



**WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL**  
**Volume 16 Number 1**  
**January 6, 2021**

**Discipleship Training - The Church's Stepchild**

By Freddy Davis

Surely you are familiar with the "Cinderella" fairytale. In that story, Cinderella goes to live with her evil stepmother and her three evil stepsisters. Since she is not part of the "real" family, they all treat her very badly. It seems that back in the late 1600s when the story was written, there were various social dynamics that created the stereotype that has persisted to this day.

In fact, in the field of evolutionary psychology, an actual term has been coined to describe this stereotype called the "Cinderella effect." In this field of study, tradition attributes the phenomenon of higher child abuse, neglect, and mortality risks for stepchildren, to greater conflict within blended families because of the presence of the stepchild. In recent years, studies of this topic seem to show that, on average, stepchildren are actually not treated more harshly than natural children.

These recent findings, though, do not do away with the stereotype and the meaning associated with it. In fact, we even use the terminology in other areas of life to represent how some people, or even programs and organizations within a larger framework, tend to get the short end of the stick.

In fact, there is one element of church activity that, even in modern times, often fits into this stereotype – church discipleship training. It is not that Christians in churches don't like it, or even think it is unimportant. At the same time, discipleship training does often get treated as a third wheel [something or someone that is unnecessary to a group or organization and is just tagging along]. The great majority of churches tend to consider

worship and Bible study to be their most important programs, and the actual church programming structure bears this out. At the same time, most churches don't know what to do with discipleship training, and thus don't do anything (or at least very little). Again, it is not that Christians consider it to be unimportant, they just don't know what to do with it. That needs to change.

The reason it needs to change is that we now live in a society that is very antagonistic toward Christianity and Christians. But the antagonism is not the worst part. There is a tendency in modern society to actually be openly hostile and aggressive toward Christians in ways that are specifically designed to intimidate, and even destroy, any Christian influence in society. These people believe that if they can intimidate Christians enough, they will be able to literally push them out of the public square and consign them to the four walls of their churches.

A saying that I have heard most of my life goes, "Never talk about religion or politics in public." The reason for this, of course, is that these are two rather contentious topics that are bound to cause conflict. So, if you want to avoid conflict with other people, you simply avoid those topics.

It was much easier to do that when society was dominated primarily by a single worldview. But now that there are multiple worldviews vying for dominance in society, that kind of avoidance is virtually impossible. It is impossible because while avoiding conflict is a common value of people who are Christians, that is not the case for people who hold a naturalistic worldview. Their relativistic value system

### **Permission to Reprint**

If you wish to reprint this article in your own print or electronic newsletter, please include the following text:

*Reprinted from **Worldview Made Practical**; a free e-zine produced by **MarketFaith Ministries** featuring practical teaching and life tools to help Christians become more effective in their faith life. Discover **MarketFaith Ministries** at [www.marketfaith.org](http://www.marketfaith.org).*

### **Speaking Schedule**

If you are interested in having Freddy Davis or Tal Davis present one of our **Worldview Seminars** or to share about worldview and its practical implications at your church or organization, please contact **MarketFaith Ministries** to schedule your event. All contact information is at the bottom of this e-zine.

### **Worldview Resources**

It is one of the primary purposes of **MarketFaith Ministries** to provide resources to help Christians understand the practical implications of worldview. You can find many free resources that will help you in your quest at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

allows them the personal freedom to dominate others any way they can manage. So while Christians may be trying to avoid conflict, they are not. And many are even willing to "get in your face" in their attempt to gain dominance for their views in society.

What this means for Christians is that we have to prepare ourselves to face this kind of conflict in ways we have never had to do before in American society. And the venue for pulling off that kind of preparation is discipleship training opportunities. We should not, of course, back off of promoting worship and Bible study. Rather, we need to consciously add a formal discipleship training element.

### **What Should Be the Core of Christian Discipleship Training?**

In order to deal with the specific challenges we face in modern society, here are some of the things Christians particularly need to be trained in:

#### ***Worldview Beliefs***

This is not a topic that was important when American society was largely homogeneous. But America is just not that way anymore. Worldview is a knowledge base that, in times past, was useful primarily for missionaries who were destined to serve in people groups that held a different (particularly non-Christian) worldview.

A worldview is defined as: The assumptions people make about the nature of reality. In other words, it is the beliefs people hold that determine for them what they consider reality vs. what they consider to be fantasy. So, if you try to share the Christian faith with someone who holds a non-Christian worldview, they will, literally, consider your message to be fantasy – like a fairy tale.

In order to deal with this problem, Christians need to understand not only the concept of worldview, but also the various worldview possibilities. Without this understanding, it is quite possible for people to understand the words others are saying, without understanding what they mean when they use those words. In our current pluralistic environment, every Christian who wants to express their faith in society needs to understand worldview concepts.

#### ***Christian Worldview Beliefs***

There are a lot of doctrines that can be discerned when reading Scripture. However, there are only three that are essential in the sense that they relate to a person's eternal destiny. This does not mean that those "non-essential" doctrines are not important, it is just that their importance relates to other aspects of the Christian life, not to salvation. In fact, a person can be completely wrong about the non-essentials and still be saved. That cannot be said about the three essentials – beliefs about God, man, and salvation.

Unfortunately, too many Christians put too much focus on the non-essentials while neglecting the essentials. This leads to a heartbreaking level of disunity in the Christian community.

But it is not just a matter of Christian unity that is at stake. Understanding the essentials holds some VERY important implications for Christians as they live life in modern society.

First, it is by comparing the Christian essentials to the essentials of other belief systems that gives us the ability to see exactly where those other beliefs are wrong. Second, it is an explanation of the essentials that comprise the message of salvation itself. It is critical for Christians to know, inside and out, the essentials of the faith.

### **Subscription Information** SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE:

A subscription to **Worldview Made Practical** is complementary for anyone interested in receiving it. If you received this email as a forward from a family member or a friend and wish to subscribe for yourself, you may do so at [www.marketfaith.org](http://www.marketfaith.org). If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, simply follow the instructions found at the bottom of each edition.

### **Contact Information**

If you wish to contact us directly, you may do so by the following methods:

321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312

E-mail:

[info@marketfaith.org](mailto:info@marketfaith.org)

Phone: 850-383-9756 (Tallahassee, Florida)

Fax: 850-514-4571

You can order our products and examine our services at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

This issue of **Worldview Made Practical** is a production of **MarketFaith Ministries**, © 2021. All rights reserved.

### **How to Share a Witness Across Worldview Barriers**

As indicated above, it is an explanation of the essential Christian doctrines that comprise the plan of salvation. But sharing that message across worldview barriers often means that it is necessary to help non-believers see where their beliefs are different from Christian beliefs, and help them grasp why their beliefs are wrong. This must often be established before they will even entertain the possibility of converting to Christian beliefs. That means it is necessary to be able to make and share those distinctions before attempting to lead a person to Christ. In the pluralistic environment we find ourselves in today, this missionary approach to sharing the gospel is an essential skill, and every Christian needs to understand how to do it.

### **How to Do Apologetics Using a Worldview Paradigm**

Traditional Christian apologetics involves defending the Christian faith against attacks from people who hold other beliefs. This is a very important skill for more than one reason. But in our current pluralistic environment, there is another approach to apologetics that has taken on a larger than life significance.

When people attack our Christian faith, they are not merely disagreeing with our beliefs. They actually hold their own beliefs that are contrary to Christian beliefs, and they are seeking to put ours down as they promote their own. Rather than merely accept their premise that Christian beliefs are wrong and theirs are right, Christians need to be able to question the validity of theirs. It is the use of a worldview paradigm that allows us to turn the tables this way. Every Christian ought to be able to make detractors justify their attacks before being willing to accept their arguments.

### **How to Understand the Christian Life Based on a Worldview Paradigm**

Because of the fact that other worldview beliefs, particularly Naturalism, are so prominent in modern society, it is not uncommon for Christians to become intimidated and entertain doubts about their faith. One of the tremendous values of understanding worldview concepts is that it helps believers have rock solid confidence that their beliefs are true.

Beyond that, one of the most basic truths of the Christian faith is that our faith is not merely a set of beliefs, it is the personal engagement of an actual relationship with God. When a person has doubts about their faith, they sometimes even doubt the relationship itself. But when confidence in the beliefs is present, not only is there confidence in the relationship, but also strength for standing strong in those beliefs out in society. This kind of confidence gives Christians the ability to both stand strong in their daily lives and to boldly share their faith.

### **Raising the Profile of Christian Discipleship Training**

There comes a time when the circumstances of our lives change in ways that require us to make changes to the way we live. This can happen as it relates to our financial situation, our job status, and even our family relationships. But it can also happen in our church life.

The fact is, society has changed to such a degree that it has become imperative that Christians interact with the culture in some different ways than we have done it in the past. Even though the message we hold and share never changes, the methods we use to confront a lost society must change – and it is now past time to reconsider the place of Christian discipleship training in our church life.

There is no doubt about it, change can be quite difficult. People get comfortable with the way they have always done things. But if we continue to do things the same way we have been doing them, we will continue getting the same results – declining church attendance, declining percentage of the population that are believers, fear in the face of opposing beliefs, and a generally deteriorating society. Are you ready to take concrete steps to change that situation? It begins with an elevated emphasis on Christian discipleship training.

### **Would You Consider Supporting Us?**

Would you consider financial support for **MarketFaith Ministries**? I feel confident that what we are doing is consistent with your beliefs about spreading the gospel and equipping the saints for ministry. Would you let us be one element of your hands and feet in this process? **MarketFaith Ministries** is a 501 (c) (3) not for profit corporation, so your contributions are tax deductible. If you would consider this we would be very grateful. Also, if you would like to know more about the ministry, it would be my pleasure to share with you personally what we are working on and how you can plug in. I can be reached at 850-383-9756 or by e-mail at [Freddy@marketfaith.org](mailto:Freddy@marketfaith.org). As for any donations, they may be sent directly to **MarketFaith Ministries** at 321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312, or you can contribute through our secure website at [www.marketfaith.org](http://www.marketfaith.org). Simply click on the “Donate” button at the bottom of the homepage. We are deeply grateful for your support of this ministry.

And, as always, if you have any thoughts, opinions or suggestions about how **MarketFaith Ministries** can help you, please feel free, at any time, to call (850-383-9756) or e-mail ([info@marketfaith.org](mailto:info@marketfaith.org)). We are here to serve you.