

The Total Contradiction Between Christianity and Unbelief

By Tim Nichols

In the last position paper we established that God is the most comprehensively biased being ever to exist: He has an opinion about literally everything. At the conclusion of that paper, we left off with the idea that we should not only think God's thoughts after Him, but feel God's feelings after Him as well, and that this should be the case in *every* area of our lives, not just in church or when we're reading our Bibles. In this paper, I'd like to explore the implications of these two key facts as they relate to our own thinking about our world and our interaction with other people.

"All the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge"

In the first century as the church was just getting started in Asia Minor, the church at Colosse had a serious problem. Someone was trying to convert the church over to false teaching. Since Paul wasn't able to be with them at the time, he sent them a letter to warn them. That letter is in our Bible today as the book of Colossians.

There has been a lot of speculation about exactly what the false teaching was, but the fact of the matter is that we don't really know for sure.¹ We can't reconstruct the Colossian heresy, whatever it was, because Paul doesn't refute it in detail. Instead, he focuses on the truth, and criticizes the false teaching because it doesn't measure up. His goal is to woo the Colossians away from false doctrine by showing them the glories of the truth and the dangers of wandering away from it.

Paul begins the book by thanking God for the ever-increasing fruit that the gospel is bearing in the Colossians' Christian growth. He tells them how he and his apprentice Timothy constantly pray for them to know God's will so they can live in a way that is worthy of the Lord by bearing fruit and knowing God. Paul is particularly concerned that they thank God for making them fit to inherit Kingdom blessings through the work of Christ, who is the visible image of invisible God, the pre-eminent inheritor of creation, Creator and sustainer of everything, and—most importantly—the Head of the church.

As head of the church, Christ holds the highest rank because He is God, and because the Father reconciled all things to Him by making peace through the cross. As this specifically relates to the Colossians, Christ reconciled them to God through His death (even though they were His enemies), in order to present them holy at the final Judgment Seat, if they will remain faithful to the gospel message in which they are

¹ This is one of those areas where you can read ten commentaries and get fifteen opinions. Whole monographs have been written attempting to identify the Colossian heresy. Mostly, commentators come up with a guess by a combination of second-century (and later!) data and conjecture based on what Paul says in Colossians—not the most reliable of methods, by any means. The truth is that we just don't know. Paul mentions some of the characteristics of the heresy in passing, but Scripture doesn't really explain it, and there's no extrabiblical evidence from the period that sheds light on the question.

established, and that Paul ministers to them. That ministry comes at a high price to Paul—among other things, he’s writing the letter from prison—but he rejoices in his suffering and willingly continues it because God gave him a stewardship, a particular function in the church. Paul’s function is to reveal to the Gentiles a mystery that was hidden for generations, but is now revealed to the saints: Christ indwelling Gentile believers. Paul preaches Christ by wisely warning and teaching everyone in order to present them complete in Christ, and works hard toward that goal.

Paul then tells them,

For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, **in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**. Now I say this lest anyone deceive you with persuasive words.²

Paul did not plant the churches in Colosse or Laodicea, but he wants these believers to know that although he was not personally involved in winning them to Christ, he is working hard for their welfare. He encourages them and helps them have loving relationships with each other. He helps them gain the spiritual wealth that comes from understanding the truths God has revealed, both about the Father and Christ. And here Paul throws in a little one-liner about Christ: “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” It’s tempting to pass over this as just another description of Christ, but Paul won’t let us. In the very next sentence, he points back to it: “Now I say this lest anyone deceive you with persuasive words.” Paul wants his readers to catch this. If they don’t want to be tricked by some sort of doctrinal used-car salesman with a bad comb-over and a slick line of baloney, they need to pay attention. He wants them to get this point: **all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ**.

Let’s think that through. “Treasures” are valuables, things worth having. The treasures in question are “of wisdom and knowledge.” Knowledge is a truth we understand and believe for good reason, but what’s wisdom? Biblically speaking, wisdom is skill, the ability to do things well. The Bible uses this word for everything from the expert craftsman’s skill in his trade to the godly person’s skill at living life and pleasing God. So the “treasures of wisdom and knowledge” are the skills worth having and the truths worth knowing. Paul says *all* of the skills worth having and *all* of the truths worth knowing are “hidden in Christ.” That word “hidden” is important, too. It implies that we’ll need to search them out. Christ isn’t necessarily going to give us everything we want on a silver platter; we’re going to have to hunt for it. Now stop and think for a second: when you lose your car keys, do you find them by looking harder in places where they’re not? Of course not. You can’t find something by looking harder in the wrong place. As we’re hunting down these skills worth having and truths worth knowing, we don’t want to waste our effort by looking in the wrong place. So where do we look? According to Paul, we look “in Christ.” That sounds very nice and holy in a Sunday School-ish way, but how in the world would we actually go about doing that?

² Colossians 2:1-4

Paul doesn't leave us guessing. As chapter two progresses, he draws a series of contrasts between the riches they have in Christ and the dangers they face if they fool around with false teaching. He first tells them that they're off to a good start. They already have good order and steadfast faith in Christ. What they need now is to stick to it, to continue living by the same gospel principles that they initially believed, and that initially established them so firmly. Here Paul draws his first contrast:

Be vigilant lest someone kidnap you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to men's tradition, according to the world's basic categories, and not according to Christ, because in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.³

How is it that Paul says these believers could get kidnapped? What's the threat? Philosophy and empty deceit, right? I can just hear some of you thinking, "Hey, that's easy—I've never studied philosophy in my life. Guess I'm okay on this one." Not so fast.

Notice that he qualifies it further with "according to men's traditions, according to the world's basic categories...." Let's think about these words. "Traditions" are practices or ideas handed down from one generation to the next. "Categories" are basic concepts and definitions that we use to think about ourselves and our world. We get kidnapped, Paul says, when we just take the things handed down to us and run with them, or when we accept the world's concepts and definitions without questioning them. Ever do something a certain way because everybody does it that way, or think of something in a certain way because that's how you were taught to think? Of course you have; you can't avoid it. And here is our first big clue to how we look for truths worth knowing and skills worth having "in Christ." We're supposed to look "in Christ" and not simply take what was handed down to us.

A Practical Example

Let's consider one example: have you ever...

- worried about your kids' self-esteem?
- thought that maybe your low self-esteem was the reason you were doing something self-destructive (drug abuse, bad relationship, overeating, etc.)?
- thought that you'd be a better person if you had higher self-esteem?
- tried to build up someone's self-esteem?
- worried about how you're going to give someone criticism they need to hear without hurting their self-esteem?

³ Colossians 2:8-9

If you answer yes to any of these questions, congratulations—you've been kidnapped! I don't mean to say that whatever you wound up doing in these situations was necessarily wrong (although it might have been). I am saying, though, that you were thinking in the world's categories.

You see, "self-esteem" is a concept dreamed up by unbelievers. These folks think that people act badly because they think poorly of themselves, and other people act constructively because they think highly of themselves. So they talk in terms of "low self-esteem," which is allegedly bad, and "high self-esteem," which is supposed to be good. All of the questions above simply take these concepts that ungodly men have passed down to us and implement them, assuming that they're true. In other words, those questions are thinking according to men's tradition, and according to the world's basic categories—the very things that a Christian should not do.

If we're not supposed to think in those terms, though, what should we do instead? Paul tells us in the same passage. We're supposed to think and live "according to Christ." The earlier passage says something similar—we're supposed to look for all the truths worth knowing and all the skills worth having "in Christ." But what does that actually mean? How would we do that here?

It means we go back to God as the source of all wisdom and knowledge. In this case, we're struggling with how we should think about ourselves, and the relationship between that and what we do. So we begin by asking what God has told us on the subject.

Proving all this in detail is a subject for another paper, but let me give you a thumbnail sketch of the biblical concept of self-esteem: there is no biblical concept of self-esteem. God's way of classifying how you look at yourself is totally different, and His categories are humility and pride.⁴ To show the difference, let's take two hypothetical men.

- Jack won't listen to a word of criticism from his wife—and he takes a request for help with the dishes as a criticism. He goes instantly into "I bust my tail working all day to pay the bills, and this is the thanks I get?" Truth is, he *is* a good provider, but in his mind, he's made that one *part* of his role as a husband into the whole thing. As long as he brings home the paycheck, he thinks he's the perfect husband (although he'll probably never say so out loud).
- Michael, on the other hand, takes every criticism to heart. He thinks he's totally useless, can never do anything right. If we take a step back and look at his life, well...he's ruined every relationship he ever had, he can't seem to hold a job for more than a couple of months, he's got a kid out there somewhere that he's never even seen, and so on. His life is a wreck.

It may surprise you to learn that as far as God is concerned, these two men have exactly the same problem: pride. Neither one of them is listening to what God has to say; neither one has a *proper* view of himself before God. It's easy to see the pride in Jack; his view of himself is obviously too high. He has forgotten that he's a sinner like everyone else, and he ignores some of his responsibilities that he doesn't want to deal

⁴ See, for example, Proverbs 3:34, 11:1, 16:5, 21:4, Micah 6:8, James 4:6-8, 1 Peter 5:5-7

with. He doesn't really care what God thinks; in Jack's mind, Jack is the authority on his own worth as a person.

Michael has the same problem: in his mind, *he* is the authority on his own worth as a person. Michael doesn't care what God thinks about him either; he's already decided he's worthless. From God's point of view, the problem with both these men is that they need to see themselves as He sees them, and they insist on ignoring the truth and manufacturing their own concept of themselves. In a superficial way, Jack's view is too high, and Michael's is too low. But in another, much more important way, both of them think too highly of themselves, because they've both placed themselves above God.

If we were trying to help Michael get his life together, we could send him to an occupational therapist to work on getting and keeping a job, and we could send him and his girlfriend to a couples' therapist to work out their relationship problems, and so on. Our goal could be to help this poor man actually see some success in his life so that he'd begin to think better of himself, gain some self-esteem. But as long as we let him decide what he's worth by looking at his situation, then at best we're just turning him into another Jack.

In order to really help Michael, we need to challenge his "right" to decide what he's worth; we need to start him off with God's wisdom. God says Michael is created in His image. God says Michael is capable of nothing valuable without His help, but with it, Michael can do great things. God says that Michael has always has help from Him, but Michael has squandered the opportunities God has given him. Michael is responsible for his choices, and bad choices will lead to bad results.⁵ We will need to help him to see these things. As we look at Michael's history, we're going to find a string of unbiblical choices that have led him to his current situation, and we will need to show him *from the Scriptures* how he can avoid those bad choices in the future.

So what does humility look like? Humility is when these men start to pay attention to what God has to say, and base their own thinking on that. As *we* understand that, we avoid being kidnapped by pagan categories and human traditions like "self-esteem." And if we can avoid it, then we can help them to avoid it too.

Contradiction: the Total War between Belief and Unbelief

Colossians tells us that we have to question everything that the world gives to us: every tradition that is handed down and every category of thought. That's a daunting task, and most people (once they grasp the enormity of it all) begin to wonder why it should be so hard. After all, don't the unbelievers live in the same world we do? Why should our thinking have to be so different from theirs?

To answer this question, we need to look at the relationship between God, man, and the world we live in. And in order to get the right answer—and avoid being kidnapped—we need to turn to God's Word. The very first words in the Bible are "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Right away, that gives us something

⁵ Here are just a few of the passages that teach these truths: Genesis 1:26-27, John 15:5, Genesis 11:6, Matthew 5:45, Proverbs 22:8, Galatians 6:7.

we need to know. The world around us is not “just there.” It’s God’s world. He made it. If we turn to Hebrews, the author begins similarly. He’s making a point about Christ, but notice how he begins.

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and **upholding all things by the word of His power**, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...⁶

The author of Hebrews tells us that the Father created the world through Christ, but then notice that he also adds that Christ is *presently* “upholding all things by the word of His power.” So God didn’t just “wind the clock,” as it were, and then let the universe run on its own. Rather, God made the world, and continually sustains it.

What is our relationship to this world? Let’s look at Genesis 1. Notice that God didn’t just turn the first man and woman loose to figure it out on their own.

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”⁷

God *speaks* to them. He tells them their place in the natural order of things, and gives them work to do. He also tells them what they can eat: every green herb, and the fruit of every tree, except for one. As Christians, it is easy for us to take this for granted, and thereby miss its significance. The fact that God offers instruction from the very start shows that humanity was never meant to interpret the world autonomously, without reference to God. Instead, we were meant to interpret his world based on the revelation that God gave to us, and in that way we were to live in harmony with God and with each other.

Of course, we failed, and we continue to fail. Nowhere is the nature of our failure more evident than at the place where it all started: the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. You may recall that the last paper gave a close examination to Eve’s temptation. I won’t repeat all the details here, but as we examined the idea of objectivity, we were able to see that Eve was not supposed to be objective; rather, she was supposed

⁶ Hebrews 1:1-3

⁷ Genesis 1:26-28

to be comprehensively biased in favor of God and His revelation⁸. Because she took a “neutral” position between God and the serpent, she sinned.

Of course, the problem is that her position was not really neutral at all. There is no neutral position with respect to God; it’s impossible. We really do owe Him absolute respect and obedience; anything less than that is actually rebellion against Him. To pretend to be “neutral” toward God *in any way, in any area*, is to rebel.

In fact, in any relationship, to the extent that there is a genuine obligation, neutrality becomes impossible. This is easy to see in a marriage, for example. Suppose a married man decides to cheat on his wife, and starts hanging out in local bars looking for available women. He starts coming home late at night, reeking of beer, cigarette smoke, and cheap perfume. His wife becomes suspicious, and one night she follows him and catches him making out with another woman in a dark corner of the bar. Enraged, she confronts him. “How dare you?”

“What are you talking about?” he says.

“You’re my *husband!*” she shouts at him. “How can you do this to me?”

“Now hold on, ma’am,” he says calmly. “Let’s evaluate this objectively. Do you have any evidence that I’m your husband?”

You see what he’s doing here? He’s being *neutral*. Maybe he’s her husband; maybe not. Maybe he’s being unfaithful; maybe not. It all depends; let’s see what the evidence says. But this is all a sham, because he *is* her husband, and he *knows* that he’s her husband, and he *owes* her complete faithfulness. So it’s no longer possible for him to take a neutral role. He can *pretend* to be neutral, but when he does, he is actually being a scummy, unfaithful hypocrite.

Our relationship with God is like that. God created us; He created the world we live in; He sustains it all. He has a plan for it all, and He has given us information about what the world is like and instructions on how to live. We owe it to him to take all this to heart. That’s what Eve owed God; when she allowed herself to be “neutral” so she could decide between the serpent’s claim and God’s, she was really asserting her own “right” to judge the situation independently of God (the same problem we saw in Jack and Michael, earlier in this paper). When she did that, she was being unfaithful to God.

As we also saw in the last paper, God is the most comprehensively biased being ever to exist. He has an opinion about literally *everything*, and He has given us His Word as the only sufficient foundation for our knowledge of the world. So whatever the area is, whether it’s fishing or fashion, shipping or shopping, ministry or mathematics, we must acknowledge God in it, and only by building our knowledge on His Word can we come to the truth. Proverbs 1:7 says it well: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” Notice that it doesn’t say “the end of knowledge.” We don’t learn all about the world, and finally come to understand the truth about God. If we don’t first acknowledge the truth about God *and* hold proper respect for him, then we don’t truly know anything at all.

⁸ If the details are a little fuzzy in your mind, I’d encourage you to re-read Genesis 3, then revisit the last paper (particularly pages 5-6) to refresh your memory. It will lay some important groundwork for the rest of our discussion here.

The Unbelieving Mind

In light of that, we need to consider how it is that so many people are unbelievers. What happens to them? Again, to avoid getting kidnapped, we need to turn to Scripture to see what God tells us. In Romans 1:18-23, Paul tells us how we should understand unbelief.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.”

Unbelievers suppress the truth, Paul tells us. In fact, they do know God. Notice that it does not say that they know there is a god, or anything so generic; it says they know *God*. They recognize his eternal power and God-ness; He has shown these things to them, and they understand what He has shown them. The problem is not that they don't *know* Him; it's that they don't *like* Him. Rather than glorify God and be grateful for all He has given them, they prefer to ignore Him.

They ignore God in spite of the fact that they are everywhere confronted with Him. Paul says here that merely by being part of the creation, they know God. They live in His world, and He shows Himself to them. In Psalm 19, David explains one aspect of this in detail.

The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His handiwork.
Day unto day utters speech,
And night unto night reveals knowledge.
There is no speech nor language;
Their voice is not heard.
But their line has gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.
In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun,
Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
And rejoices like a strong man to run its race.
Its rising is from one end of heaven,
And its circuit to the other end;
And nothing is hidden from its heat.⁹

⁹ Psalm 19:1-6

There is no one who does not know God; all human beings are always and everywhere confronted by Him in His creation. Every person that lives under the sky knows God.

Because they lie to themselves about this most basic fact of their existence, their thinking becomes futile. We should not miss this point. We saw earlier that the fear of the Lord is the *beginning* of knowledge. It's the starting point. They ignore and flout God rather than fearing Him, and so rather than arriving at knowledge, they arrive at futility. Their denial of God erodes even the possibility of knowing the truth. Instead, their foolish hearts become darkened, and even as they claim to be wise, they commit the great spiritual folly of worshipping the creation rather than the Creator. Because they don't like God, they'd rather worship rocks and trees and animals, or even each other, rather than God. They will carve an idol out of one end of the log, use the other end for firewood to cook their dinner, and then bow down and worship the idol they just carved, as if it were actually doing something for them.

When someone becomes that kind of stupid, more evidence usually doesn't help. For a really shining example of how ineffective evidence can be, have a look at Matthew 28:2-15. When Jesus rose, an angel came down from heaven, shining with heavenly glory. He rolled the stone away from the entrance to the tomb, and sat on the stone. The Roman guards saw all this, and of course they were terrified. Some of them came into Jerusalem and told their story to the chief priests. Now the Roman guards may not have known enough to understand what they were seeing, but the chief priests certainly had enough biblical background to understand what had happened. And yet, with all their knowledge, and with this direct evidence that God had raised Christ from the dead, just like Jesus had said would happen, what did they do? Did they seek out the disciples, beg for forgiveness, and follow Jesus? They did not; they paid the guards to lie about it.

We need to keep this in mind when we confront unbelief, and we need to keep this in mind as we consider the world around us. If we want to keep from being kidnapped, we have to consider the source any time we're learning something from unbelievers. For this reason, many eminent Christians have concluded that there is no point of contact between a believer and an unbeliever. If they are both consistent with their respective premises—the one loving God and the other hating Him—then they can't even talk to each other. According to these thinkers, the believer and the unbeliever simply have no common ground.

Common Ground, but Not Neutral Ground

Fortunately, that is not true. There is common ground between the believer and the unbeliever, *but you can't find it in the unbeliever's idea of the world*. Nothing in the unbeliever's pagan mind is neutral; as we've seen, neutrality is impossible. His mind is hostile to God.¹⁰ The unbeliever is made in God's image, lives in God's world, and most importantly, *does* know God, even though he won't admit it. But his suppression of the truth about God prevents him from seeing the truth about the world clearly. The way he understands the world is always a little off, because he's trying to let the world in, but

¹⁰ On this point, see Romans 5:10, Ephesians 2:1-3, Colossians 1:21.

keep God out. This never works, so if you look closely, he always has a lie buried somewhere in his view of life and the world.

This is because in order to reason, work, balance his checkbook, even add $2 + 2$ and get 4, the unbeliever has to interact with God's world *as it really is*. However, as we saw in Romans 1 and Psalm 19, God's world *as it really is* points the unbeliever toward God. He does not want to be reminded of God, so he lies to himself that the world does not really lead to God. In subtle ways, this distorts his knowledge of the world. For example, suppose I watch a sunset with an unbelieving friend. Do we agree about what we have seen? We do not. I saw that "the heavens declare the glory of God," while my friend insists that he saw a wonderful sunset, but he didn't see anything about God in it.

So where is the common ground? In the world as it really is, and in what my unbelieving friend actually knows about God (not just what he'll admit to knowing). These things are not "neutral ground" between us; we don't interpret them in the same way. But even though he denies that he saw anything about God in the sunset, *I* know that isn't true. It is not the case that I saw a Christian sunset and he saw an atheist sunset; *there's no such thing as an atheist sunset*. In fact, he saw a Christian sunset, because that's the only kind there is. And although he may strenuously deny it, even to himself, I know that he knows God is there. I know that God showed Himself to my friend in the sunset, and that my friend understood, because God has told me so.

A Quick Test

In the same way that there is only a Christian sunset, all facts are Christian. There are no atheistic facts, and even more importantly, there are no neutral facts. We tend to instinctively resist this idea. "Come on," we say, " $2+2=4$ is a fact, and everybody agrees on it, Christian or not. Surely there's nothing particularly Christian about $2+2=4$!" In my mind's eye as I write this, I can see some of my readers nodding their heads at this. If you're one of them, congratulations! You've just been kidnapped.

Haven't we already seen from Colossians that all facts worth knowing and all skills worth having are hidden in Christ? Then if $2+2=4$ is a fact worth knowing, and arithmetic is a skill worth having, they are both hidden in Christ. Haven't we already seen from Proverbs that the fear of the Lord is the beginning—not the end—of knowledge? Then if we want to know our arithmetic properly, we have to understand how it all starts from the fear of the Lord. Haven't we already seen from Romans that pagan thinking is futile and dark? Then if $2+2=4$ is productive and true, not futile and dark, it does not belong to pagan thinking, but to Christianity.

To put it bluntly, Scripture repeatedly tells us that we have to start with God to get to $2+2=4$. If we think otherwise, then, well, we're arguing with the Creator about the nature of the universe. How smart is that? Of course, it's one thing to know that $2+2=4$ is a Christian fact, and another thing to have a detailed understanding of *how* it's a Christian fact. Showing the Christian nature of mathematics is a little beyond the scope

of this paper, but there are some resources that can help you with that if you're interested.¹¹

Conclusion

These truths are not just important for our interactions with unbelievers; they are also vital to our own fellowship with God. We should be striving to think and feel as God does about everything, and that means we should be striving to understand how everything we do, from balancing the checkbook to training an employee, begins with the fear of the Lord. The better we understand this in its details, the deeper our fellowship with God will be, and the closer our lives get to the richness that God meant for us to have in this life. Gaining that understanding requires some deep and careful thinking, so we can meditate on Scripture and “map our world” with God’s Word.

Get started today! Take the most perplexing problem you face at the moment (however large or trivial) and bring it to the Word. What truths from Scripture can you think of that apply to the situation? Is there someone to forgive, or someone to confront? Is there something good to thank the Lord for, or something bad to pray about? Is there difficulty that you should rejoice over, because it will produce patience in you?

Don’t just do this with your problems. Take your occupation, and look at Scripture. If you’re a craftsman of some kind, have you considered the record of how God crafted the world, and how your job is part of His goals for the world? If you’re an accountant or bookkeeper, perhaps you should take a look at those books on Christian mathematics. If you’re a trainer or a healthcare professional, learning what God has to say about the human body would be a good starting point.

Gain some experience with this. Remember that everything you hear from pagans has been filtered through their unbelief, and think it through carefully. Rely on Scripture; don’t get kidnapped. Scripture has a great deal to say about how to do this well, and some of those lessons will be the subject of the next paper. But just this much will get you started: God has an opinion on everything, and His opinion, as revealed in Scripture, is the starting point for all the facts worth knowing, and all the skills worth having.

So what are you waiting for?

¹¹ A very general guide would be Benjamin Wiker and Jonathan Witt, *A Meaningful World: How the Arts and Sciences Reveal the Genius of Nature* (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), which covers a broad variety of topics, including some mathematics. To see the argument for Christian mathematics worked out in detail, consult Vern Poythress, “Mathematics” in *Foundations of Christian Scholarship*, edited by Gary North (Vallecito, CA: Ross House, 2000) or James Nickel, *Mathematics: Is God Silent?* rev. ed. (Vallecito, CA: Ross House, 2001).