and from the **power of Satan to God**, that they may receive **forgiveness of sins** and a place among those who are sanctified **by faith** in me.’*
- A Christian must continue to be **bold** in confronting the surrounding culture that is lost
- A Christian must also be **humble** in their approach to the surrounding culture
 - A Christian has what they have ONLY because of the grace of God

The correct starting point for all things in life is *reverence not neutrality*

- Does neutrality exist?
- Are people born “neutral” towards God?
 - Answer – no
 - We are all born with an unregenerate heart

Romans 8:7 - *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot*

Matthew 12:30 - *Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters*

What is the difference between neutrality and *common ground*?

- **Neutrality** – being neither for or against Christ
 - This is impossible
- Because of the unregenerate heart of the unbeliever
 - They mis-diagnose the world and its problems
 - They have an incorrect understanding and interpretation of the world around them
- An unbeliever is deceived in thinking they can trust their own reason and experience
 - That they can interpret the world around them correctly
 - That their conclusions are the final verdict
 - That they are a sufficient reference point for knowledge and wisdom
- The epistemology of the unbeliever is = **autonomy**
 - Auto = self
 - Nomos = law
 - Autonomy = “self-law”
- **Common Ground** – things the believer and unbeliever have in common
 - Safe schools / to be treated with respect / support charitable organizations / to take personal responsibility for your actions / to treat other people’s property with respect / to treat others like we want to be treated

Utilizing the Common ground / points of contact for evangelism

We all want:

- What is best for our children / safe schools / solid education
- People to love one another
- To treat others with respect
- People to follow the rules
- People to take responsibility for their own actions
- Just laws - end racism - make sense out of life
- Find meaning and purpose

Only the Christian worldview can attain this

- Because it is the fear of the Lord that unites us in both the knowledge and wisdom of God
- We submit to the Lord out of reverence and awe – worship
- We conduct ourselves the way He has prescribed
- This is the only way for humanity to achieve the common ground it desires

Autonomy divides

- It breaks humanity up into individual segments
 - Us vs them
- We want what we want in opposition to what God has prescribed for us
 - Common ground can never be achieved this way

The Three Step Approach of the Transcendental Argument - Presuppositionalism

- 1 - Identity the preconditions behind the worldview / belief that are necessary in order to make it reasonable and logical
 - We all want:
 - What is best for our children / safe schools / solid education
 - People to love one another
 - To treat others with respect
 - People to follow the rules
 - People to take responsibility for their own actions
 - Just laws
 - End racism
 - Make sense out of life
 - Find meaning and purpose
 - To treat others as we want to be treated
- 2 - Conduct an internal critique
 - Show how their own position is unable to provide the presuppositions for those preconditions
- 3 – Demonstrate the Necessity of God
 - Explain to them how only Christianity is able to provide the necessary presuppositions for those things to exist and function as they do