

Thinking Christian: A Counter-Culture Worldview

May 2025

DAY 1 The BATTLE for TRUTH

Scripture: [Genesis 3:1-6](#); [John 14:6](#); [John 8:31-32; 43-47](#); [Psalm 139:23-24](#)

Reflection:

From Genesis 3 onward, our world has been caught in a battle. When the Serpent comes to Eve, he doesn't come at her with a poisonous bite; he comes at her with a poisonous idea. Satan comes to the Garden of Eden with a LIE. In John's gospel, one of the dominant themes is TRUTH vs LIES. Jesus claims,

I am the Way and the Truth and the Life (John 14:6)

And Jesus casts Satan as the "Father of lies" (John 8:44), a liar from the beginning. Because there is NO TRUTH in him, lying is the only language he speaks. His primary strategy of spiritual warfare isn't illness, sickness, tragedy, or hurricanes – that's plan C. His go-to formula to drive human society into ruin (and the church into ruin!) is deceptive ideas that play to our disordered desires.

To follow Jesus is to trust that He is the TRUTH, that He speaks the TRUTH, and that we can know this TRUTH as we navigate the world around us.

From news headlines to political battles to social media to school board meetings to college classrooms, Jesus speaks a better word than progressive versus conservative. In the battle for truth, let's turn to the Word of God to find answers.

Ask Yourself:

- If someone asked you today about your perspective on these divisive issues, what would you say?
 - o Immigration and Refugees
 - o Environment and Climate
 - o Sexuality and Gender
 - o Artificial Intelligence
- Would your answers most reflect what the Bible has to say or what your favored political party has to say? What happens in your heart and mind when you consider these words: your political party is not "God's party"?

Pause to Pray: Allow King David's prayer to humbly posture yourself before God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Open your heart and mind to the transforming power of the Trinity.

*Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Psalm 139:23-24

Take a Next Step: Start your days with this prayer, inviting God to help you think Christianly. Find this reading plan on YouVersion! Search by title or "whoisgrace." <https://www.bible.com/>

DAY 2 A RENEWED MIND

Scripture: [Romans 8:5-8](#); [Romans 12:2](#); [2 Corinthians 10:2-5](#); [Philippians 4:4-8](#)

Reflection:

One of the words you encounter when you read the Bible is “repent.” In Greek, this word indicates a change of mind and heart. Used by Jesus and the New Testament writers, it means that you turn from sin and turn toward God. And our sinful behaviors don’t usually spontaneously arise from our physical bodies. Sinful behavior begins in the mind. This is why Paul is preoccupied with the mind. Consider these observations about the Mind from Paul’s letter to the church in Rome:

- Every thought has the power to move me toward the Holy Spirit or close me off from Him.
- The natural tendency of the mind apart from God is toward death.

Ask Yourself:

- How distracted is my mind? Consider possible sources: social media, entertainment, news, games, online browsing, shopping, etc.
- What are the sources of my thoughts? What am I investing my mind in daily?
- Toward what kinds of thoughts does my mind drift? Make a list- use this one to get you started:
 - o Hope
 - o Gratitude
 - o Pessimism
 - o Envy
 - o Selfish desires

Pause to Pray: *Lord, I want to live an abundant life filled with peace even on hard days. Holy Spirit, I need your help! Transform my mind. Convict me when I “spend” my thoughts on things that are harmful and distracting. As I spend more time in the Word and in prayer, teach my mind to turn to what you desire... Amen.*

Take a Next Step: As you go about your day, look for the sources of the attributes listed in Philippians 4:8 (true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy). How can you add more of these to your daily intake?

DAY 3 THINKING CHRISTIANLY

Scripture: [Romans 1:18-25](#); [Romans 12:2](#); [John 3:16-21](#); [Philippians 4:4-8](#)

Reflection:

It is not only our individual minds that can reject God. At a societal level, what happens when God is rejected?

Since the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries, Western society has been subjected to a process of de-Christianization. Secularization has taken its place. Religious ideas and institutions have increasingly lost their social significance and influence. Religious thinking has become less meaningful, and the Church and its leaders have become more marginalized. Secular thinkers argue that God either doesn't exist or at least is an irrelevance to daily life. In fact, He could be dispensed with entirely, and very little would change. But the Bible says otherwise. To turn away from God affects a society at the deepest possible level and this is what we are witnessing around us today.

In Romans 1, Paul speaks of those who have “*given themselves over*” to sin, but we also read that “*God gave them over*” to their sinful desires and appetites as an expression of His wrath for their denial of Him. When God is denied, society does not stay the same. It tends to become individualized, sexualized, and violent. As Christians, we're swimming in the secularized waters of our culture, and it is important that we learn to think “Christianly.” Consider the following comparisons between a secular and biblical worldview:

	Biblical	Secular
Who is the focus:	God	Self
What is the standard for life?	Bible	Culture
What is the purpose of life?	Holiness	Happiness
What big problem does the world face?	Sin	Systems
What is evil?	Missing God's mark	Anything that makes me unhappy
Where do I find salvation?	Jesus Christ	Discovering my true self
How do I achieve a breakthrough?	Surrender to Christ	Healing from trauma
How should I live?	Humbly	Self-Sufficiently

Ask Yourself:

- Observe the culture as you move through your day- advertising, music, TV shows, movies, etc. How do they reflect the secular worldview?
- How have the secular waters of the culture around me influenced my thinking?
- Am I living like God is the center of my life, or am I at the center?

Pause to Pray: *God, you sent Jesus to save the world. To save ME. Thank you, Jesus, for your sacrifice! Thank you that you made a way for me to live in your light, no longer enslaved to my sinful self. Open my eyes to see what is good and lovely in the world you have made. Also, open my eyes to see and my mind to discern where I have been thinking and living within a secular worldview rather than a biblical one... Amen.*

Take a Next Step: Return to the list of attributes in Philippians 4:8 (true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy). How will you add these things to the world around you today? For example- what does it look like to live and work in a manner that is excellent?

DAY 4 GOD is SOVEREIGN

Scripture: [Colossians 1:15-20](#); [1 Timothy 6:8-17](#); [Psalm 103:19-22](#)

Reflection:

For the next five days, we'll allow God's character to challenge our thinking about some of the biggest cultural issues of our day. By placing God at the center of the conversation, we'll be able to think "Christianly" and engage these issues with wisdom, truth, and grace.

For some, the idea of "sovereign" brings to mind a crown, throne, and scepter. All the trappings of a king or queen. But isn't the idea of monarchy a little outdated except for those nostalgic few among us?

When the Bible describes God as SOVEREIGN, it is describing him as having ultimate authority and dominion over all of creation. Because He is omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing), and omnipresent (all-present), there is nothing outside of his knowledge and control. There is no limit to His rule and reign.

Paul provides us with two rich descriptions of God's Sovereignty:

- 1- In the beautiful confession of Christ in his letter to the Colossians, Paul reminds us that God's Sovereignty belongs to the Son as well, and in His sovereignty, He has provided a way for our salvation (Colossians 1:15-20).
- 2- In Paul's admonition to Timothy to be content and avoid the love of money, he charges Timothy to remember God's sovereignty and pursue righteousness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness (1 Timothy 6:8-17).

Ask Yourself:

- What do Paul's words in Colossians 1 and 1 Timothy 6 teach you about the sovereignty of God?
- Consider the questions we asked yesterday. If someone asked you one of these questions, how would your understanding of God's sovereignty help you respond?

What is the standard for life?	What is the purpose of life?
What big problem does the world face?	What is evil?
Where do I find salvation?	How do I achieve a breakthrough?
How should I live?	
- To claim that Jesus is the "Lord" of your life means that you place yourself under his sovereignty. What does that look like for you right now? In what areas do you struggle to let go of your own control?

Pause to Pray: Let the words of Psalm 103 lead you into prayer and praise of God who is Sovereign.

*The Lord has established his throne in heaven,
and his kingdom rules over all...*

*Praise the Lord, all his works
everywhere in his dominion.*

Praise the Lord, my soul.

Psalm 103:19, 22 NIV

Take a Next Step: In the next 24 hours, set a timer for 5 minutes to pause and meditate on Colossians 1:15-20.

DAY 5 GOD is JUST

Scripture: [Micah 6:8](#); [Luke 10:25-37](#)

Reflection:

Two of the big political issues today are immigration and refugees. Recent polls of Christians reveal that less than 20% say their views are primarily influenced by the Bible. Instead, media, family, friends, and personal experience are shaping their opinions. How can we think “Christianly” about this issue?

Let’s begin with the character of God. Throughout the Bible, God reveals himself to be **JUST**. Not only does He act with justice, but His people declare Him to be just. Biblical justice is an interesting concept. At first glance, it might seem like it’s the opposite of mercy. But it’s not. Mercy is God’s unconditional grace and compassion his covenant loyalty. Mercy is loving someone beyond what they deserve. In Micah 6:8, justice focuses on action, while mercy has to do with the motive behind the action. We often think that mercy means letting someone off the hook while justice means bringing down the hammer. But instead, we must see mercy and justice not as opposites but as two sides of the same coin. An attitude of merciful love will overflow in actions that bring about justice. Simply defined, justice is making wrong things right.

Let’s consider what that means for the issues of immigration and refugees.

The Bible does not prescribe a particular set of immigration policies for the United States or any other country outside of Israel during biblical times. It does, however, lay out God’s heart for immigrants and the values that should define how we view and respond to immigration issues. God specifically and repeatedly calls his people to care for foreigners who, as newcomers to the land and its social systems, can easily fall victim to marginalization and injustice. After all, as God often reminds the Israelites, they were once foreigners too. Biblically speaking, when you look at all the instances where the Bible talks about caring for the forgotten, several classes of people continually come up. In fact, there are 4 groups that have been called “the quartet of the vulnerable”: widows, orphans, **refugees**, and the poor. God moves and acts with justice toward all of them, and He calls his people to do likewise.

Here is summary of biblical truths:

- The Bible is a story of immigrants (Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Israelites, Ruth, etc.).
- Governments are ordained by God to maintain order and protect its citizens. (Romans 13:1-7)
- The Bible distinguishes between citizens, resident aliens, and foreigners. God explains why the foreigner was not afforded the same rights and privileges of a natural citizen or, at times, resident alien (Exodus 12:42; Deuteronomy 15:3, 17:15). In many ways, it was because the foreigner refused to live by the culture and beliefs of the nation they had entered.
- Christians should advocate for reforming immigration laws while acknowledging that actual policy-making is complicated.
- Christians should default to hospitality over hostility. (Luke 10:25-37)
- Christians should give special consideration to those fleeing persecution.

Ask Yourself:

- What does it look like to love my neighbor in tangible ways where I live, learn, work, or play?
- Are there organizations or individuals in my community that are doing the good, often hard, work of advocating for justice? How can I support them?

Pause to Pray: Use Mary's prayer in Luke 1 to pray for God's justice and mercy to flow through you and your community.

*His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.*

*He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.*

*He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.*

*He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.*

Luke 1:50-53

Take a Next Step: Look for an opportunity to *do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God* today. (Micah 6:8)

DAY 6 GOD is CREATOR

Scripture: [Genesis 1:26-31](#); [Psalm 24:1](#); [Colossians 1:15-17](#); [Revelation 21:1-5](#); [Psalm 19](#)

Reflection:

Here's the deal: If you really want to care about the environment, you need to know Jesus. And if you say you know Jesus, you really need to care about the environment.

Just because these issues have become *politicized*, that doesn't mean they're primarily *political*. Yes, it's been taken up by activists and people throwing paint on the Mona Lisa, and some who go way too far by worshiping the earth or suggesting that plant life is more sacred than human life. But some Christians have gone to the opposite extreme and given up on creation care. The truth is that the church ought to be taking the lead in stewarding and respecting the environment that God has given to us. Why? Because God is the **CREATOR**, and from the beginning, He declared that all creation is "good."

Men and women were created as image-bearers. That means that we are a visible representation on earth of the invisible presence of God. In Genesis 1 God commanded us to "subdue and rule over" all of creation. That doesn't mean "use and consume" for only our benefit without regard to the consequences- that attitude comes after Genesis 3, after the Fall! What does it mean? Here are some biblical principles for us:

- 1- Creation belongs to God, not to us. Psalm 24:1 reminds us, *The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*
- 2- Humanity is the pinnacle of God's good creation. There is a hierarchy in the created order. God is the sovereign and providential Creator. Humanity is below God but above creation. The non-human creation is valuable in God's sight, but below humanity. This is a theocentric (God-centered) view that allows us to both care for and subdue creation under God's guidance.
- 3- Humanity is called to exercise both dominion and care over creation. God's command in Genesis 2 tells us to **work** and **care** (NIV) or **tend** and **watch over** (NLT) the world God has made. While we have an imperfect capacity to responsibly steward the earth, we should not abandon stewardship.
- 4- Environmental stewardship is an act of worship toward God. It is an act of love toward our neighbors and future generations. It is an act of justice for the vulnerable. It is an act of respect for other cultures and communities.
- 5- We get to join God's story in the restoration of all things! Just as our hearts cry, *Come, Lord Jesus* (Revelation 22:20), creation also groans for the ultimate coming of Jesus and his kingdom (Romans 8:19-22). And He is coming! *Behold, I am making all things new* (Revelation 21:5).

Ask Yourself:

- How does creation point your eyes toward the Creator (Colossians 1:15-17)?
- How does your lifestyle balance these principles of Christian environmental ethics?
 - o Technology and restraint
 - o Development and conservation
 - o Human needs and ecosystem health
 - o Present use and future availability
 - o Pragmatic solutions and prophetic witness

Pause to Pray: Use Psalm 19 to praise God, our Creator.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork...

Take a Next Step: Cultivate wonder and gratitude for God's world – what's God the Creator saying to you, and what are you going to do about it?

DAY 7 GOD is DESIGNER

Scripture: [Genesis 1:26-28](#); [Ephesians 4:18-19](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:3-8](#); [Psalm 139:13-18, 23-24](#)

Reflection:

There is something beautiful and good about sitting by a fire—indoors with a cup of tea and a good book, outdoors roasting marshmallows and laughing with friends late into the night. There is also something devastating and terrible about fire- when drought persists, a spark can turn into a raging inferno, or an untended candle can burn down a whole house. How can something be good and cause so much disaster? Is fire good or bad? It can be both. Fire must be respected, treated with care, and guarded in order for it to be beautiful and good.

The reflection on fire helps us reflect on issues of sex, sexuality, and gender. It may be a topic of political debate, but it is deeply personal. More than that, this is deeply biblical and spiritual. The cultural view has promised freedom and fulfillment through the sexual revolution to today. The church has struggled not to view these things with fear, fixation, and hypocrisy. There is a better way. A way that begins with this truism: **True sexual wholeness comes by embracing God's design.** Today's scriptures are a meditation on biblical principles of sexuality and gender:

- 1- Your body matters to God.
- 2- God's design reveals God's purpose for you.
- 3- Your true freedom comes by adhering to God's boundaries.
- 4- Your identity in Christ transcends your sexual identity.
- 5- Feelings cannot be the deciding factor in right vs. wrong.
- 6- Your sexual wholeness is a witness to the world.

Together, these biblical principles remind us that God is an incredible **DESIGNER!** With an abundance of love and care, he uniquely and purposefully made all things, including each body that has lived and will live on this earth. To be carefully crafted by the hands of God is to be made in his image. As His image bearer, his intention is that you flourish in your God-given body as a reflection of his goodness and love.

Ask Yourself:

- Which of these biblical principles is difficult for me to understand or believe for myself?
- What feelings rise up in me as I read these scriptures and principles? What does it look like for me to surrender my feelings to God, and humbly receive His Truth in order to think Christianly about these things?

Pause to Pray:

*God, I praise you for your design. You made me so wonderfully complex, and you know me, inside and out. Trust and truth are not easy to understand and grasp in this world. But I want to trust You. I want to believe You. Help my unbelief! Open my eyes to see the beauty in me and in all the people you have made. I long to be your flourishing image bearer. I invite you to-
search me and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
Point out anything in me that offends You,
and lead me along the path of everlasting life. (Psalm 139:23-24 NLT)*

Amen...

Take a Next Step: As you end your days, use Psalm 139:23-24 for reflection and confession.

DAY 8 GOD is PERSONAL

Scripture: [Genesis 2:7](#); [Genesis 11:4-6](#); [Psalm 8](#)

Reflection:

With every year that passes, AI gains influence over us in ways we don't even realize. Algorithms monitor and influence our shopping habits, our time on social media, our healthcare, and the world of education. AI is changing our world in a million ways. It is the future whether we like it or not. One of the biggest areas of research and development in AI right now is the attempt to mimic the heart of humans- to build empathy and emotion. There's also a lot of crazy talk around sentience and consciousness and aspects of the soul that are trying to be created. This is way beyond Rosie, the robot housemaid from *The Jetsons*- we're now trying to recreate the mind, body, heart, and soul of a human. This is what is called Transhumanism or Post-Humanism. The idea is that what we now know as human beings will be replaced over time; that this is the final stage of our evolution- AI fused together with human beings to create something new.

AI is reshaping how we interact with the world and with each other. As its sophistication grows, it challenges not only our notions of convenience but also prompts us to ask deeper, more profound questions. What does it mean to be human? What does it mean to be conscious? Can a machine possess a soul? How do these innovations align or clash with our Christian understanding of life and existence?

First, let's begin with the character and nature of God. He is **PERSONAL**. We define the Trinity as "God in three *persons*." It's not an easy concept to grasp, but it's backed up by scripture. And God's personhood becomes the template for ours. We are relational because He is relational. We love and create and make moral choices by his good design. And perhaps the greatest comfort is the fact that God is personally present with His people. From the Garden of Eden to the Tabernacle to the incarnation of Jesus to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to the coming of the new heavens and new earth. God is with us!

Biblical principles of Personhood:

- 1- Our human origins are divine. Personhood begins with God's creative breath. (Genesis 2:7; Psalm 8)
- 2- To be human is to be an animated, soul-filled body with a heart that gives us the ability to feel and make moral, rational choices. (Psalm 1)
- 3- Humans are designed for relationships. Diversity and unity are essential aspects of our relationships with one another. (Genesis 2:18)
- 4- To be human is to be finite: limited and mortal. (Psalm 139:16; Isaiah 55:8)
- 5- Humans are tasked by God with sacred stewardship of his creation. Technology is meant for our good and his glory, not to allow us to become our own gods. (Genesis 11:4-6)

From a Christian viewpoint, humanity and consciousness are not just byproducts of biological evolution or neural complexity; they are divine gifts bestowed by God Himself. This understanding calls us to approach AI with both curiosity and humility, acknowledging the incredible capabilities of human innovation while honoring the divine breath of God that makes us uniquely human.

Ask Yourself:

- How do these biblical principles reorient your mind to think Christianly about God, personhood, and technology?
- What does it look like for you to thoughtfully and intentionally engage with advancing technology like AI rather than mindlessly be swept along in the advancing tide?

Pause to Pray: Use Psalm 8 to lead you into a prayer of humble praise and worship to our God, who is personal.

Take a Next Step: What is a small personal act or word that you could do for or share with someone this week?

DAY 9 ENTER the DIALOGUE

Scripture: [Proverbs 15:1, 18:21](#); [Ephesians 4:29](#); [James 3:5-10](#); [1 Peter 3:15-16](#); [Psalm 19:14](#)

Reflection:

A great deal of harm has been done in our society through the misuse of words. Politicians, the media, celebrities, industry leaders- we can point the finger in every direction. But it isn't just *them*, it is also *you* who misuses words and intentionally or unintentionally causes harm. Perhaps a good principle should be that we resist the urge to pontificate or rage in relatively anonymous spaces (like social media) and, instead, choose to engage in civil dialogue with the men and women that move within our circles, where we live, work, learn, and play. When "they" have a face and a name and a story, and they're sitting across from you, it is much more difficult to demonize, slander, and hate.

There is an animated Christmas movie from 1987 called, *The Troll Prince*. In it, trolls are evil, and gnomes are good. In one scene, two girls encounter a young prince of the trolls in their home, and they sing, "God loves all He made, even evil trolls." Spoiler alert- as the movie progresses, the girls reflect the love of God to him, and his frozen heart quite literally melts, and he is transformed into a gnome.

Reflecting on all that we have learned about "Thinking Christianly," is it possible that we could view ourselves, our families, our neighbors, our colleagues, our classmates, every man and woman and boy and girl through the lens of God's good character: Sovereign, Just, Creator, Designer, Personal. All flowing from the heart of love; a love that did the most amazing thing for all of us:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Later in John's gospel, after the miracle of the resurrection, Jesus comes to his followers with the following command:

"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." (John 20:21)

How did the Father send Jesus? As a generous gift born out of His love for every individual that He had ever made. How, then, does He send us? With that same spirit of love- love for God and love for the world He made.

With that in mind, consider this construct for healthy dialogue about hard issues:

YOU, ME, IT:

Before YOU and I talk about IT (the issue at hand), let's establish some things. I like YOU. I hope YOU like ME. So as we talk about IT, that doesn't affect how I think about YOU. Because YOU are not IT. IT is an idea, and no matter what happens, I'm never going to hate YOU because of IT. In fact, I'm going to choose to love YOU because God made you, and HE loves you.

Ask Yourself:

- Who are the hard people (name them!), and what are the hard issues in your life?
- How can you pray for the people you named?
- How will the "YOU, ME, IT" construct help inform future hard conversations?

Pause to Pray: Begin your prayer with Psalm 19:14 and ask God to give you opportunities to have conversations about hard things with hard people, trusting that his Holy Spirit will give you wisdom, discernment, and self-control.

*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.*

Take a Next Step: What is God saying to you? What are you going to do about it?

Find more reading plans on YouVersion! Search “whoisgrace” or set Grace Church as “my church” in your app and find all of our plans. Know someone who speaks Russian as a first language? We have plans in Russian too! <https://www.bible.com/>