

Postmodernism and the Discerning Christian

Goals

1. To make us more conversant with Postmodernism
2. To show how a Christian should think about Postmodernism
3. To give a Christian response to Postmodernism and its cultural influences
4. To lay some groundwork for you to evangelize and defend the faith
5. To demonstrate the consistency and strength of the Christian faith

Before we get started...

1. I am not **THE** expert...
 - a. I don't make this my life's work but I take from people who do
 - b. I want to get the Worldview right!
 - c. I try to be discerning when looking at other Worldviews
 - d. There's a lot that I know, and much more that don't know
2. There is an inherent danger in studying worldviews...
 - a. People EMBRACE it wholesale or REJECT it wholesale
 - b. People EMBRACE or REJECT the wrong things!
 - c. We're studying History, Philosophy, Theology, Apologetics, and Evangelism
 - d. Sometimes this can be an uncomfortable thing
3. A (REALLY) brief history of human thought...
 - a. Basic contour of Pre-Modern Thought (1400 – 1750)
 - b. Basic contour of Modern Thought (1750 – 1960)
 - c. Basic contour of Postmodern Thought (1960 – today)

What is Postmodernism?

1. A worldview that is founded upon these premises...
 - a. Truth is founded upon narratives and the languages that carry them
 - b. No person's truth can be greater than any other person's truth
 - c. Truth is personal and subjective, not absolute and objective
 - d. Truth is found within a person's experiences
 - e. The only way to know truth from someone else is to identify with their narrative
2. What are some areas has Postmodernism influenced?
 - a. Postmodern Art
 - b. Postmodern Architecture
 - c. Postmodern Theology
 1. Feminist, LGBTQIA+ Theology, Emerging Church, Generous Orthodoxy, Post-Foundationalism, The Woke Church, Incarnational Theology, Liberation Theology

Brief History of Postmodernism

1. **History:** The 2nd Industrial Revolution → Post-WW2 (~1870-1960)
 - a. Modernism taught that the world can be exploited for our good
 1. The power of human ingenuity was on display...
 2. Assembly lines, lightbulb, plastics, toilets, synthetic fertilizers
 3. Electric rail, automobiles, internal-combustion engines, airplanes

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2. Because that would make someone's truth BETTER than someone else's!
3. Because that's what got us into the Modernist dilemma!
3. The Personal Nature of Truth
 - a. "It's true for me..."
 1. The mind produces its own truth, and is therefore subject(ive) to each person
 2. Objects only have extrinsic essences, and not meaning within themselves
 - b. So, all the other "truths for you..."
 1. Are of equal quality to my truths
 2. Are not certain in themselves... only situated within their story (Critical Theory)
 3. Are only valid insofar as my "truths" have a point of contact with your "truths"
4. The Experiential Nature of Truth
 - a. "Truth" is primarily gathered through experience
 1. This is a REJECTION of objective facts and propositional statements
 2. Truth can *really* only be experienced (and that only by themselves)
 3. If you have not experienced "truth" you are ignorant of it, unless you identify with it
 - b. Experience trumps meaning
 1. Meaning is filtered through the experience of the recipient (Deconstructionism)
 2. Even if it is factually false, the lived experience counts greater than the intention

Your thoughts/questions so far???

1. **History:** The 2nd Industrial Revolution → Post-W/W2 (~1870-1960)
2. The Birth of Postmodernism
3. Basic Tenants of Postmodernism
 - a. Narrative and Language
 - b. No Meta-Narratives!
 - c. The Personal Nature of Truth
 - d. The Experiential Nature of Truth

Next Week...

1. Re-cap of what we learned today
2. Examples of Postmodern Movements
 - a. Black Lives Matter
 - b. Postmodern Christianity