



WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL
Volume 18 Number 39
October 18, 2023

The Discipleship Mirage - Part 6
Unity in Diversity

By Freddy Davis

You can read part 1 at:

<http://www.marketfaith.org/2023/07/the-discipleship-mirage-part-1-what-is-the-discipleship-mirage/>

You can read part 2 at:

<http://www.marketfaith.org/2023/07/the-discipleship-mirage-part-2-the-quest-for-a-comprehensive-approach-to-discipleship-training/>

You can read part 3 at:

<http://www.marketfaith.org/2023/07/the-discipleship-mirage-part-3-creating-a-disruptor/>

You can read part 4 at:

<http://www.marketfaith.org/2023/07/the-discipleship-mirage-part-4-an-introduction-to-christian-worldview-discipleship-training/>

You can read part 5 at:

<http://www.marketfaith.org/2023/07/the-discipleship-mirage-part-5-what-is-worldview-and-why-use-a-worldview-paradigm/>

Is there any difference between baseball, golf, and tennis? After all, in all three sports you hit a relatively small ball with some type of stick, so they must all be the same, right?

Well, of course, all three are very different from one another. But how do we distinguish between them? We distinguish them based on the rules.

The rules allow us to ask questions that express the uniqueness of the different sports. For instance, we could ask:

- What kind of ball is permissible?
- What must be the shape and makeup of the stick used to hit the ball?
- What must be the shape and boundaries of the playing field? and
- What are the rules for hitting the ball, and what happens then?

It is in answering these questions that we are able to clearly distinguish between the different sports.

As an interesting aside, the rules give us another insight, as well. Consider baseball, for example. All baseball is not the same. For instance, there is T-ball for the little guys, where the players hit the ball as it sits on a Tee stand. In little league, the distance between the bases is less than regulation, and the pitcher's mound is not as tall. And baseball games in Japan can end in a draw. And even in the American major leagues, the American League uses a designated hitter while the National League does not.

The fact that these kinds of differences exist does not take away from the fact that all are playing baseball. The completely essential parts of the game exist in every form. Those things that are different are matters that do not change the fact that the game is still baseball. There is a certain amount of allowed diversity within the unity.

Using the definitions of the two different kinds of faith systems that were discussed previously, it is now

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.*

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>.

possible to begin addressing the matter that allows us to define the Christian faith (and other faiths) in a way that gets at its unity and diversity. This, then, puts us in a position to extend look at certain other parts of the expression of the Christian faith to address the specific thing that unifies all of the diverse elements of the discipleship process.

The diverse points where Christians engage the world are obvious as we live life day by day. We impact the world as we participate in evangelism, teaching others about our faith, engaging our devotional life, helping our neighbor, and so on. While these are all separate (diverse) activities, they are also tied together. And we come to understand how they are connected by using what we refer to as the three essential worldview questions. These are the questions that are not only able to distinguish the Christian faith from other faiths, but are also able to clearly define the core essence of our own faith. By using these three questions in different contexts, we are able to get at all of the necessary elements that pertain to the Christian discipleship process. This is the thing that gives us a foundation to be able to grow in our own understanding of the faith, and to express it in the world.

Expressions of Unity and Diversity

I have, sitting in my desk, a stapler. When I need to hold several pieces of paper together, it is quite a handy device. I put the papers together, stick the corner between the two stapler arms, press on top to push the two arms together, and voila, a staple comes out and attaches them all into a single unit.

Looking at the device itself, I notice that it is made up of many parts – and each part is essential. There are various molded metal and plas-

tic pieces that form it's shape. There are screws that hold various parts together, and a base that determines the way the staples curve when they are expelled. There is a hinge that allows for proper movement, and a latch that permits me to disengage the hinge when that is appropriate. There is also a spring mechanism on the inside that keeps the staples in place. And, of course, there are the staples themselves.

Normally, when I need to use the stapler, I don't think about all of the parts. I generally only think of the unified whole. But without the various parts put together in the proper way, there would not even be a unified whole able to accomplish the task of stapling.

Christian discipleship mirrors that pattern in many ways. The unified whole is a life that is a devoted follower of Jesus Christ. But to accomplish that end, there are many parts that need to be addressed. There are parts that involve learning what it means to be a disciple of Christ. There are parts that involve various disciplines to help individuals personally grow in their relationship with Christ. And, there are parts that involve skills that must be mastered in order to carry out the work of Christ in the world. The unity and the diversity must come together for a person to truly become a faithful follower of Christ.

In order to develop a comprehensive view of the nature of discipleship, it is necessary to wrap one's mind around all of the major elements that comprise the topic – the parts associated with its unity as well as its diversity. Below are the specific diverse categories that need to be addressed in order to comprehensively express one's Christian faith out in the world. It is in these areas that we are able to use the three essential worldview questions as a unifying means of understanding and expressing our discipleship opportunities.

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. 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

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**, © 2023. All rights reserved.

Diversity Category 1 - Understanding Faith

For many, digging into the very concept of a faith system seems like an obvious place to start figuring out how unity and diversity fit the discipleship process. For some people, however, it may seem that this topic isn't relevant at all. The truth is, though, we must start here. If you were to take a survey of people in America and ask them what comprises their faith, almost every one would be able to give you some kind of answer. However, depending on the beliefs of the ones you ask, the answers will be all over the place. Since people's understanding of faith is dependent upon their worldview beliefs, it becomes necessary to have a comprehensive grasp of the faith possibilities before we can go any further. It is this comprehensive picture that is the key to our ability to compare the truth of the Christian faith with the non-truth of non-Christian beliefs.

While every belief system in existence is based on a faith foundation, there are many people who are fully convinced that what they believe is not based on faith at all. Anyone who makes that claim, however, simply does not understand the nature of what they believe. People tend to connect faith with church, spirituality, or some form of organized religion. Those who identify their faith in different terms, such as believing they do not have any faith, easily mistake the nature of their beliefs.

How the Worldview Questions Apply

The truth is, EVERYONE'S beliefs are based on faith. But, since every faith system (worldview systems and belief systems) has its own foundational beliefs, we need to have a way to get at those beliefs. We do it by answering the three essential worldview questions. While the various faith systems will have their own unique way of answering those questions, all of them can give an answer

to them. It is by recognizing this fact, and delving into those answers, that we are able to understand the nature of every faith system in existence. We can then compare and contrast them to our own beliefs, and analyze for truth.

Diversity Category 2 - Understanding the Christian Faith

The Christian faith is unique in a very profound way. While most belief systems are defined by their essential doctrines, Christianity is not. Of course, it does have essential doctrines that can be defined using the three essential worldview questions. However, those answers are only an explanation of a deeper truth. The Christian faith is a relationship with God before it is a set of doctrines. The doctrines merely explain the different elements that go into an explanation of the relationship.

How the Worldview Questions Apply

The fact above is not meant to minimize the importance of the doctrines. They are the key to understanding the core of the Christian faith, and we get at this by answering the three essential worldview questions based on the teachings of the Bible. The answers that emerge from this exercise define the line that cannot be crossed and yet one remain a biblical Christian. Getting even one of the essentials wrong takes a person completely out of the Christian faith and into some other belief system.

(Special Note: Understanding this truth also begs us to look at the other side of the coin. Sadly, we see a lot of disunity in the body of Christ – particularly in the separation that exists between the various Christian denominations. This kind of disunity is mostly based on the fact that different groups have different ways that they interpret the Bible regarding various non-essential doctrines. The truth is, a person can be completely wrong concerning one of these non-

essential doctrines and still legitimately be a member of the body of Christ – as long as they get the three essentials right. A recognition of this fact should help promote unity within the body of Christ – even between groups where certain significant differences exist.)

Diversity Category 3 - Living out the Christian Life

It was mentioned in the previous section that the Christian faith is different from every other faith for the simple fact that its essence is found in a relationship rather than in a doctrine. That being the case, it is necessary to understand how that relationship exists. Since God is not a physical person living on earth, it becomes necessary to engage the relationship with Him using means that are in some ways different from the way we engage those we have with fellow human beings.

That difference, however, is not because the essential personhood of human beings is different from God's. In both cases, we are spiritual persons. The differences lie in the simple fact that humans on earth have limitations that God does not have based on the fact that we are physical creatures.

Since relationships, themselves, are spiritual interactions, the way we engage a relationship with God is essentially the same way we engage our relationships with human beings – only without the physical part. Relationships are based on self-conscious thoughts that are expressed to other persons who are able themselves to act in a self-conscious way. When interacting with other human beings, we often express our thoughts through the use of our bodies, but the thoughts themselves are formed in our spirit. As we interact with God, we express our relationship with Him in the spirit only. So, as we live out our faith in the physical environment on earth, we listen to and speak to God by prayer, by interacting with Him through His written revelation, and by worship.

How the Worldview Questions Apply

The application of the worldview questions in this category are exposed initially in the first two questions: Who is God? and Who is man? God exists as a particular kind of person, and so do human beings. It is only by understanding the nature of God and the nature of man that we are able to understand the nature of the relationship that is possible between God and man. We come to understand these things from His revelation of Himself in the Bible.

If, on the other hand, we understand God to be a being that is different from what is revealed in the Bible, our attempts to interact with Him will be futile. In that case, our thoughts would not correspond to the way God actually exists. Correspondingly, if we don't understand our own nature as persons created in His image, we will not even seek to know Him based on the reality of human existence.

The third question – What is salvation? – is also important as we seek to interact with God in daily life. It is this question that explains the reality of the relationship itself. God created us for relationship with Himself, but if we don't see that as an important matter, we will likely not even seek the kind of personal relationship He made possible for mankind to enjoy.

Diversity Category 4 - Understanding Non-Christian Faiths

There are so many non-Christian faiths that it is very difficult for most people to even keep track of them, much less learn their core beliefs. But if we, as Christians, are serious about understanding and sharing our faith with those who hold these other beliefs, and about giving a strong apologetic when those same people try to witness to us of their faith, that is exactly what we must do.

How the Worldview Questions Apply

Once again, an understanding of worldview principles gives us the key to dealing with this matter. When we are able to answer the three essential worldview questions based on the beliefs of another faith, we automatically know the worldview from which it emerges. This knowledge also provides us a basis for understanding the weaknesses of that faith system – the elements that do not correspond to actual reality. By being able to answer the three essential worldview questions based on the beliefs of any given non-Christian faith, we have the knowledge needed to understand the people who hold that faith, along with the ability to share a witness with them.

Diversity Category 5 - Understanding How to Do Evangelism

There are numerous evangelism tools that have been developed over the years to teach people how to share their faith with those who don't know Christ. Some of the more well known ones include: The Four Spiritual Laws, The Romans Road, Steps to Peace with God, Evangelism Explosion, FAITH, and there are numerous others. While each of these methods have their own unique twist, all of them are attempting to convey the exact same message – the message of how a person can enter into a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

How the Worldview Questions Apply

What makes worldview knowledge important in this arena relates to the content of that single message. The gospel message is nothing more than the biblical answers to the three essential worldview questions. Our task, then, is nothing more than knowing what the Bible says about that, and examining how those answers relate to those with whom we wish to share our faith. The essential core message that they must understand never changes.

Another place in the evangelism process where using the three essential worldview questions comes into play is in helping us understand those with whom we wish to share our faith. If a person holds a different worldview from our own, we cannot begin sharing as if that person already understands Christian concepts. We must know their beliefs in order to start our witness in a place that makes sense to them. It is the way they answer the three worldview questions that helps us to know the starting point that will allow us share the gospel in a way that is understandable to them.

Diversity Category 6 - Understanding How to Do Apologetics

1 Peter 3:15 informs us that, as Christians, we have a responsibility to provide reasons to those who are searching for answers as to why our Christian faith is true. The process of providing those reasons is called apologetics. There are actually two different approaches we can use in the process of addressing the apologetics task – defensive and offensive.

The more usual approach is defensive, and is most helpful in two particular circumstances. The first circumstance involves defending our beliefs against those who would attack our faith. The second relates to cases where we are dealing with people who might have genuine questions about why the Christian faith is true.

How the Worldview Questions Apply (Defensive)

Tapping into the answers provided by the Christian faith to the three essential worldview questions gives us the core elements of our own faith that need to be defended or explained to those who don't know Christ.

How the Worldview Questions Apply (Offensive)

The second, and less usual, approach to apologetics is based on an offensive attack – one that seeks out the weaknesses of the beliefs of those with whom we interact. It is here that a knowledge of the answers to the three essential worldview questions really comes into its own.

Everyone who attempts to attack our Christian beliefs does so based on some other set of beliefs that necessarily promote a different set of moral values. While we should, of course, always be ready to answer people who are truly sincere in wanting answers about the Christian faith, those who are simply trying to trip us up are not actually wanting answers. They have a different agenda altogether. They are looking to put down our faith. As a result, it becomes necessary to deal with them in a different way.

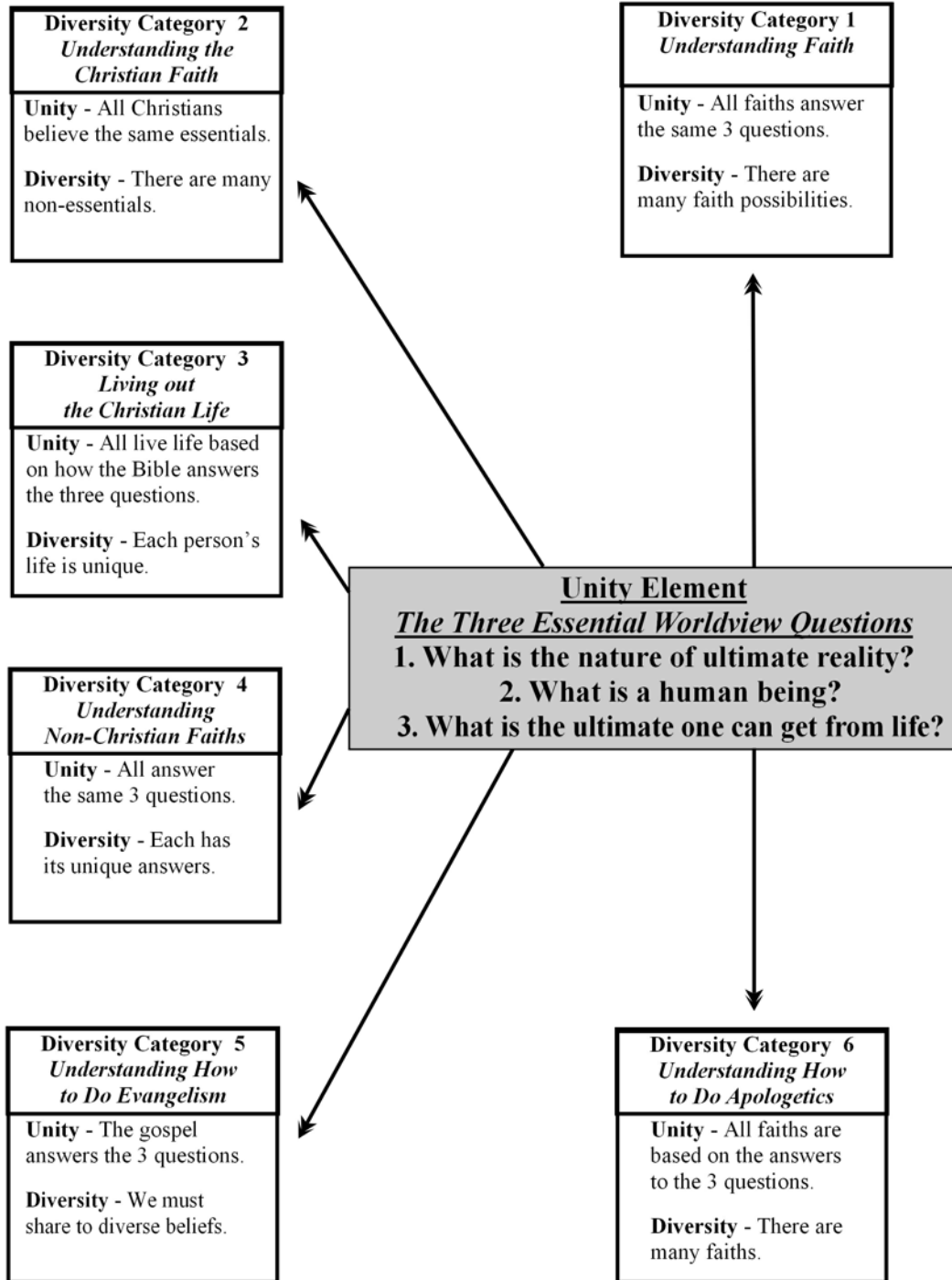
We should not, of course, have a wrong attitude when we respond to those who attack us. At the same time, those who have bad motives toward us cannot be allowed to win the day as they seek to promote false beliefs. As such, we should actively challenge their beliefs and require them to justify themselves before we become willing to spend all of the time and effort necessary to answer their objections and questions.

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. 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. 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). We are here to serve you.

We can challenge them by requiring them to justify "why" their faith assumptions should be considered true. To do this, all we need to do is ask them how their faith answers the three essential worldview questions. Then, when they answer, we must insist that they explain how they know that their beliefs are true.



Next Up: Using a Worldview Paradigm in Discipleship Training