



The One & Only

Journey Two

OmniInfinity™
begin - return - continue

M.A. Helland

"OMNIALINFINITY™ builds a bridge on which my head and my heart can shake hands. It combines deep principles with ancient practices, and is a pathway to knowing God in order to love Him. I encourage you to walk the path; cross the bridge."

*Dr. Jim Altizer
Azusa Pacific University*

The One & Only

journey elements

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what comes to your mind?

The One & Only

From finding our One & Only Love, to not missing out on our One & Only Chance,
We think of the uniqueness of DNA and snowflakes,
And perhaps discovering the Key
to the only Door,
to the only Answer, Solution, or Cure.

We think of rare treasure, one-of-a-kind pieces of art, relics, manuscripts, and jewels,
Hidden away in vaults, displayed in museums, sold at auctions for millions.
So priceless, and highly valued,
So singular, original and solitary,
So sought after and dreamed about,
So exclusive.....
So endangered.

Whether its One of a Kind, or the Only One I have, It's my One & Only.
It needs no upgrade, update, remodel, or revamp.
There's no generic, no substitute, no copy and paste.
It can't to be imitated.
No others exist. Anywhere.

Many will try to pass off the knockoffs and cheap imitations instead.
There's just not enough to go around,
So we fool ourselves into believing the lie. We work so hard at it.
And then it's gone, over, dead, used up, destroyed – We're empty-handed.
Lost, Looking, Searching, Wandering once again.
Our One & Only turned out to be so common and ordinary.

The true One & Only causes the world to cringe over His exclusivity –
But He cannot be GOD without it!
So priceless, unique, singular and sought after,
Yet not hidden away – accessible to ALL.
The One & Only Love of our lives, He holds the Key - to the Door - to the Answer.
There are NO others like Him.
There are NO others, period.

Your turn:

What comes to your mind when you think of the One and Only?

remember

Exodus 3: 14a

"God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." NIV



Use the space below to help you memorize the verse above.

For additional background on the *remember* element, see the [appendix](#).

Now write out the verse from Journey 1: **Psalm 145:3**

read

Joshua 1, 24, Hebrews 11-12



Read through each chapter completely on three separate days, the first day in a **modern translation** such as the *NIV* or *NAS*, the second in a **modern paraphrase** such as *The New Living* (NLT) or *The Message*, and then the third **with a pad and pencil** by your side as you record your thoughts and observations. It is also helpful to **read the selections aloud**. As you read, underline words that describe who God is or names He is called.

This element is about **reading what it says** – try to put aside any preconceived ideas about what you think it says, or what you may have concluded based on other studies or classes. We are not saying those ideas are not correct, but for this Element, we just want to read it as if for the first time. **Read for the storyline** – and see if you can then faithfully retell it in your own words.

First Reading: Modern Translation – which one did you use?

Second Reading: Modern Paraphrase – which one did you use?

Third Reading: Reading Notes

Joshua 1:

Joshua 24:

Hebrews 11:

Hebrews 12:

Descriptions of God:

Names used for God:

journal

2.1 Beyond Transcendence

In **Highest Honors** we discovered there is much about God we will never know or understand. This is because of His Transcendence, the fact that **He is God and we are not**. Even much of what we do know about Him is hard to comprehend. This creates a tension with our need to make sense of our reality – how we think and live.



Because of this, **God, being God, reveals Himself** to us in many ways, and we choose whether to believe this revelation or not. This is where faith comes in.

We all have faith in something, we exercise it every day.

It's not about whether you believe, but what you believe in, in whom or what you have placed your faith.

What you **believe**
determines what you **do**,
your view of **reality**,
how you make sense of **life** and the **world**.

And what you do will also **reveal** what you **believe**.

Remember the saying,
"Actions speak louder than words"?

Our **actions** are a result of our **choices**.
Our choices are determined by acting on what we believe.

At some point in each of our lives we will **make the ultimate choice**, whether we believe in God and what kind of God we believe in.

The **danger** comes when we **make ourselves** the **determiner of Truth**. When that happens, we have transferred God's Transcendence to ourselves. Man has been doing this since the dawn of Time.

The results are the myriad of ISMs, religions, worldviews – the frameworks we have developed to make sense of life and the world. We are responsible to get it right because His Proof of Life is everywhere.

Are we looking, are we thinking, are we paying attention?

Your turn:

List some of the things you put your faith in everyday through your actions and choices.



analyze

Chapter Titles and Key Words

Give each chapter from this week's Readings a Title and then write down some of the Key Words from each chapter. Then answer the question at the bottom. The first one has been done for you.

Joshua 1

Title: *Be Strong and Courageous*

Key Words: *strong, courageous, obey, possess, land, God be with us.*

Any other words jump out at you?

Joshua 24

Title:

Key Words:

Hebrews 11

Title:

Key Words:

Hebrews 12

Title:

Key Words:

What did you learn about God from these four chapters?

journal

2.2 Bagel Choices

Imagine you walk into a room where your host has put out a sumptuous spread of assorted bagels and shmears. Let's walk through your possible decision making process, the choices you will need to make if you are going to eat a bagel.

First off, you will need to find out or **DISCOVER** there are bagels in the room. How would you do this?

You could stumble across them, smell them or see them, or you could see other people hanging around them and go over to see what is going on.

Or, if you are not too inquisitive, distracted, on the phone, or whatever, and end up sitting down without a bit of interest in the bagels, someone will have to come and tell you about them.



At this point, whether you realize it or not, your brain will run through the questions and choices below.

- **Investigation:** Do I go over to the bagels or not?
- **Interest:** Do I want to have a bagel?
- **Selection:** What kind of bagel?
- **Size:** Do I want the whole bagel, or just half the bagel (and should I come back later and eat the other half?)
- **Prep:** Do I cut it in half, or eat it whole, do I toast it or not?
- **Enhancement:** What should I put on it? Cream cheese, peanut butter, butter, jam, all of the above?
- **Presentation:** After all this, I have a beautifully prepared bagel. I can put it on a plate for all to see and admire and take a picture of it.
- **Action:** Finally, I must decide to take a bite.

Who knew there was so much involved in bagel prep and consumption. Choices are made all along the way. We do this hundreds of times a day without even thinking about it.

Your turn:

Think about your average day: List some of the choices you make.

What kinds of choices are the hardest for you to make? The easiest? The most important?

Many people try to not make choices and let others choose for them. What is the danger in that?



investigate

The One & Only

Define: Write a brief definition next to each of the above words

using a regular dictionary, not a Bible dictionary. (Click on any word to link to dictionary.com)

∞ [Existence](#)

∞ [Sufficiency](#)

∞ [Self](#)

∞ [Solitariness](#)

∞ [Independent](#)

∞ [Free](#)

∞ [Simplicity](#)

∞ [Indivisible](#)

∞ [One](#)

∞ [Unique](#)

∞ [Perfect](#)

∞ [Unity](#)

∞ [Necessity](#)

Now write your own definition for **The One and Only below:**

Review: Read the scriptures below and note what each discloses about God and what you think that means.

Ephesians 4: 4-6

John 1:18

Romans 1:20

James 2:19

Deut. 4: 32-40

How many Gods are there?

Exodus 15:11-18

Isaiah 44:6-8, 45:5

Where did God come from?

Exodus 3:14-15, John 8:52-58

Genesis 1:1, John 1:1-3

What does God need?

Acts 17: 24-28

John 5: 26

Is there anything like God?

Psalm 77: 13-19

Micah 7:18-19

What is God composed or made of?

Conclude: From what you have discovered above, list your conclusions about the nature of God and Man.

GOD

Man

10 things

The One & Only

1. **Yahweh (I AM WHO I AM)** is the sacred, personal name of Israel's God eventually spoken aloud only by priests in the temple. After the temple was destroyed in AD 70 the name was not pronounced. It portrays the sense that God is self-existent and always present with his people. In the Middle Ages the name was translated Jehovah and now appears in our Bibles as LORD, as opposed to Lord which is used for the name *Adonay*.¹
2. **Novation** – "God has no origin."²
3. **A. W. Tozer** – "For God is everywhere while He is nowhere, for "where" has to do with matter and space, and God is independent of both. He is unaffected by time or motion, is wholly self-dependent and owes nothing to the world His hands have made."³
4. **Only God can trust in Himself** – all other beings must trust in Him. All things need God. Only to God is nothing necessary. This allows Him to be limited by nothing, truly free and independent.
5. **There are no parts to God.** He is only composed of himself, the ultimate in simplicity and perfection.
6. **God has no needs.** He does not need our help, support or defense.
7. **Arthur W. Pink** – "He is solitary in his majesty, unique in his excellency, peerless in his perfections. He sustains all, but is himself independent of all. He gives to all, but is enriched by none."⁴
8. **A. W. Tozer** – "So, were every man on earth to become an atheist, it could not affect God in any way. He is what He is in Himself without regard for any other."⁵
9. **Norman L. Geisler** – "God is by nature an absolutely Necessary being. That is, He cannot not exist." God is Being. Everything else only has being because it has been given to them by God."⁶
10. **God is the original, uncaused cause of everything.** He is not derived from anything. He is and will ever be, independent of you and me.

Your turn:

Pick one or two of the above quotes or statements and share any insights or challenges it presents to you.

journal

2.3 Ultimate Q & A

We are all looking for answers. Whether we realize it or not, in order to **survive** we develop a **framework** from which we **make sense** of life and the world. We draw our personal meaning and values from it, it controls the way we think and ultimately live our lives. It determines what we care about:

- The **risks** we take and the **choices** we make
- How we treat **people** and view **history**
- How we engage **culture**
- What we **settle for** and what we **fight for**
- The **relationships** we **make** and the relationships we **break**

This framework is called our **Worldview** and provides the desperately needed answers to those unsettling, tension causing questions. **Questions** asked by mankind from the beginning of time, **planted in our hearts** by God, to draw us back to Him.

Questions about:

- **Creation:** Who Am I? Where do I come from?
- **Meaning:** Why am I here? What is my Purpose? Where am I going? Where should I be going? Can I make an impact?
- **Morals and Ethics:** What is good, valuable, beautiful? How do I treat others, live in community? Who's in charge?
- **Afterlife:** What happens after I die? Is there some kind of reckoning? Am I responsible for my life's impact?
- **Hope:** What will the future bring? What about destiny, progress, can I make an impact for good? Will things get better?
- **Truth:** What is real? What can I trust?
- **Evil:** How do I explain evil, sin?
- **God:** Is there a God and what is He like?

Timeless questions about God, origins, evil, human nature, values, destiny and truth, beauty, change, progress, life, love, purpose, eternity.....

These rise up from deep within our souls – We want to trust, we want to be loved, we want to have purpose.

Is there anything worth living for?
Who can I trust?
Does anyone care?
Does anyone care about me?

Your turn:

Of the final four questions directly above, which speaks to your heart right now.
 Why do you think that is?



practice

Prayer and Fasting



Prayer – Talking with God

Much has been written on prayer, Jesus spent much of His earthly life practicing it, it was the only thing the disciples ever asked Jesus to teach them, and it is one of the earliest things we learn how to do as we say our prayers before bed as children.

Unfortunately, we spend much more time talking about it, sharing requests, studying it, and making up rules about it, than we actually do it. That is, until we are flat on our backs in a hospital bed, the bank account is empty, our spouse has left, our children are in jail, or our job has been eliminated. Then we pray! **Let's not wait until the disasters happen.**

When asked to **share requests**, we talk about Aunt Susie's big toe, our fourth cousin who is traveling, and the test our neighbor's child is taking tomorrow.....all valid requests, but really, what about our needs? Don't we have any? Of course we do.....we either don't recognize them, or we are ashamed to share them or for some reason we think it is selfish to pray for our own needs.

Prayer is a practice of engagement – moment by moment communicating with God. It strengthens our spiritual life and can easily be combined with the practices of Solitude and Silence. It **changes things on earth** to be as in heaven. It has power and for us to practice it is to engage the power of God.

For additional background on the *practice* element, see the [appendix](#).

So here is the challenge for this unit – let's start with developing a daily practice of personal prayer.

1. Pick a time and place to be alone and pray for at least 10 minutes each day. Use your MasterList (see below) to remind you how to pray. If you miss this appointment, use the last few minutes before your drift off to sleep to talk to God.
2. This practice should become an integral part of your daily routine; keep your running conversation going with God all day.
3. Once weekly combine your prayer time with a time of Solitude and Silence.
4. You can pray silently, aloud or write down your prayers.
5. You can pray anywhere, anytime, in any posture and as long as you need.
6. Prayer should be addressed to the Father in the name of Jesus, who has granted us access.
7. Attitudes of prayer include persistence, watchfulness, humility, sincerity and honesty.
8. There is no place in true prayer for indifferent, habitual ritual.

9. What should you pray for?
 - For yourself, for others, for your enemies
 - For wisdom, direction, peace, courage, strength, obedience
 - For the government, the cities, the churches
 - For the poor, the sick, the prisoners, the persecuted,
 - For God's purposes to be accomplished
 - For physical, material, spiritual needs
 - For protection from evil and spiritual power
 - For guidance, forgiveness and cleansing
 - Thanksgiving and praise for who HE is and how He cares for you.
 - Thanksgiving and praise for his answers to prayer



10. Record any insights or struggles, any new things you learned from this practice of prayer.
11. Scripture: 2 Chron. 7:14, Jer. 29:7, Matt. 5:44, 6:5-13, Acts 1:14, Rom. 12:12, Eph. 6: 18, I Thess. 5:17

Creating the Prayer MasterList

1. After years of trying to keep track of various prayer lists for different groups to no avail, and using an assortment of different kinds of prayer journals with special paper, columns, etc., I decided to make my own, very simple prayer MasterList.
2. I recommend using a small journal, that you can keep with you, or create a space on your laptop or your phone to make the entries.
3. There are also APPs for smart phones and tablets that allow you to create digital prayer lists.
4. Every prayer request is logged in some way on this list. I don't go into great detail, as I have found the Holy Spirit always brings back to mind why I am supposed to pray.
5. Items on the list are usually either just names, or 3 to 4 word explanations.

Set up your Sections: Think about the different categories of people and things you pray for before setting up your different sections. Here are the sections I use:

- **General Ongoing requests:** These are things that I want to continue to pray for
- **In the News:** related to world and national events, leaders, natural disasters, etc.
- **Friends and Family:** Close friends and extended family members by name
- **Christian Workers and Ministries:** By name
- **Salvation/Christian Growth:** People without Christ or walking without Christ.
- **Illness:** Those who are sick
- **Tough Stuff:** Those going through struggles, use only first name if confidential.
- **Specific Requests:** Specific requests for something that has an end date
- **Section for myself:** General and specific, spiritual and material
- **Section for each family member:** General and specific, spiritual and material

Label your Sections and Enter Requests: I label the top of the page with the section title. Make sure to leave some blank pages in between and then label the top of the next section. You can put tabs on the pages if you wish. Enter names and requests under each section.

Record Answers: When a prayer is answered I just put a star by the line. Many of the things I pray for are ongoing so I never stop praying for anyone on the list until they die.

Personal Reflections on Prayer:

1. Prayer is a practice of engagement - which means we are to do something we normally would not do. Many times prayer is seen as a last resort, something to do when there is nothing else to do. What kinds of things do you find yourself doing first, before you finally pray about a situation?
2. What excuses or rationalizations do you come up with to put it off prayer or not do it at all?
3. What kinds of things do you immediately pray about? What kinds of things do you rarely consider praying about?
4. List some of the ways prayer changes your perspective or outlook.
5. Explain what you experience when others pray for you.
6. When others ask you to pray for them, what are you going to do?
7. Share how you could personally pray about everything as you go throughout your day.



Fasting - Depending on God

Fasting is often **done in combination with focused prayer** for a specific need or action, or for seeking God's guidance. It is the most obvious **practice of abstinence**, since it requires the cessation of eating or drinking for a period of time to allow us to focus our **dependence on God** and **His ability to satisfy** all our needs.

It teaches us temperance, self control, moderation and restraint, as well as humility. It goes beyond skipping a meal. We need to **commit in advance** to a period of fasting, and then pray through it as we go about our day. The struggle that ensues, the hunger pangs, reveal much about what we depend upon, and remind us to pray.



No matter what, during my fasting experiences, **I am always hungry**, even though I probably would not have been under normal circumstances. There is no reason most of us could not go 24 hours without food.

Take the fasting challenge and see what God reveals to you.

1. Fasting usually pertains to abstaining from food and drink for a time, but it can also include partial fasts from a particular item, as well as from other practices that draw us away and dull our spiritual sensitivity.
2. Fasting is more than skipping a meal and should be planned and prepared for. For those with no fasting experience, plan your fast to be no longer than one 24 hour period (two meals).
3. Anyone with medical issues should check with their doctor prior to fasting.
4. Identify a reason or purpose for your fast, perhaps a need in your life, a struggle you need to get through, a action you need to take, for God to move in an area outside of your control, for greater vision, for wisdom, for relationships to heal, or for a greater awareness of God.
5. Our goal this journey is to fast for a 24 hour period from food and all drinks except water. An alternative would be to fast for a 12 hour period.
6. The 24 hour fast should start after dinner, fasting through breakfast and lunch, breaking the fast with dinner the next day.
7. The 12 hour fast should start right after breakfast, fasting through lunch, breaking the fast with dinner that same day.
8. Start your fast with prayer and be prepared to notice and record what you feel physically, emotionally and spiritually. There will be spiritual warfare, so be prepared. Ask God to give you the strength and to reveal Himself to you.
9. During the time you would have prepared and eaten your meals, spend the time praying, reading or studying the Bible, focusing this time on God, not just going about your normal activities.
10. Scripture: Psalm 35:13, 69:10, Daniel 1:12-15, Matt 4:2, 6:16-18, Acts 13:2



Personal Reflections on Fasting:

1. The practice of Fasting is not just about the absence of food. What does it reveal in your life? What does it free up in your life? How does it benefit you?
2. What was the hardest part of this exercise for you? Did you become aware of any desires that control you?
3. The key to fasting is moving our focus from our physical appetites to concentrating on feeding our spiritual selves by focusing on God. It is more than missing a couple of meals, it is using the time normally given to these meals, their preparation and consumption to commune with God through other spiritual practices. How did you spend your mealtimes?
4. Fasting is one of the most neglected spiritual disciplines today. Why do you think that is?
5. What other things could you fast from that would reveal how much they control your life or help get your perspective and priorities in order?



why?

Prayer

Julian of Norwich – “Prayer unites to the soul of God.” ⁷

Dallas Willard – “Prayer is talking to God about what we are doing together...pray about what you are interested in and then the circle of our interests will grow in the largeness of God’s love to what God is interested in.” ⁸

William Carey – “Prayer – secret, fervent, believing prayer – lies at the root of all personal godliness.” ⁹

Andrew Murray – “Prayer is not a monologue, but dialogue. Its most essential part is God’s voice in response to mine. Listening to God’s voice is the secret of the assurance that He will listen to mine.” ¹⁰

Curtis Mitchell – “Prayer is not conquering God’s reluctance but laying hold of His willingness. God never needs to be made willing to grant the request. Persistence in prayer is not to make God more like man, but man more like God.” ¹¹

Jesus – “You may ask for anything in my name and I will do it.” John 14:14

The disciples never asked Jesus to teach them anything, except how to pray.

Richard Foster – “We should never make prayer too complicated. An inner sense of compassion is one of the clearest indications from the Lord that this is a prayer project for you.” ¹²

Frank Laubach – “...live so as if you see anybody it will be to pray.” ¹³ Invite Jesus to walk with you and touch those around you with his love and compassion. Throw a cloak prayer around anyone in our nearness.

C.S. Lewis – “We must lay before Him what is in us, not what ought to be in us” ¹⁴

John Ortberg – “Desperate people pray...people in foxholes pray...when we reach the limit of our resources we pray instinctively...Desperation prayers have been the beginning of spiritual life for many people. But, they are not sufficient to sustain it.” ¹⁵

The Bible – Prayer changes things. The enemy would rather we do anything but pray.

Pray without ceasing – I Thess. 5: 17

Pray about everything – Phil. 4: 6

Your turn:

Pick one or two of the above quotes or statements and share any insights or challenges it presents to you.

why?

Fasting

Dallas Willard – “Fasting confirms our utter dependence upon God by finding in Him a sustenance beyond food. Through it we learn by experience that God’s word to us is a life substance, that it is not food alone that gives life, but the words that proceed out of the mouth of God.” ¹⁶

Richard Foster – “Fasting must forever center on God. More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. We cover up what is inside us with food and other good things, but in fasting these things surface.” ¹⁷

David – “I humbled my soul with fasting.” Psalms 69: 10

Fasting will most often be accompanied by spiritual warfare requiring the use of all the weapons of Ephesians 6.

Dallas Willard – “Fasting frees us from having to have what we want. We learn to remain calm, serene, and strong when we are deprived. Positively we learn that God meets our needs in His own ways.” ¹⁸

Fasting will bring us out of the domination of desire.

Andrew Murray - "Fasting helps to express, to deepen, and to confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything - to sacrifice ourselves - to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God." ¹⁹

In God's Word fasting is connected with a very troubled spirit or a very anxious heart. In a sense, it's not something you choose, so much as something that chooses you, because it's that important.

Fasting puts things in proper focus. Food and the things of this life are not as important to me now as _____ (fill in the blank).

The early church expected those who fast to give away what they would have eaten, either in money or in food, to those in need, and even praised those who fasted in order to give to the poor.

John Wesley - "Is not the neglect of this plain duty (I mean fasting, ranked by our Lord with almsgiving and prayer) one general occasion of deadness among Christians?" ²⁰

Martin Luther - "He wants nothing at all to do with you if by your fasting you court Him as if you were a great saint, and yet meanwhile nurse a grudge or anger against your neighbor." ²¹

Your turn:

Pick one or two of the above quotes or statements and share any insights or challenges it presents to you.

journal

2.4 God Shopping

You can find five major Worldviews in societies around the world. These have been with human culture over time and often are repackaged in modern wrappings. There really is **nothing new** under the sun. For a more in depth look at these, please review the [More Cool Stuff](#) in this lesson.

Atheism and Naturalism: There are many flavors of this NonGod but they all stem from the belief that Man, Matter and the Physical universe are all there is. There are no moral absolutes, so values and evil are relative to the person. There is no God, no miracles, in fact man created the idea of God. Nothing exists after death, there is no purpose in living.

Post Modernism: This is a worldview skeptical of absolute truths or universal principles in favor of relativity and individual experience. Buzzwords include multiculturalism, tolerance, and inclusion. All religions are true and all cultures are equal.

Polytheism: This is the belief in many finite gods each with its own domain both within and beyond the physical world. One gains favor with these Gods by offering sacrifices and performing rituals, and visiting their human priests or practitioners, shamans, or witch doctors.

Pantheism: This is a belief in an infinite God that is everything and that everything is God. Our purpose is to be reabsorbed into the great spirit world of nothingness. Evil as well as the physical world is an illusion.

Theism: This is the belief in an infinite, personal God, who exists in and beyond the universe. Evil is a result of free choice and will be defeated by God. Miracles are possible and ethics and values are absolute and grounded in God. The human body and soul are eternal and live beyond death.

Every ism, philosophy, religion, worldview, personal outlook, is some flavor or variation or combination of these five. There are some basic similarities to all of these – they all strive to answer the basic questions of our heart.

Your turn:

At this point in your spiritual journey, which box above would describe your basic Worldview?

How have you come to these beliefs? What kinds of things have impacted the formation of your Worldview?

What do you base your beliefs on? Is proof that your Worldview is correct important to you?

inventory

Your wants and needs

Take some time to answer the following questions about your own current wants and needs. You may not have answers to all the questions right away – so take some time to think about them. Answers will come to you over time. Remember there are no wrong answers, only honest answers.



What do you need?

What do you need to do?

What do you need to let go of?

What are some of the first things you do when you get up in the morning?

What are the last things you do before you go to bed at night?

What do you want?

What do you want to do?

What do you want to do before you die?

What do you want to let go of?

What are you missing?

If you had three wishes, what would they be?

journal

2.5 The Big Six

There is a progression of questions, a simple decision tree, which reveals insight into the thought process we go through in forming our Worldview. Based on our choices, our worldviews, and our responses to the Proof of Life we have each experienced and observed, we can logically think almost all the way to the One and Only.

Question 1: Is it possible to know whether God exists or not?

No – stop here, you are an **Agnostic** (you either don't know, or believe you can't know)

Yes – Please continue

Question 2: Do you believe in God?

No – stop here, you are an **Atheist** (A Skeptic would doubt God exists)

Yes – Please continue

Question 3: Do you believe in One God or many gods?

Many – Stop here, you are a **Polytheist** (Animism, Spiritism, Wicca, etc.)

One – You are a Monotheist, please continue

Question 4: Is the One God you believe in Transcendent (Greater than and Beyond Creation) or Immanent (within or equal to creation)?

Immanent – Stop here, you are **Pantheist** (Hinduism, Taoism, Zen Buddhism, etc.)

Transcendent - Continue

Question 5: Does the One and Only Transcendent God interact with His creation?

No - Stop Here, You are a **Deist**

Yes – You are a **Theist** – Please continue

Question 6: Does the Theist God exist as one person or three persons in One?

One – You are a **Unitarian** (Judaism, Islam, etc.)

Three Persons in One – You believe in the Trinity of the **Christian God**

It is possible to answer the first 5 questions based on the many ways God has revealed Himself to us. This **general revelation** has been available from the beginning of time. But God knew it could only begin our journey to Him.

We will discover in upcoming journey units additional ways He interacted specifically with us, revealing even more about who He is.....Then we can answer Question 6.

Your turn:

Answer the questions above. Where did you end up?

If you are stuck on a question, what is keeping you from making a choice? What would help you make the best choice?

What were some of the things that influenced your answers at each step.



adventuring

Prayerwalk

This week **plan about thirty minutes** to walk around your neighborhood or place of business during daylight. If walking is not safe, or you are unable to walk, driving will suffice.

As you walk, **pray about what you see, and what you don't see.** Pray for the people you see on the street. Pray for the families that live in the homes you walk by. Pray for the children and teenagers, the schools, the marriages, the jobs, the conflicts, for all the needs of the neighborhood.

Pray for spiritual health and protection from evil, for a hunger for God, for connection to community, for belonging, for peace, for comfort, for God's abundant blessings.

Pray on behalf of your neighbors. Let all your senses make you aware of the realities and needs of your neighbors.

Pay attention to what God points out to you. Look through His eyes at the things you might not have noticed otherwise.

When you return, reflect on your experience below.

1. What did you see, and hear?

2. Did you become aware of something new?

3. Will you pray any differently for your neighborhood now?



journal

2.6 Simply Mindboggling

God is a **simple** Being – the simplest of all. How can that be? Because He is pure being, without any potential existing in the eternal present, nothing needs to be actualized or effected by someone else. (Explain that in your own words.) God is being, everything else has being. He does not become, He is.

Or you could say, God is **self existent**. He was not made and had no origin. The I AM who I AM exists in the past, present, and future all at the same time.

Self Sufficient is another word that comes to mind. God needs nothing outside Himself. Only God can fully trust in His own self, All others must trust in God. He has life in Himself. He does not need our help, support, or defense.

This allows Him to be **independent** and **free**, unlimited by anything, His creation cannot affect Him in any way. This is the quality man seeks to gain when we put ourselves ahead of God. He is free from the effects of matter, space, time, and motion.

He is the only truly **necessary** being. All other things are dependent on God for life or existence. God is dependent on nothing.

There are no parts to God. He is **indivisible**, not a composition. He can't be torn apart. We on the other hand are made up of body, soul, spirit, intelligence, mind, imagination, and memory.

God is **One**. He is unique and perfect. There is only One God – more than one God would require limits on all of them. To have more than one God would mean there were no Gods at all.

One of the most passionate areas of belief throughout time has to do with **exclusivity**

- Is there only One God and if there is, is there only one way to Him?
- Can't I just be sincere about what I believe?
- Perhaps there are different names for the same God?
- Perhaps there are different ways to the same God?

Every major religion in the world today asks its followers for sincerity and exclusivity. Their way is the only way. All others are to be excluded or converted. It is only when we get to the Post Modern mindset of pluralism and tolerance that the ruckus escalates.

Truth by definition will exclude. Choices abound.....choose carefully. Mindboggling....

Your turn:

How do you struggle with the issue of exclusivity? (The idea that there can be only one God?)

How does understanding the attributes above help you better accept the truth of The One and Only God?

How would the existence of more than one god make them not gods at all?



lyrics

You might wonder why lyrics are included in a study like this.

I believe lyrics, or poetry put to music, as well as the accompanying music, have always been used by the Most High to impact our hearts and minds –

- either by **our part in its creative process** –
- or through **our participation in its expression** –
- or through **our pleasure as a recipient** of its

sensory benefits.



Please try to listen to the musical versions on your own - **iTunes** and **youtube** are great online resources. **If you are using the PDF version of this study and are connected to the internet, clicking on the song title will bring up a music video.** The lyrics presented will not always be spiritual in their original context – but much can still be gained from applying them to how they describe and point to the Most High God.

When you read these lyrics or listen to the song “The Best”, imagine you are singing it about you and your relationship with God.

The Best

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Affdv5Tfg>

Performed by Tina Turner
Lyrics and Music by Holly Knight and Mike Chapman
© 1988 by Knighty Knight Music.

I call you when I need you, my heart's on fire
You come to me, come to me wild and wired
When you come to me
Give me everything I need
Give me a lifetime of promises and a world of dreams
Speak a language of love like you know what it means
And it can't be wrong
Take my heart and make it strong

You're simply the best, better than all the rest
Better than anyone, anyone I've ever met
I'm stuck on your heart, and hang on every word you say
Tear us apart, I would rather be dead

In your heart I see the star of every night and every day
In your eyes I get lost, I get washed away
Just as long as I'm here in your arms
I could be in no better place

You're simply the best, better than all the rest
Better than anyone, anyone I've ever met
I'm stuck on your heart, and hang on every word you say
Tear us apart, I would rather be dead

Each time you leave me I start losing control
You're walking away with my heart and my soul
I can feel you even when I'm alone
Oh don't let go ²²

Your turn:

List some ideas from this song that describe things that are true about God. This song was written about a man remembering his first love and vowing to return to her once again. When you read these lyrics or listen to this song, imagine you are expressing it about your journey to find God and then to knowing God in a deeper way.

I Know You're Out There Somewhere

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a97d5bUCFVQ>

Lyrics by Justin Hayward, performed by The Moody Blues
c. 1988 by Nightswood, LTD

I know you're out there somewhere
Somewhere, somewhere
I know I'll find you somehow
And somehow I'll return again to you

The mist is lifting slowly
I can see the way ahead
And I've left behind the empty streets
That once inspired my life
And the strength of the emotion
Is like thunder in the air
'Cos the promise that we made each other
Haunts me to the end

I know you're out there somewhere
Somewhere, somewhere
I know you're out there somewhere
Somewhere you can hear my voice
I know I'll find you somehow
Somehow, somehow
I know I'll find you somehow
And somehow I'll return again to you

The secret of your beauty
And the mystery of your soul
I've been searching for in everyone I meet
And the times I've been mistaken
It's impossible to say
And the grass is growing
Underneath our feet

I know you're out there somewhere
Somewhere, somewhere
I know you're out there somewhere
Somewhere you can hear my voice
I know I'll find you somehow
Somehow, somehow
I know I'll find you somehow
And somehow I'll return again to you

You see I know you're out there somewhere
O yes I know you're out there somewhere

Yes I know it's going to happen
I can feel you getting near
And soon we'll be returning
To the fountain of our youth
And if you wake up wondering
In the darkness I'll be there
My arms will close around you
And protect you with the truth

I know you're out there somewhere
Somewhere, somewhere
I know you're out there somewhere

Somewhere you can hear my voice
I know I'll find you somehow
Somehow, somehow
I know I'll find you somehow
And somehow I'll return again to you ²³

Your turn:

What are some things you are searching for? Where are you searching?

Click each artist's name to listen to two versions of this famous song.

Somewhere Over the Rainbow

Music by Harold Arlen, Lyrics by E.Y. Harburg
c. 1939 Rhino Entertainment and EMI Music Publishing

[Performed by Judy Garland](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSZxmZmBfnU>

Somewhere over the rainbow
Way up high,
There's a land that I heard of
Once in a lullaby.

Somewhere over the rainbow
Skies are blue,
And the dreams that you dare to dream
Really do come true.

Someday I'll wish upon a star
And wake up where the clouds are far
Behind me.
Where troubles melt like lemon drops
Away above the chimney tops
That's where you'll find me.

Somewhere over the rainbow
Bluebirds fly.
Birds fly over the rainbow.
Why then, oh why can't I?

If happy little bluebirds fly
Beyond the rainbow
Why, oh why can't I?

[Performed by Israel Kamakawiwo'ole](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fahr069-fzE>

c. 1939 Rhino Entertainment and EMI Music Publishing

Somewhere over the rainbow
Way up high
And the dreams that you dreamed of
Once in a lullaby
Somewhere over the rainbow
Blue birds fly
And the dreams that you dreamed of
Dreams really do come true
Someday I'll wish upon a star
Wake up where the clouds are far behind me

Where trouble melts like lemon drops
 High above the chimney tops that's where you'll find me oh
 Somewhere over the rainbow bluebirds fly
 And the dream that you dare to, why, oh why can't I?

Well I see trees of green and
 Red roses too,
 I'll watch them bloom for me and you
 And I think to myself
 What a wonderful world

Well I see skies of blue and I see clouds of white
 And the brightness of day
 I like the dark and I think to myself
 What a wonderful world

The colors of the rainbow so pretty in the sky
 Are also on the faces of people passing by
 I see friends shaking hands
 Saying, "How do you do?"
 They're really saying, I...I love you
 I hear babies cry and I watch them grow,
 They'll learn much more
 Than we'll know
 And I think to myself
 What a wonderful world (w)oooorld

Someday I'll wish upon a star,
 Wake up where the clouds are far behind me
 Where trouble melts like lemon drops
 High above the chimney top that's where you'll find me
 Oh, Somewhere over the rainbow way up high
 And the dream that you dare to, why, oh why can't I?

The song was originally written for the movie, *The Wizard of Oz*, and was sung by Judy Garland, eventually becoming her signature song. In 1939, the year of its release, it won the Academy Award for Best Song. It was also selected number one on the "Songs of the Century" list compiled by the Recording Industry Association of America and the National Endowment for the Arts. The American Film Institute also ranked "Over the Rainbow" the greatest movie song of all time on the list of "AFI's 100 Years...100 Songs".

Besides Judy Garland and Israel Kamakawiwo'ole who has surged to the top of the charts with an updated lyrical ukulele version, this timeless song has been sung and arranged for and by every generation since, including arrangements by the Cast of Glee, Frank Sinatra, Eva Cassidy, Jason Castro and Katharine McPhee of American Idol fame, little Connie Talbot on Britain's Got Talent, Jewel, Tony Bennett, Ella Fitzgerald, Rufus Wainright and Barbra Streisand to name a few.

Your turn:

Do you have any dreams so amazing you are almost afraid to share them?

Where can you go and not get into trouble?

Share your thoughts on why this song has such universal appeal.

more cool stuff

Worldviews

If someone asked you about your Worldview you might have to think twice.

Most of us have never really even thought about it.

Is it something we just make up as we go along?

Does it matter in my daily life?

Can I change it if I don't like it?

Is this just an academic exercise?



Does it have anything to do with our race, sex, national heritage, current nationality or even our religion?

Everyone has a personal worldview much like every culture and society displays shared philosophies, values and customs. Sometimes the personal clashes with the cultural, and sometimes cultures allow multiple worldviews to exist and oftentimes these will clash and compete with each other.

What is a Worldview?

Simply put, it is a **theory of the world used for living in the world, a comprehensive system of beliefs about what exists, how things happen, and what it all means.** It serves as a foundation for all our thoughts, decisions and actions and spans a wide range of beliefs and topics.

Some of the questions and beliefs included in a worldview include:

- Why are we here? What is our purpose? Where did we come from?
- How did the world get here and how does it work?
- Where are we heading?
- What is culture? Are all cultures on an equal standing or are some better than others?
- Life is basically decisions we make about using our time. What are your priorities?
- Is life just about matter and energy or is there more?
- Can we know if God exists? Does God exist? What is He like? What is His relationship with the Universe?
- Did miracles occur in the past? Do they occur today?
- Is the universe self-assembling or did God create it in miraculous ways?
- Does God communicate with us in everyday life? Does He communicate through written revelation?
- What is God's role in history? Is there purpose and meaning in history for individuals and mankind? Is history linear or cyclical?
- How do we relate to each other? How are individual people regarded in contrast to the group/majority/culture/state?
- Is life important? What happens after death?
- What is wrong with the world? How can we fix it?
- What values and ethics are important? (How we should behave and what we should do and what methods are allowed)
- Who decides? Who gets power and how do they get it? Is power granted or taken?

Personal Worldview

On a personal level this is the **combination of all you believe to be true and what you believe is the driving force behind every emotion, decision and action.** It affects your response to every area of life and the society you live in including the following areas: Philosophy, Science, Theology, Anthropology, Economics, Law, Politics, Art, and Social Order.

It will also affect your beliefs about: death, work, sex, family, use of technology, the environment, life and health, recreation, rule of law, suffering, war, privacy, human rights and truth.

A worldview not only contains beliefs and values that are time honored and practiced, but also those that are withheld. It includes not only the things we do and love but those we won't or don't do and hate.

Where does your worldview come from?

Initially our worldview comes from the family we are born into. **Tradition and home are the two most powerful magnets for our worldviews.** Over time we often forget the original reasons for them, accepting them without question. No one asks Why?

Our early life experiences, religious training, family situation, education, national culture and customs will help determine our worldview. As we grow we have access to more outside influences than ever before from entertainment, sports, education, family, church, technology, work, relationships, and we learn if our worldview holds up to the reality of our life experiences.

Sometimes we change it just to be cool. Sometimes we change it because it makes sense at the time, it's what everyone else is doing. Young people often change out of rebellion. Others may change out of anger, or as a result of a traumatic experience. Some change because they obtain more truth, some because their current one isn't working or doesn't mesh with reality.

But many don't even know, don't care and are just getting on with it. And that in a nutshell is their worldview. No one is asking why? Nothing is critically examined.

Cultural or Societal Worldview

Personal worldviews operate within the context of a culture or society's shared philosophies, values and customs. These components allow a society to exist over time on a large scale and determines government styles, economics, education, family structure, laws, rights of citizens, power structure, care of the weaker members, methods of control, methods of security and protection of sovereignty, role of media and the press, protection of life and the role of religion.

Many societal worldviews allow for of the existence of a variety of personal worldviews under their governing umbrella so long as these personal worldviews do not threaten the society and culture. Problems arise when there are differences that cannot be overlooked or accommodated on either side.

Evolving Worldviews

Over time both personal and cultural/societal worldviews change or evolve. Sometimes this is the **result of changes in the society that force the worldview to change**, and **sometimes the peoples' worldviews change first which forces the society to change**.

Some of the reasons a society or nation's worldview would change over time include the following:

- Current worldview was **unsustainable**, implosion of society creates vacuum, new worldview accompanies power used to control crisis.
- **Advancement of society** through technology, discovery of new worlds, discovery of new knowledge, etc., creates tension in areas of ethics and values
- **Generational gap** – inability of prior generations to pass on to future generations, different life experiences in successive generations
- **Syncretism** – Multiculturalism equalizes beliefs and practices that dilute strength of ruling worldviews
- **Media** of all kinds controls information to fulfill agendas and change minds. Use of propaganda and misinformation or denial to all facts in order to change truth in minds of populace.
- Acceptance over time of values of **personal peace and prosperity above all**, apathy in general allows strong men to take over and control
- **Migration and immigration**, people groups from different worldviews, cultures and religions move into area and do not assimilate.
- **Conquest** by foreign nation bringing its own worldview
- **Revolution** – from within, either societal morals, values or governmental coup.
- Religion, Science, and Education – brings new ideas, new discoveries, new truth
- **Subtle manipulation** over time, bullying, shaming, violence, going along to get along, peace at all costs.
- **Observation of past results**, consequences, failures

Personal worldviews also change over time as people grow up, get an education, have their own family, accumulate life experiences good and bad, come to know God, deal with health and financial issues, and have a greater awareness of the world. They begin to ask Why?, critically examining the truth in their beliefs.

Major World Views

Hopefully, the chart below allows you to see the differences between the major worldviews that have been around from ancient times. We will discuss some of them in more depth but since it is a broad overview you are encouraged to do further in depth study if you desire more information.

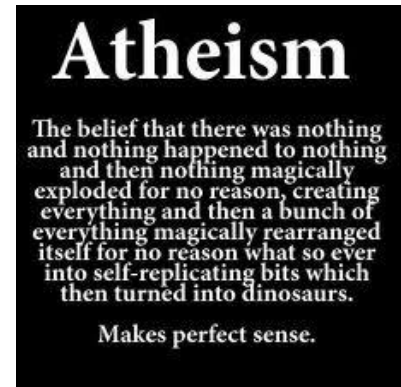
	Man/Reality	Truth/Morality	Evil/Death	God
Naturalism Agnosticism Atheism Secular Humanism Rationalism Nihilism Marxism/ Communism Existentialism	<p>Man: Complex biological machine, chance product of evolution. Man will someday become extinct as a species</p> <p>Matter is all that exists, no soul or spirit, only physical reality and natural law.</p>	<p>Truth only from scientific proofs and what can be verified from five senses and understood by the brain.</p> <p>Morals determined by individual preferences and situation, subject to evolution and change.</p>	<p>Evil is real and caused by human ignorance. Man can defeat evil by overcoming ignorance.</p> <p>Death brings an end to each life form. They cease to exist and there is no afterlife.</p>	<p>God does not exist.</p>
Post Modernism Multiculturalism Pluralism Relativism Universalism	<p>Man is a product of his social setting and is not free.</p> <p>Reality is socially created through a cultural filter</p>	<p>Truth is relative to one's culture.</p> <p>Tolerance, freedom of expression, inclusion, refusal to claim to have all the answers leads to a lack of universal moral values.</p>	<p>There is no absolute evil since it is relative to one's cultural expression.</p> <p>Recognizes death without implying any consensus or certainty about the nature of life after death.</p>	<p>God may or may not exist.</p>
Polytheism Animism Tribal Beliefs Spiritism Ancestor Worship Wicca NeoPagans Some New Age	<p>Man is a material creation of the gods who happens to have a spiritual core.</p> <p>Material things are associated with good and bad spirit beings who govern what goes on behind natural events. Reality is spiritual</p>	<p>Truth is discovered through a shaman figure who has visions about what the gods and demons are doing and how they are feeling. Truth is hidden.</p> <p>Moral values mostly include taboos which upset or anger various spirits whether they are good or evil.</p>	<p>Evil occurs because of the struggle between the gods and will never be defeated.</p> <p>Soul enters the spiritual dimension at death.</p>	<p>Multiple, finite, personal gods exist.</p>
Pantheism Hinduism Zen Buddhism Taoism Eastern Mysticism Most New Age Christian Science Scientology	<p>Man seeks oneness with spiritual, eternal and impersonal reality. Individuality and personality are illusion.</p> <p>All matter is an illusion</p>	<p>Truth = unity of oneness of universe. Beyond rational description.</p> <p>No distinction between good and bad as cosmos is perfect all the time.</p>	<p>Evil is an illusion.</p> <p>The life force reincarnates to another form when current body dies.</p>	<p>One infinite, unknowable, impersonal God that is in everyone and everything.</p>
Theism Christianity Islam Judaism	<p>Man is a unique creation made by God in His image meant to interact with Him. Reality is finite, material and relational.</p>	<p>Truth is objective and revealed by God. Morality revealed by God as an expression of His moral being.</p>	<p>Evil is the result of free choice and will be defeated by God. After death the soul is transported to either heaven or hell.</p>	<p>One and Only One infinite, personal God. Christianity=Triune God, Jesus came to earth as Man/God to save us.</p>

Atheistic Worldviews

Believing in God is oftentimes considered something for the **uneducated and uninformed** when it is actually the other way around. As societies advance they begin to depend more on themselves, seeing no need for God, pointing to their own accomplishments as proof of their abilities.

But since the **Proof of God** is all around us, as we advance, we actually acquire better tools for discovering that proof.

Man, in his denial of the existence of God, has developed many flavors of Atheism, some of which are listed below. **See if you recognize** any of these in our society today.



- **Secular Humanism** – man is the measure of all things, we are self-sufficient and will figure it out, will solve all our problems
- **Rationalism** – If I can't understand it – it doesn't exist. Senses can't be trusted, only reasoning, logic, and real world experience.
- **Naturalism** – nature is all there is – no supernatural intervention in the world, only believe what can be felt with 5 senses or proved scientifically
- **Materialism** - existence is explainable solely in material terms, with no accounting of spirit or consciousness. The universe as a huge device held together by pieces of matter functioning in subjection to naturalistic laws. Denies all concepts of Special Creation, it relies on the Theory of Evolution to explain itself.
- **Nihilism** – there is no meaning or purpose in existence, no absolute value or truth – we create our own value
- **Marxism/Communism** – utopia can be obtained if everyone works for the good purpose of the whole. "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."
- **Pragmatism** – Something is true if it works. Ends justify the means.
- **Secularism** – no faith, no soul, religious skepticism or indifference. The view that religious considerations should be excluded from civil affairs or public education – separation of church and state.
- **Rationalism** – Everything we know by faith can also be proved by reason but not vice a versa. Deny creation out of nothing and divinity of Christ.
- **Scientism** – Scientific method and proof is the only way to discover truth. Determines in advance kinds of conclusions and beliefs will be deemed acceptable.
- **Hedonism** – Everyone does their own thing – ultimate chaos.
- **Absolute Democracy** – Absolute 51% vote, whatever the majority wants, no values or ethics, law and morals a matter of averages.
- **Multiculturalism** - no truth transcends culture, no idea or moral concept might be true for every cultural group or every human being. All cultures, from that of a spirits-worshipping tribe to that of an advanced industrial civilization, are equal in value.
- **Pluralism** – Every religion is true.
- **Relativism** – No criteria by which one can determine which religion is true or best. Whatever you believe is true for you.
- **Universalism** – Everyone will eventually be saved and go to heaven through good's eventual triumph over evil.
- **Inclusivism** – One religion is explicitly true while all others are implicitly true.
- **Syncretism** – Adoption of parts of one religious belief into another. The Romans were masters of this – they used it to keep their empire happy and under control.

The Modernists vs. The Post Modernists

Postmodernism is currently a very influential worldview that appeared in the late 1960's and came into its own in the early 2000's. To understand it better we need to also understand the worldview it is a reaction against, Modernism.

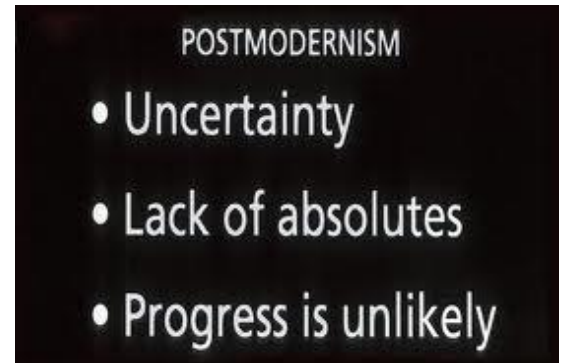
The following lists compare the two competing groups.

Modernism was birthed during the Enlightenment (1700's) and is based on the humanistic ideas that **man is good and has no need for God or outside revelation to survive and progress.**

- Human reason alone is enough and will solve all the world's problems.
- Rational, logical scientific method defines all truth.
- Progress, technology, mastery of nature, and scientific advancement are highly valued.
- Reality or truth is what you can see and touch and prove.
- Cause and effect is what drives the universe.
- Personal peace and prosperity become man's goals.
- Ultimately leads to rise of technological advancement at any cost, rise of materialism and determinism, empty lives, pessimism and lack of creativity and beauty, loss of freedom, and elite amassing wealth and control.

Post-Modernism is a reaction against the pessimism and emptiness of Modernism and **attempts to expose autonomous human reason as a dead end.** It believes **humans are only an extension of their culture not individual rational selves.**

- Skeptical of absolute truths or universal principles in favor of relativity and individual experience. By acknowledging that anything goes, if you think it's true – it's true, it fluctuates between atheistic tenets and at best polytheistic ideas.
- Truth is subjective at best, experiential and may change, individual perception is not reality. Truth is created as you experience it.
- Post Modern reality is subject to individual interpretation, which can change by the minute. All meaning is relative to a cultural situation. Personal choice legitimizes everything.
- Buzzwords include tolerance, inclusion, freedom of expression, and a refusal to claim to ever have all the answers or absolute truth. No single answer will suffice for all cultures or individuals.
- People who claim absolute truth are considered aggressors and repressive.
- Hedonistic – everyone can do what they want when they want to.
- All beliefs are valid, but if you reject my beliefs, you reject me.
- Freedom from restraints of rationality, nothing separates truth from self-delusion, not responsible for choices.
- Truth is replaced by empowering political narratives, creating revisionist history, and celebrating multiculturalism.
- Easily able to substitute power for truth, use of sociological law, whatever society wants at the moment
- No common definitions, no moral restraints, freedom is only limited by freedom of another or their willingness to fight.
- Attracted to spiritual experiences, New Age, Mysticism, Wicca, Environmentalism, emotional responsiveness to storytelling, visual media, and modern mythmaking.



Paganism vs. Neopaganism

Paganism is a term originally used to **define beliefs that were not Christian, Jewish or Islamic**. These early religions were mostly pantheistic, polytheistic or animistic. The Greeks and Romans were considered pagan because of their polytheistic mythical superhuman gods and goddesses.

Neo Paganism comprises a **mixture of various modern beliefs and spiritual practices based on ancient pagan rites and rituals**, most often centering around the earth or nature, the sacredness of the land, and breaking through into the spiritual worlds.

Beliefs and practices range from modern day New Age and Wicca, to adaptations of ancient Druidism, Celtic, Norse, Roman, Greek and Egyptian polytheism. A Pantheon of gods and goddesses of all types are created and worshiped. Humans can also become their own gods and goddesses and communicate with the spirit world.

History is usually viewed as cyclical in nature, seasonal, with no end in sight, absolute truth does not exist, and all beliefs are true. Humans are not the crown of creation, the community is the most important, and the earth is greater still.

What's the difference between a Deist and a Theist?

This is another issue that gets a lot of press and can be very confusing.

Let's start out with what they agree on:

- Both Believe in One, Infinite, Personal god – so we can call them Monotheistic
- Both Believe that God created the world
- Both Believe there are absolute moral values

Here are the major differences:

- A Deist believes God does not interact (miracles) with His creation and the universe. After He created it, He left it to itself and does not intervene. A Theist believes God exists and interacts within and beyond His creation and that **miracles** happen.
- A Deist does not believe in **original sin** while a Theist does.
- A Deist believes **evil** can be defeated (by man or God), while a Theist believes evil is a result of free choice and will ultimately be defeated by God.
- A Deist believes God's only **revelation** is through creation, not through Jesus or the Word of God, *The Bible*, as the Theist believes.
- A Deist places a high value on **reason** and the results of reasoning instead of faith.

What is a Biblical or Christian Worldview?

A Biblical Worldview goes beyond holding Biblical morals, or living life with Bible verses attached. It is not Christian political reactionism, but instead is **Biblically grounded transformation that goes beyond the spiritual, impacting anything and everything, inserting itself onto the world stage of life and culture.** Defined by hope in Jesus it moves beyond simple wishful or positive thinking.

Here are just some of the building block beliefs of a Christian Worldview:

1. An **absolute personal God** exists who created the universe out of nothing and then created mankind in His image, HE is worthy of respect, honor and worship.
2. He is the absolute **LORD and King** over this world.
3. He is **knowable**, but to think wrongly about Him is idolatry. He is also **incomprehensible** and infinitely greater than mankind.
4. Man has been given **dominion over creation** by God.
5. **Man is fallen, sinful.** Man is also a moral being made in God's image with free will and loved by God. Life is precious and begins in the womb.
6. **Government** is instituted to control fallen man with just laws based on Divine and Natural Law.
7. **Jesus, the Son of God, is also God**, and is mankind's only hope for redemption.
8. **The Bible** is God's instructions to man, absolute moral truth to be obeyed.
9. **History is linear**, not cyclical. It is made up of sequential events leading to fulfillment of God's purposes for humanity. Human history will climax on earth where it began.
10. **God provides** for His creation and we are to care for each other including the sick, the elderly, the poor and the young.
11. **Satan** and **evil** are real. **Heaven** and **Hell** are real. There is **life after death**.
12. **Sex** is good in the context of a **covenant marriage** between a man and a woman. All other expression is sinful and distorted and produces negative consequences.
13. We are to live in and **care for God's creation** carefully and lovingly, but it is not to be worshiped in HIS place.
14. **Technology is a tool** to be used to fulfill God's purposes but it is not to be worshiped allowing it to control us. This would include the use of and its exposure to media, recreation, communication, and information.
15. **Arts and Recreation** are a legitimate part of human creativity and community as long as they are used in a healthy and God honoring way.
16. **Work** is a gift of God and is to be pursued with excellence for God's glory. Our gifts and abilities come from God, as does prosperity or suffering and struggle.
17. Values **economic stewardship** of property, free enterprise, checking injustice and responsibility
18. Values political concepts of **justice, freedom, order** and limited government.
19. Through **education** we are to develop critical skills of analysis so we are informed, intentional and reflective about what we see, say and create.

Battle of the World Views

Christianity was born into the **worldview of the Roman Empire**. Rome was a glittering empire with a rotten core. Human life had no value. Ideas were considered the true reality as the spiritual was superior to the physical.

Every element of Roman society reflected this hierarchy of the superior ruling the inferior. The father ruled the family, men ruled over women, slaves were inferior to free, in fact they were considered to be tools. The emperor ruled and was to be worshiped as god by the empire.

Life had no value. Men fought to the death in the arenas, abortion and infanticide was common, visibly deformed children were left to die, and slavery was the economic foundation of the empire.

Multiple gods were worshiped and many were adopted from cultures of the people that were conquered by the empire. These gods were eternal, but really only super humans.

As the **Christian worldview expanded** after being legalized and then adopted by the Emperor Constantine, the following changes began to appear in the 300's and following centuries.

- People were equal, no one superior, since they were all created in the image of God.
- Opposition rose toward the institution of slavery, babies began to be rescued, the sick and weak were cared for.
- Since God created and worked, all people were now expected to work, whether it was intellectual or physical. Labor has intrinsic value, it's not just for slaves and servants.
- Technology began to be developed to remove drudgery from work. Property rights were developed.
- The ongoing dynamic between the church and the state began as Christianity became legal, but it did not depend upon the state, remembering its beginnings as a persecuted minority religion.

During the **Middle Ages** the ideas of Augustine and Aristotle regarding the **purpose and necessity of government** in any society were rediscovered. Augustine believed human government is needed because of sin, selfishness and self-interest. The absence of government equals anarchy. Government, run by sinful man, is corrupt by nature, but a necessary evil.

Aristotle recognized that government is a necessary institution that God has placed in the world and has positive and legitimate functions. The need was to find a way to prevent original sin from corrupting government.

John Locke's ideas of inalienable rights stem from the Middle Ages – Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness, based on belief that all are created in the image of God and have natural rights the state cannot remove. **Natural laws are the moral laws** God wove into the fabric of the universe. **Truth** is considered absolute, knowable to the human mind, and necessary for society.

However, the Christian worldview was always under attack from opposing worldviews that rose within various cultures and societies.

- The **Reformation Wars** of 1400-1600 were over not if Christianity is true, but which Christianity is true? Who were the true Jesus followers? Questions of the role of religion in society arose.

- The **Discovery of the New World** called into question Biblical morality and history. Where did these new people groups who don't know the gospel come from? Are they really going to hell because they don't know about Christianity? What about the story of Noah?
- Biblical authority was even further questioned and under attack as a new way to look at knowledge, **the scientific method**, becomes only way to evaluate truth. Truth moved away from certainty to probability. Knowledge moved away from studying classics to scientific experimentation. **Evolution** became the reason for God's creative power. Truth is now found in the present and the future, not in the past.
- As the modern western world moved through periods of Existentialism, Postmodern Nihilism, Eastern Pantheistic Neo Paganism, New Age, Materialism, and all flavors of Atheism, we have lost the certainty and meaning of life.

And once again it seems we have **returned to Roman times**. Materialism and evolution have led to feelings of life's purposelessness ushering in a rejection of spirituality. Today's supreme virtue has become toleration, after all, it's what kept the empire together, embracing any and all lifestyles. And if you don't go along to get along you are persecuted.

The decadent, oversexed, self-indulgent, anti-natal society that was Rome has returned in modern trappings as Western society today **continues this battle between Rome and Christianity**. Take away Christianity, and we're back to Roman pagan worldview.

Your turn:

What are some of the ideas described above that you have noticed are prevalent in your sphere of influence?

Which ones do you recognize often in movies, songs, in the news, on talk shows, in books, in the classroom, and even at church?

List some ways your personal worldview has changed over time?

List some ways your personal worldview conflicts with the cultural worldview where you live?

journal

2.7 Nitty Gritty

The term **Nitty Gritty** means to get to the heart of the matter, the basic essentials or realities of something. The concepts below are the main points or the Nitty Gritty of the **The One and Only** journey you have almost completed. Take some time to review them.



1. **We are all** looking for answers.
2. **God has planted** questions in our hearts to draw us back to Him, questions only He can answer.
3. **How we answer** these questions will determine our Worldview, the framework from which we make sense of life and the world.
4. **When we make ourselves the determiner of Truth** instead of God, we transfer God's Transcendence to ourselves, and the results are a myriad of "isms", religions, and worldviews based on faulty foundations.
5. **We want God to be** everything else but God. Holding an incorrect view of God is a choice. It will determine our actions and our future.
6. **There is only One God** – more than one God would require limits on all of them.
7. **Truth by definition will exclude.**
8. **Extra credit reading recommendation:** [Choosing Your Faith In A World of Spiritual Options](#), by Mark Mittelberg

Any final thoughts?

closure

Because it matters what we think about God

We have come to the end of **The One & Only**, the second of the 12 OmniInfinity™ Journeys. This journey has caused us to **Remember** "God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14a) and **Read** Joshua 1 & 24 and Hebrews 11-12.

We **Analyzed** with Chapter Titles and Key Words and **Investigated** the One & Only, as well as **Practiced** Prayer and Fasting. We also took **Inventory** of our Wants and Needs and went on an **Adventuring** Prayerwalk. We were challenged by the revelations in the **More Cool Stuff** Worldview chart, and then again by the definitions of so many flavors of Atheism. And finally, **Lyrics** spoke to our hearts and souls as we pondered the One & Only through music.

The **Journal** guided us through discovering **how our actions and choices reveal what we put our faith in**. We are constantly **looking for answers** to those basic questions placed deep in our souls to draw us to HIM. In order to survive, we **create a framework** to make sense of life and the world – **our Worldview** – which provides these answers.

However, when we make ourselves the determiner of Truth instead of the One & Only, we create a myriad of isms, religions and worldviews. But since there is **nothing new under the sun**, our God shopping results in one of **5 major Worldviews**: Atheism/Naturalism, Post Modernism, Polytheism, Pantheism and Theism. By answering **6 basic questions** we are able to determine what we currently believe about God.

We learned God is **simply mindboggling** – so **simple**, pure and **indivisible**. He is truly **free** and **independent**, needing nothing outside Himself – truly **self sufficient**. He is also **self-existent**, has always been and is currently in what we perceive as the past, present, and future, all at once. He **needs nothing** and no one, yet everything and everyone needs and is dependent on Him. He is **One** and **the Only One**. There are no other Gods.

Now it's time to **think back** over this part of your journey and **reflect** on what you have discovered and learned. The categories below may help jog your memory. **Describe** the details of any areas that **apply** to you.

New Things I Learned

Old Things I was reminded of

Questions I have

Areas I was challenged in

First steps I took

Areas I would like to study more

“AHA!” moments

Dreams and visions



appendix

- [About the Journeys](#)
- [About Remembering](#)
- [About the Practices](#)

about the journeys...

Welcome to **OmniInfinity™**.. a series of guided journeys leading to greater knowledge and understanding of the attributes of God and the Spiritual Practices necessary to gain this knowledge.

The only requirement is a willingness to learn and discover through a variety of activities. Some elements you may naturally be drawn to, some will challenge you, and some may be way out of the box for you. It is important to do them all, in order, completing one journey before moving on to the next.

There are twelve journeys or units, **each designed to be completed in two months** - either by yourself, with a friend or in a small group setting. It is important to remember we all start from different places, we start with what we know and move on from there, but we are all traveling together.

journey elements

The following elements make up each journey and should be completed in order. Some of the elements require some advance planning, so you might want to review the entire contents of each journey before you begin. Use the Table of Contents to check off your progress.

Remember: One or more Bible verses to memorize for each journey unit.

Read: Throughout the twelve journey units you will read some of the most profound and well loved chapters in the Bible.

Analyze: A variety of Bible Study methods will be offered to help you analyze in greater depth a section of the Reading above. The goal of this section is to familiarize you with various ways to greater understand God's Word.

Investigate and 10 things: Each journey unit focuses on a group of God's attributes, defining terms, and completing a directed investigation page.

Practice and Why?: Part of growing in our relationship with God is the intentional practice of skills that have helped Christians from the beginning. Each journey unit will focus on one or more of these with instructions for developing each discipline skill. Some Practices involve doing a specific activity, while others require we stop doing certain things.

Inventory: A personal inventory will be completed regarding areas related to the attributes and skills studied in each unit, reviewing your personal history and evaluating your current practices and beliefs.

Adventuring: This section guides you to venture out into the world with a specific assignment to observe, interact with or impact your surroundings and neighborhoods. The intent is to allow God to reveal Himself through nature, media and other people.

Lyrics: You are encouraged to read the included song lyrics as poetry for your inspiration, go online and listen to the actual recordings and then reflect on the questions that follow.

Journal and More Cool Stuff: The author has included some musings and further information pertaining to the subject of each journey unit for your consideration, personal response and reflection.

Closure: At the conclusion of each journey there is a place to recap where you've been, what you learned, new thoughts, challenges, growing pains.....

enjoy the adventure ...

about remembering...



Think of this exercise as a necessary foundation for future excellence – like practicing scales on the piano or doing wind sprints or swimming laps, taking your vitamins, or eating your vegetables.

We actually recall or remember all kinds of things we've memorized without really even trying. Can you think of any?

How about your phone number, email address, street address, zip code, social security number, birthday, names of your family, how to get to work, how to drive a car, that secret recipe...or how to spell or multiply, song lyrics, movie scenes, jokes, what someone was wearing, what car they drove, sports statistics, what chocolate tastes like, what the ocean smells like, and on and on.

Why do we remember what we remember?

Recollection is just the tip of the memory iceberg. Within our marvelous and mysterious brain the memory works in collaboration with us and the world – it uses all our senses and emotions. We associate smells, colors, places, rituals, symbols, landmarks, even people, with memories and when we sense the trigger, we remember.

There are tremendous spiritual benefits from Remembering Bible verses:

- Strengthens our faith
- Shapes how we view the world
- Makes God's Word immediately accessible
- Guards our minds.....and that's just for starters.

Experts say that we will forget more in the first hour after our memory event than in one day, and more in the first day than the first month...What we remember for one month, will probably stay with us.....so the idea is to remember regularly for one month and we've got it.

Here are some suggestions to help you get started. We all learn differently – so don't be afraid to try some of the more unusual methods. Not only do we need to remember the verse, **we need to remember to work on remembering the verse.**

- Write the verse on several post it notes or index cards and put them where you will see them such as the car, the bathroom mirror, the kitchen sink, a bulletin board, your computer screen saver, your cell phone, by your bed.....
- Make plans to spend five minutes, twice a day (usually as you get up and before bed) to review.
- Say it slowly, 15 times in a row, emphasizing each word.
- If you have already learned it in another translation, review that one. Once you know it in one, look it up in a couple of other translations to see what is different.
- Review it when you are waiting in line, or on hold on the phone.
- Sing it – make up a tune to go with it
- For extra credit, add the verse before and the verse after.

about the practices...

The Spiritual Practices put us in a place where we are better able to interact with our environment and God. God can then reach inside our spirits and transform them.

Just as our body needs to eat, breathe, exercise, drink, sleep, etc., so our spiritual self needs to make sure it is being sustained, cared for, and trained.

The results include spiritual growth, a life controlled by the Holy Spirit, evidence of the fruit of the spirit, and the ultimate goal, living life like Jesus did.

The Spiritual Practices are not:

- Meritorious laws that earn favor with God
- A way to show how spiritually mature we are
- Unpleasant or difficult

Instead, they are:

- Intentional
- Activities we do that when practiced allow us to do activities we cannot now do.
- Adaptable to work with our temperaments and gifts
- Adjustable according to the rhythm and seasons of our lives

There are two kinds

Practices of Abstinence - when we stop doing something that is perfectly normal to allow ourselves to focus more on God, His Word, and growing in godliness. These also help us resist our tendency toward sins of commission (when we do something we shouldn't do). We withdraw to breathe in all that God can provide to us, breaking the hold that the world has on our lives. Practices of Abstinence help ready us and create room for the Practices of Engagement.

Practices of Engagement - when we do certain activities that help us grow in Christ and obey his commandments. The Practices of Abstinence have opened up the time and broken up the preoccupations so we are now free to learn of, focus on, and practice those things that God commands us to do. These assist in keeping us from our tendency toward sins of omission (not doing the things we should do). We engage to breathe out all that God commands us. ¹¹

As their name implies, the Spiritual Practices are not one-time events, but skills to be learned and developed over time. So don't be discouraged in the beginning if you struggle with them or find them difficult. Make them a regular part of your life. In our Journeys we would rather **emphasize the actual practicing of the Practices** and not so much the reading about them.....and let you discover the benefits as they appear in your life.

credits

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so what now?

Continue your OmniInfinity™ adventure with

- Journey Three: Beyond Time and Space**
- Journey Four: Large and In Charge**
- Journey Five: Faithful and True**
- Journey Six: Good and Ready**
- Journey Seven: Bright, White and Right**
- Journey Eight: Hot, Hot, Hot**
- Journey Nine: O Mercy Me**
- Journey Ten: To Die For**
- Journey Eleven: Up Close and Personal**
- Journey Twelve: Perfect Ending**