The Truth Project
Lesson 2—Part A
Philosophy (59:36)

Introduction

In this second installment of our worldview tour, Dr. Tackett takes students into the northeast quadrant of the compass for an introduction to Philosophy and Ethics, the two outside pillars of our Temple of Truth or framework of foundational concepts. In essence, the message of this lesson parallels the precept of Proverbs 23:7—“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” The heart of the discussion lies in the thought that there is a formal and vital connection between our ideas about the nature of the world (philosophy) and our understanding of right and wrong behavior (ethics).

Themes

Philosophy, according to Dr. R. C. Sproul, is “a scientific quest to discover ultimate reality.” This would seem to indicate that philosophical ideas about truth are closely aligned with the biblical definition given in Lesson 1: truth = reality. In this connection, it’s worth noting that the 1828 edition of Webster’s Dictionary included the following affirmation: “true religion and true philosophy must ultimately arrive at the same principle.” Significantly, Webster’s original definition of the word also asserted that philosophy aims “to enlarge our understanding of God.” God, of course, has been edited out of subsequent editions of the dictionary. This is consistent with the perspective of contemporary culture, which has been taken captive by the unfounded assumption that “the cosmos is all there is or ever was or ever will be” (Carl Sagan). Another way to say this is that current thought pictures reality as a closed box—a cosmic cube—in which there is no room for anything that cannot be sensually or materially perceived. The problem is that with the lid of the box closed and God excluded, philosophy is deprived of a universal reference point and thus crippled in its “scientific quest for ultimate reality.” As a result, it cannot answer the most basic questions about right and wrong behavior.

Points to Watch For

Dr. Tackett persuasively argues that even the most outspoken adherents of “cosmic cube” thinking and relativistic ethics—thinkers like Carl Sagan and William Provine—cannot possibly live by their own reductionist and materialistic principles. On the other side of the coin, he suggests that many contemporary Christians have been unwittingly taken captive by the assumptions of our age (“conformed to this world”). He concludes the lesson by challenging students to think more aggressively about what it means to be “transformed by the renewing of the mind” (Romans 12:2).

Classwork (Handouts & Videos)

Each week you will receive a new handout that will include both fill in the blank and discussion oriented questions. On most fill in the blank questions we will not stop the video, but we will always stop the video to discuss the questions that require both more insight and deserve further investigation. After each class answer sheets will be posted on the church’s website along with a password protected version of the video in case you miss a class. So let’s turn over the page and turn on the video…continuing our journey into The Truth Project!
I. **(DISCUSSION)** As a Believer can you be taken Captivity?
   a. “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.” (Col. 2:8)

II. **(DISCUSSION)** What **Truth Claim** did Carl Sagan deceptively make in the opening of his program “Cosmos”? Why did he make that claim the way he did?
   a. “The Cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be.” (Carl Sagan)
      i. Or in other words **There is no God**
   b. At the time when “Cosmos” was made it would have been unacceptable to most people to blatantly say, “There is no God” so he chose to sneak his Truth Claim in the back door using Assumptive Language.

III. **(FILL-IN) Assumptive Language:** Assumptions are the most **DANGEROUS** form of knowledge…why…because Assumptions are caught and bought without an open, conscious dialogue…because if you buy a statement, you buy its **ASSUMPTIONS** as well.

IV. **(DISCUSSION)** What philosophical **Assumptive Truth Claim** does Carl Sagan make in this second clip?
   a. “Some part of our being knows this is where we came from. We long to return and we can because the cosmos is also within us…We’re made of star-stuff. We are a way for the cosmos to know itself” (Carl Sagan)
      i. Or in other words, **God did not create man, the Cosmos did**

V. **(FILL-IN)** The Cosmic Cube Philosophy states that there is absolutely **NOTHING** outside of the box/cube.

VI. **(DISCUSSION)** What sort of implications does this human centered Cube Philosophy have?
   i. All the philosophical issues
      1. Who we are?
      2. What the meaning of life is?
      3. Is this all there is?
      4. Is there a God?

   **Biblical Philosophy (Worldview)**  **Man-centered Philosophy (Worldview)**

   **GOD**

   **NOTHING**
VII. **(FILL-IN)** A biblical worldview is built upon two fundamental presuppositions:
   a. …that **GOD IS**! (God exists).
   b. …and that God has revealed Himself to us through His **CREATION** and His **WORD** that He has delivered to us (Special Revelation).

VIII. **(DISCUSSION)** How often do we live as if God is not there?
   a. Every time we sin or do not love Him with our whole heart, mind, body, and soul…that is when our actions do not match what we say we believe.

IX. **(FILL-IN)** The man-centered philosophy or worldview says that all the answers to life’s questions are to be found in the **BOX**.

X. **(DISCUSSION & FILL-IN)** What is Philosophy?
   Philosophy = “the love of wisdom” and it is a search for ultimate reality
   
   a. “The objects of philosophy are to ascertain facts or truth, and the causes of things or their phenomena; to enlarge our views of **GOD** and his works…” (Noah Webster 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language)
   
   b. “True **RELIGION** and true philosophy must ultimately arrive at the same principle.” (S. S. Smith)
   
   c. “…a search for the underlying causes and principles of reality.” (Webster’s 3rd New International Dictionary)
      i. It’s an alright definition, but it unfortunately leaves **GOD** out of the picture, which leaves us with only what’s inside the box.

XI. **(FILL-IN)** The Philosophical Holy Grail is “**THE UNIVERSALS**” (the Universal Truths of life)

XII. **(FILL-IN & DISCUSSION)** How do we find “The Universals” (the answers to the big questions)?
   a. The world seeks the Universals from the **PARTICULARS**…but God gives us the Universals so that we might understand the **PARTICULARS**.
   
   b. **(DISCUSSION)** How does God give us the Universals?
      i. Through the special revelation of His Word.

XIII. **(DISCUSSION)** Why are man’s philosophies hollow and deceptive?
   i. Because they cut themselves off from the source of Universal Truth that they seek.

XIV. Hollow & Deceptive Philosophy (Positions that contradict themselves)
   a. Materialism: matter is the only reality
   b. Idealism: ideas are the only reality
   c. Empiricism: knowledge comes from experience
   d. Rationalism: knowledge is gained by reason without experience
e. Naturalism: true knowledge only comes from scientific study
f. Determinism: there really is no knowledge, you only react to stimuli
g. Relativism: there are no absolutes
h. Mentalism: mind is the true reality and objects exist only as an aspect of the mind’s awareness
i. Mechanism: everything can be explained in terms of physical or biological causes
j. Solipsism: self is all you need to know
k. Subjectivism: knowledge is dependent upon and limited by your own subjective experiences
l. Intuitionism: knowledge comes primarily from some kind of inner sense
m. Hedonism: pleasure is good, pain is evil; if it feels good do it.
n. Etc…

XV. (DISCUSSION) Postmodernism says there is no absolute truth…can we live in world using that philosophy? Why or Why Not?
   a. No, because then life itself has no foundation or reality…and we can’t live in a non-reality, insane world. But when you shut yourself off from God, a non-reality is all you are left with. “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” (Psalm 14:1a)