

S T U D Y G U I D E



Ultimate Issues

by R.C. Sproul



S T U D Y G U I D E

Ultimate Issues

R.C. Sproul



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

Renew your Mind.

LIGONIER.ORG | 800-435-4343

Copyright © 2018 Ligonier Ministries

421 Ligonier Court, Sanford, FL 32771

E-mail: info@ligonier.org

All rights reserved.

No reproduction of this work without permission.

Printed in the United States of America.

Only Two Worldviews

INTRODUCTION

What is the difference between people and animals? Where does the idea of human value come from? On issues of ultimacy, what do we base our ideas on? Where do we get our concept of right and wrong, meaning and purpose, dignity and value? In this lesson, Dr. Sproul exposes the radical difference between a theistic and an atheistic worldview.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To recognize that there are really only two worldviews
2. To consider how theistic and atheistic worldviews collide
3. To show that if God does not exist, all ethical systems are arbitrary

SCRIPTURE READING

And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the LORD commanded. Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant."

—1 Kings 11:9–11

They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace.

—Jeremiah 6:14

LECTURE OUTLINE

- A. A worldview is a framework of looking at life and the world around us.
 - 1. The German word for worldview is *Weltanschauung*.
 - 2. Various worldview systems are continually colliding with each other.
 - a. No one has a perfectly consistent, coherent system of looking at and interpreting life.
 - b. There are thousands of different philosophies that compete with each other in the world.

- B. The ultimate system division is between theism and atheism.
 - 1. There is an enormous gulf that exists between these two ultimate perspectives.
 - 2. No one is a consistent theist, and no one is a consistent atheist.
 - 3. When it comes to God, He either exists or He does not; there is no third alternative.
 - 4. How one answers the question of God's existence will systemically influence his thinking about everything.

- C. There are differences between theocentric and anthropocentric belief systems.
 - 1. Theocentric belief places the existence and reality of God at the center of all things.
 - 2. Anthropocentric belief denies the reality of God and views all things from a man-centered perspective.
 - 3. Both views have serious consequences and ramifications.

- D. Atheistic humanism assumes that there is no God and man is the highest being.
 - 1. Man is a cosmic accident or a germ that fortuitously emerged out of the slime.
 - 2. Man's origin is from nothingness, and he ultimately moves toward nothingness.
 - 3. This belief system undermines the possibility of human significance, value, or importance.

- E. Christians unsuspectedly syncretize atheistic ideas into their thinking that are fundamentally opposed to God.
 - 1. Syncretism involves the indiscriminate blending of values and concepts from opposing systems.
 - 2. The Old Testament often describes how Israel, a nation constituted by Yahweh, also built temples and idols to pagan gods.
 - 3. God then sharply rebuked His people for trying to live in two worlds, for trying to blur the clear antithesis that exists between two systems.

- F. If God does not exist, all ethical systems are arbitrary.
 - 1. Friedrich Nietzsche said that, since God is dead, we must be willing to embrace nihilism.

2. Jean-Paul Sartre, commenting on human life, said, “Man is a useless passion,” because there is no ultimate truth or standard of value.
3. Such beliefs leave us floundering to determine our own ethics.

G. Issues ultimately boil down either to full-orbed theism or radical atheism.

1. Fyodor Dostoyevsky wrote, “If there is no God, all things are permissible.”
2. Edgar Allan Poe’s poem “The Raven” described the antithesis between theism and atheism: If there is no one home, there is no hope.

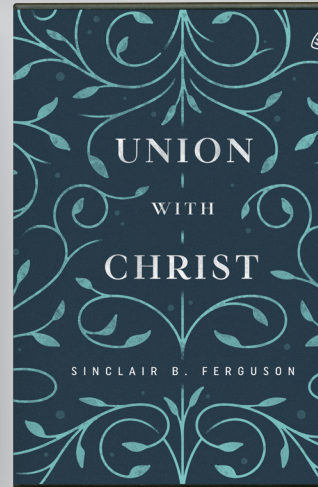
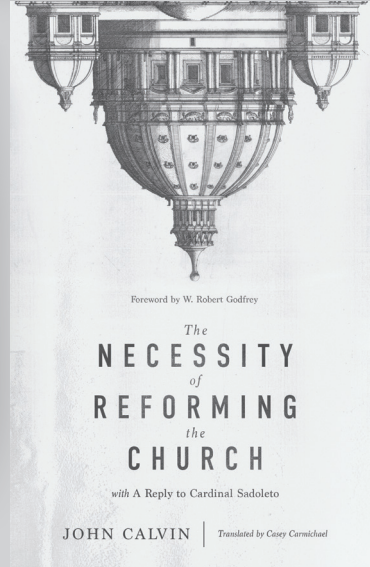
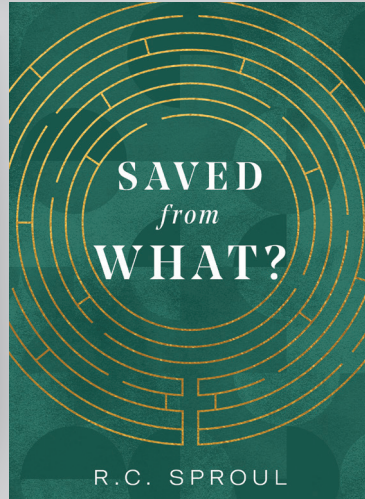
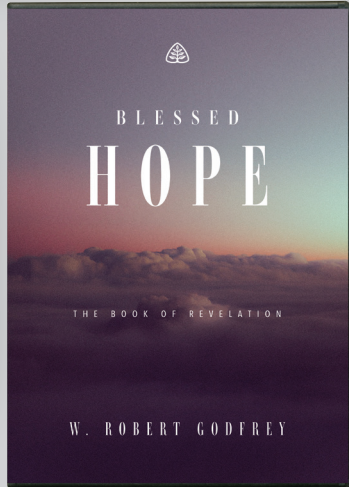
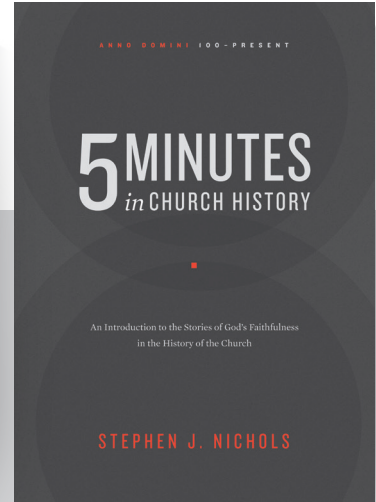
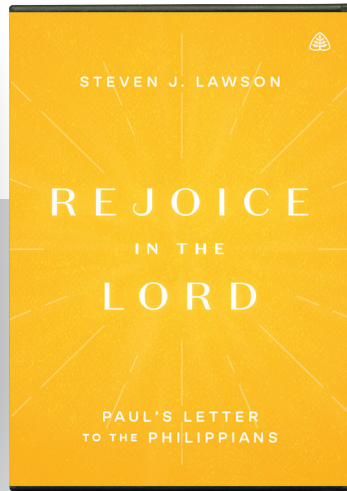
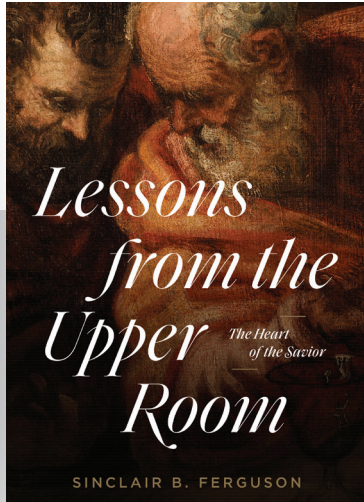
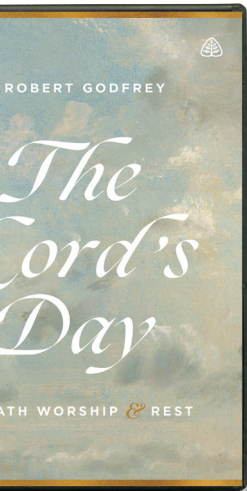
STUDY QUESTIONS

1. A worldview is defined as which of the following?
 - a. A belief of which one cannot be objectively certain
 - b. A framework of looking at life and the world around us
 - c. A system of ideas that ultimately lead to nothingness
 - d. A view that considers all things in the world to be of equal value
2. The ultimate system division is between which of the following?
 - a. Theism and atheism
 - b. Theism and polytheism
 - c. Theism and postmodernism
 - d. Theism and relativism
3. Atheistic humanism assumes that there is no God and man is the highest being.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. Anthropocentric belief denies the reality of God and views all things from a man-centered perspective.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. Which of the following terms describes an indiscriminate blending of values and concepts from opposing systems?
 - a. Nietzscheism
 - b. Relativism
 - c. Nihilism
 - d. Syncretism
6. All ethical systems are arbitrary if which of the following is true?
 - a. God does not exist
 - b. Pain does not exist
 - c. Satan does not exist
 - d. Worldviews do not exist

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If no one has a perfectly consistent, coherent worldview system, as Dr. Sproul suggests, how can anyone be trusted with the truth?
2. Were you surprised by the students' responses to the question about the relative value and importance of human beings to animals? How did the topic of slavery derive from this question? How would you respond in a similar situation?
3. How would you respond to someone who says that good and evil do not exist and are only illusions?
4. How does Edgar Allan Poe's poem "The Raven" illustrate the difference between hope and despair?

We want to see men and women around the world connect
the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



Order your copy of this title, download the digital version,
or browse thousands of resources at Ligonier.org.



LIGONIER MINISTRIES