

# AUTHORITY & ALLEGIANCE

## Syllabus: Authority, Allegiance, and the Scripture

Notes —

### CLASS #1:

- I. Introduction.
- II. Authority of the Scriptures.

### CLASS #2:

- III. Ten Types of Authority that compete with Scripture.

### CLASS #3:

- III. Ten Types of Authority that compete with Scripture (cont'd).

### CLASS #4:

- III. Ten Types of Authority that compete with Scripture (cont'd).

### CLASS #5:

- III. Ten Types of Authority that compete with Scripture (cont'd).
- IV. Course Conclusion.
- EXAM.

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## Authority, Allegiance, and the Scriptures: Exam

### Possible 20 Point Questions

- 1) Define the authenticity and authority of the Scriptures using both internal and external evidences (pp. 297-300).
- 2) Select one example of false doctrine that is a result of traditionalism. Explain what the doctrine is, why people believe it, the proper response, and what can be kept or valued from it (pp. 318-329).
- 3) Define and describe the two main tenets of popular humanism (pp. 307, 308).

### Possible 10 Point Questions

- 1) List four ways in which the incarnate Word and the written word are directly related (no scripture necessary) (p. 296).
- 2) Offer a few points that serve as a general biblical response to utilitarianism (p. 305).
- 3) Define humanism (p. 306, 307).
- 4) Explain how legalism and hedonism are opposite to one another (pp. 314, 315).
- 5) Offer a few points that serve as a general response to universalism (p. 316).
- 6) Explain how the Jehovah Witness doctrine is based on extreme humanism (p. 330).

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## I. Course Introduction.

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### Purpose of the Course:

It is not the purpose of this course to “prove” the authenticity of the Scriptures. We will only offer a brief defense by establishing some basic evidences. Ultimately, the establishment of the Scriptures as your ultimate authority requires a step of faith. We will proceed assuming that this step of faith has been taken.

It is our purpose to become aware of some of the types of authorities that compete with the Scriptures for our allegiance. We must be challenged to avoid such authorities ourselves, and be equipped to minister to those who are trapped within such false authorities.

It is not our intent to reject every action that may be associated with each type of authority, but to clearly lift up the Word of God as THE ultimate authority to which all others are subordinate.

### A. There are three key issues within this course.

#### 1. Authority.

- a. Actions are based on beliefs, just as a Christian’s behavior is a result of theology. Another way to say this is that what a person does is derived from what that person values and believes.
- b. Belief is based on what is perceived to be true and authoritative. That is, belief is based on the particular perception of authority from which a person views the world.
- c. Christians may speak of having a “biblical world view”. This means they view all of life with the Bible as their ultimate authority. They understand reality or truth to be founded upon the Scriptures. Their beliefs are based on the Bible. Their values are based on the Bible. Ultimately, their actions are based on the Bible.
- d. The most visible thing about a person is their actions. However, the most profound influence upon a person is what they view as authoritative; so authority is really a deeper issue. It precedes and determines actions.

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### 2. Allegiance.

- a. How many different authorities can a person adhere to? Jesus answered this question when He said “No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and mammon**” (Lk 16:13).
- b. What authority influences your world view? What determines truth? What is your life subordinated to or ultimately based upon? What do you see as authoritative?
- c. Many different authorities attempt to gain our allegiance. The challenge for the Christian is to be in allegiance to God alone, as He has revealed Himself and His will in His word.

### 3. Scripture.

- a. For the Christian, the Scripture must be the basis for what is true. When we speak of the Scripture, we mean the Word of God, both the Incarnate Word (Jesus) and the written Word (the Bible).
- b. The Incarnate Word is eternal (Jn 1:1), conceived by the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:35), born a common man (Phil 2:7), and fully perfect (Heb 4:15).
- c. The written Word is eternal (Ps 119:89), conceived by the Holy Spirit (2Tim 3:16), written in common language (1Cor 2:4-10), and fully perfect (Ps 19:7,8).

## B. Contents of this course.

### 1. The authority of the Scriptures.

- a. Internal evidences.
- b. External evidences.

### 2. Allegiances that compete with Scripture.

- a. We will consider ten types of authority that compete with Scripture.
  - 1) Traditionalism.

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- 2) Utilitarianism.
- 3) Intellectualism (Humanism).
- 4) Sensationalism.
- 5) Materialism.
- 6) Spiritism.
- 7) Legalism.
- 8) Hedonism.
- 9) Denominationalism.
- 10) Universalism.

- b. Most of our attention will be given to traditionalism and intellectualism (humanism). The other types of authority are more for class discussion and application.

## II. Authority of the Scriptures.

### A. Internal evidences.

1. Jesus' view of the Scriptures.
  - a. The most important reason to accept the authority of the Scriptures is that according to what is recorded in the Bible, Jesus Himself held that view. If Jesus viewed the Scriptures as authoritative, then we should also. In this way, the whole question of authority can be simply answered.

#### Author's Comment:

In regard to the authorship of the Pentateuch, we should simply accept that Moses authored the books of the Law because Jesus viewed him as the author (see Mk 7:10; Lk 24:27).

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- b. The following points show some of the ways in which Jesus viewed the Old Testament as authoritative.
    - 1) He viewed the Old Testament as inspired by the Holy Spirit (Mt 22:43).
    - 2) He viewed the Old Testament as the Word of God (Jn 10:35).
    - 3) He viewed the Old Testament as historically accurate (Mt 12:40).
    - 4) He viewed the Old Testament as the standard for understanding (Mt 22:29).
    - 5) He viewed the Old Testament as the final word (Mt 4:4,7,10).
    - 6) He viewed the Old Testament as consistent with Himself (Jn 5:39; Lk 24:27,44).
    - 7) He viewed the Old Testament as reliable (Mt 26:54,56; Lk 24:44-46).
  - c. Jesus also validated the establishment and authority of the New Testament.
    - 1) He declared to the apostles in John 14:25,26 that the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance all that He said to them (thus the writing of the Gospels).
    - 2) He also told them in John 16:13 that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all the truth and reveal what was to come (thus the writing of the remainder of the New Testament).
2. The Scripture's view of itself.
- a. The Scripture is God-breathed or inspired (2Tim 3:16; 2Sam 23:2).
  - b. The Scripture was God sent or initiated (2Pt 1:20,21; Jer 1:9).
  - c. The Scripture gives testimony of its own authors (Gal 3:8; 2Pt 3:15,16).

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## 3. Fulfillment of prophecy.

- a. The Scripture foretells of the coming Messiah (see Is 52:13-53:12).
- b. The Scripture foretells the history of nations (consider the destruction of Tyre as it was prophesied in Ezekiel 26).
- c. The Scripture foretells the history of Israel (consider the exile as it was prophesied in Hos 9:17, and the restoration as a nation as it was prophesied in Jeremiah 31).

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## B. External evidences.

### 1. History of the Bible.

- a. Its unity - the same messages are expressed within the different parts of the book (redemption, covenant, the Kingdom of God, the reality of the Messiah).
- b. Its diversity - written over a 1500 year period by more than 40 different authors from completely different backgrounds.
- c. Its preservation - no other book has been preserved with such careful attention. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls supports this.
- d. Its distribution - read by more people in the world and in more languages than any other book.
- e. Its influence - has consistently influenced people from all cultures in a way that has radically changed their lives.

### 2. Archaeological discoveries.

- a. Historical consistency.
  - 1) The ancestors of the people of Israel have been shown to have come from Mesopotamia (Gen 11:28).
  - 2) A man named Erastus was a high ranking city official in Corinth at the time Romans 16:23 was written.

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- b. Geographical consistency.
  - 1) There were walls of a city that fell outward around the time of the writings of Joshua concerning Jericho.
  - 2) There were cities of the same biblical names and the same locations as Paul described with respect to his missionary trips.
- 3. Scientific discoveries.
  - a. It has been discovered that the earth “hangs on nothing” (Job 26:7).
  - b. It has been discovered that life is in the blood (Gen 9:4).

### III. Ten Types of Authority that Compete with Scripture.

#### A. Traditionalism (Systems of Tradition).

- 1. Definition.
  - a. Truth is determined by what has been valued in the past. In its extreme form, traditionalism becomes a person’s primary authority.
  - b. Aspects of traditionalism may also affect those who intellectually view scripture as their primary authority, but actually refer to traditions to know how to live and act.
- 2. Religiosity can be the result of traditionalism. Religiosity puts an emphasis on form and ritual instead of content and faith. It can result in superficiality. It often results in doctrines that are extra or non biblical. The Bible calls these doctrines “traditions of men” (see Mk 7:8).
- 3. It is important to remember that we should not identify someone as “lost in religiosity” (and unsaved) simply because of the name of their particular denomination.
  - a. For example, some Christians think all Methodists are unsaved religious people.
  - b. Other Christians automatically consider someone who is a Roman Catholic as being “lost in religiosity”.



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4. In general, evangelical Christians have made two great mistakes concerning their perspective of the more traditional expressions of the Church (often referred to as “high church”).
  - a. At one extreme, we have those who say that the more traditional or highly formal liturgical churches are almost like cults. They say that it is not possible for a “high church” person to be saved.
  - b. At the other extreme, we have those who are “hyper-ecumenical”. This is the position of tolerance at the expense of truth. Unity at the cost of authority of the Bible. They say, “traditionalists think in one way that is acceptable and we think in another way that is just as acceptable.”
5. Both extremes are wrong. They are too simplistic.
  - a. It must be remembered that the more liturgical churches are based on central Christian doctrines. Therefore, it is possible for a member of that church to be saved.
  - b. However, we must not ignore the possible negative effects of misplaced tradition (superficiality and false doctrine).
    - 1) To do this for the sake of “unity” will only produce false unity.
    - 2) Superficiality and false doctrine must be challenged, because it encourages religiosity and separates us from entering the Kingdom of God.
  - c. The key point is that God’s word, rightly interpreted, should be viewed as the deciding factor in such disputes.

## Author’s Comment:

Vol. 3 of this series Bible Study is recommended to provide confident skills for biblical interpretation.

6. Two points must be emphasized for ministering to people caught in the trap of traditionalism.
  - a. Accept the fact that a “traditionalist” can be a Christian.

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- 1) How can a traditionalist be a true believer when, for example, they sometimes do not even fully understand the doctrine of salvation?
- 2) This question is answered in Acts 15:5, in the same way that “certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees (those who would be prone to tradition as their authority) who had believed” could be called believers, yet not understand the doctrine of salvation.
  - a) In Acts 15:1 we read about the beginning of the confusion that led to the Council at Jerusalem. Some were saying, “Unless you are circumcised according the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”
  - b) In Acts 15:5, those people who were called believers (in the book of Acts a believer is always a Christian) agreed with the confused understanding of the doctrine of salvation. Yet, they were still saved.
- 3) We must remember that salvation concerns the whole person, not the mind only. God does not depend on a perfect grasp of doctrine within people to save them. Thus, someone can be saved; one could know the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and intimate Lord, and still not have a perfect understanding of doctrine.

### Author's Comment:

In ministering to a person who is trapped in traditionalism, you must look at the heart of the person. A Christian will know if another person is a Christian without knowing the name of their church. Is Jesus in their heart? Do they love Jesus? Have they given their life to Jesus?

### Discussion Point

What is the difference between a traditionalist who is unsaved and a believer who is influenced by tradition as their authority? In what ways in your own life or church are you vulnerable to traditionalism?

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- b. To help traditionalists, be prepared to challenge false doctrine. The goals are to evangelize unsaved traditionalists, and to discourage superficiality and teach correct doctrine to believers who are negatively influenced by traditionalism.

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## Author's Comment:

We must challenge false doctrine on two levels:

- 1) The "What?" of false doctrine: What do these doctrines say? What is taught and believed that is not biblical?
  - 2) The "Why?" of false doctrine: Why is the doctrine wrong? Why do they have the doctrine? Why does the individual believe the doctrine?
- It might be necessary to understand level #1 (the what) in order to talk with a person regarding their false doctrine.
  - It is definitely necessary to understand level #2 (the why) in order to evangelize an unsaved person or correct someone who is saved.
  - If you only understand level #1 (the what), then you will only be equipped to argue with the person.
  - If you also understand level #2 (the why), then you can meet that person's need by replacing the false doctrine with the biblical doctrine (by replacing the incorrect authority of traditionalism with the ultimate authority of Scripture). In many cases, a person believes a false doctrine because he is trying to fill up an empty place in his relationship with God. This only results in frustration. Only the true doctrine can satisfy him.

## Discussion Point

Refer to the Appendix for several examples of false doctrine produced by traditionalism. Promote discussion of how to avoid such pitfalls and how to minister to those who are influenced by them.

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### 7. Summary of Traditionalism.

#### a. What is Traditionalism?

- 1) Extra or non-biblical doctrines that reduce the greatness of Jesus.
- 2) Doctrines that are based on the traditions of men, instead of the Bible.
- 3) Doctrines that minimize the work of the cross.
- 4) Doctrines that promote a good works theology.
- 5) Doctrines that focus on the tangible in place of the spiritual.

#### b. Why do people become trapped in traditionalism?

- 1) Because they lack a personal relationship with Jesus.
- 2) Because they lack Bible knowledge.
- 3) Because they lack the Spirit (the power of the Spirit is replaced by tangible substitutes).
- 4) Because they attempt to earn salvation.
- 5) Because they seek piety through superficial holiness.
- 6) Because they lack faith in the work of the cross.
- 7) Because their doctrine has never made the transition from the old covenant to the new covenant. Tradition is Master!

#### c. The solution to Traditionalism.

- 1) Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Lift Him up. Magnify Him. Stress faith. Focus on the Bible. Emphasize the successful, sufficient, complete and final work of the cross. Challenge the unsaved person to make their own personal decision. They must repent and give their life to Jesus. Most important, offer them the opportunity to have a personal, real and intimate relationship with Jesus.

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- 2) The most important book for a traditionalist to read is Hebrews.
- 3) The most important verses for a traditionalist are Gal 2:21 and Mk 7:6-9.
- d. What from traditionalism can be kept?
  - 1) There are many bridges to evangelize unsaved traditionalists and minister to believers influenced by traditionalism.
  - 2) The general biblical response (to traditionalism) is that we must allow Mk 7:6-9 to challenge us. Traditions can be very helpful, but only when they are subordinate to the Word of God.

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## Discussion Point

Discuss ways in which you are vulnerable to traditionalism? How can you protect yourself?

### B. Utilitarianism.

- 1. Definition of Utilitarianism.
  - a. Truth is determined by usefulness of results. A successful outcome justifies any method used to arrive at that outcome. In its extreme form, utilitarianism becomes a person's primary authority.
  - b. Utilitarianism can also creep into the lives of believers who intellectually assent to the Scriptures as their primary authority.
- 2. The general biblical response (to utilitarianism) is that we must allow the "great cloud of witnesses" of Hebrews 11 to show us that "results" do not act as our primary authority.
  - a. Many of the greatest people of faith did "not receive what was promised" (Heb 11:39). Their faith was not in a certain result, but in the One who provides those results...in the Word of God.
  - b. Results are very important, but only when the methods to obtain those results are subordinate to the Word of God.

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## Discussion Point

Discuss ways in which you are vulnerable to utilitarianism? How can you protect yourself? Read 1Cor 1:18-25 and discuss how utilitarianism might be associated with the “wisdom of this world”.

## Discussion Point

As a conclusion to this section, discuss ways in which traditionalism and utilitarianism are opposite to one another.

### C. Intellectualism.

1. Definition of Intellectualism - truth is not received by man, but is created and/or figured out by man.
2. There are various forms of intellectualism.
  - a. Deism - God is considered as an “absentee landlord,” for the most part, He is not involved in His creation, but leaves man to exist on his own.
  - b. Relativism - Truth is relative and depends on the situation. There are no absolutes.
  - c. Secularism - Truth is determined by temporal or worldly concerns. The sacred is divorced from everyday life.
  - d. Humanism - Truth is established in accordance with the welfare and happiness of mankind in this life, because man is God.
3. In its extreme form, intellectualism and/or humanism becomes a person’s primary authority. Intellectualism and/or humanism can also negatively affect those who make Scripture their primary authority.
  - a. The Humanist Manifesto states, “No deity will save us. We must save ourselves.” For the humanist, man is God. Humanism is a religion that believes that man is God.

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- b. Augustine said, “Sin is believing the lie that you are self-created, self-dependent, and self-sustained.” In this sense, humanism is the ultimate sinful ideology. It is the ultimate idolatry (man worshipping man).
- c. Humanism exists everywhere that man exists.
  - 1) Pure humanists are atheists. Actually, there is no such thing as atheism since all people have a god, even if the god is the person himself.
  - 2) At the same time, humanism has entered every religion. Unfortunately, it has even entered Christianity.
  - 3) There are two results of humanism within the Church:
    - a) The churches are filled with “good” people who are not Christians. There are tares among the wheat (Mt 13:24-30).
    - b) The churches are filled with weak Christians (often called nominal Christians). These are people who are saved. However, humanistic ideas and philosophies keep them from growing in the Lord.
- d. There are two main tenets of popular humanism.
  - 1) Situational ethics - This principle defines the moral code of humanism.
    - a) It says that everything is relative. There are no absolutes.
    - b) It is an egotistical morality, since man is God, man makes the rules. The rules depend on what benefits man the most.
    - c) It is a utilitarian philosophy (the result justifies the method). Morality is judged in terms of the result. If the result is positive for the individual, then the action is considered moral.

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## Author's Illustration

A humanist might say, "If it feels good then do it." A humanist definitely would say, "Do whatever works out best for you" (see Jdg 21:25). This is why people can have abortions and say that it was the morally correct thing to do.

## Insert Your Illustration

- 2) Tolerance - This principle defines "love" for the humanist.
  - a) It claims that love is to tolerate all things.
  - b) 1Cor 13:7 says love "bears all things". Biblical love bears all things. It accepts and supports the person even if it cannot and will not accept and support the actions of the person.
  - c) Humanistic love tolerates all things. It accepts the person and his wrong actions, but does nothing to help the person. It is a love of words only.

## Author's Illustration

Humanistic love says, "I am O.K. and you are O.K.". It says, "You do not bother me and I will not bother you."

## Insert Your Illustration



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- 3) The root and result of both of these tenets is that man is considered sovereign. Man is god. Man makes the rules. Whatever man does is acceptable.

- e. Since man is God, the most important topic in humanism is human rights. Man must defend his rights. He must hold onto his rights at all costs.

## Author's Illustration

A humanist would say, "When a man has lost his rights he has lost his life" (compare this with Mt 5:38-41; Mt 16:24-26; Phil 2:5-7).

## Insert Your Illustration

- f. Humanism always leads to hedonism (the excessive love of pleasures and the avoidance of discomfort).
- 1) Humanism says that man is God.
  - 2) Reality says that man has a sin nature.
  - 3) The result is that in humanism, god has a sin nature.
    - a) God is free to do what he likes.
    - b) Thus, god (man) will act according to his nature.
    - c) The result is hedonism.
- g. Especially in the Western world, humanism appears to be "good".
- 1) Humanists are seen as good people who want to live as brothers with all peoples of the world. They want to do what is good for mankind.

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- 2) The people who have biblical values and morals are seen as the “bad” people (even though part of the reason why humanism appears to be “good” is because it does hold to certain Christian principles and practices).
- h. The following is a list of some of the other beliefs in humanism:
  - 1) The universe was not created.
  - 2) Man is evolving toward perfection (evolution).
  - 3) The supernatural does not exist.
  - 4) There is no life after death.
  - 5) There needs to be a new world order.
  - 6) Socialism is the best political action.
- i. The humanist supposedly believes in tolerance.
  - 1) However, humanism is militantly against Christianity (or any other form of orthodox religion).
  - 2) The Humanist Manifesto promotes tolerance, but aggressively opposes religion.

### Author's Comment:

In humanism, “Man can do whatever makes him happy as long as it does not involve religion.” This is inconsistent. A humanist may not even be willing to listen to your testimony until you challenge him on this level.

- j. Humanism says that man has the power within himself to make the world a perfect place to live. It is only a matter of time (evolution).

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## Discussion Point

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If humanism were true, why then do things only seem to be getting worse? More crime. More murders. More starving. More pollution. More divorce. More violence. More wars. More pornography. Challenge the humanist. Where is their hope? History shows us that it is hopeless to hope in man. Without God there is no hope.

### **Evangelizing Humanists:**

Humanism is an intellectual religion. Do not waste time with intellectual arguments. Challenge their mind only for creating an opportunity to challenge their heart.

- 1) Use the Word of God. Trust in the power of the Word (Rom 1:16).
  - 2) Contrast the failures of mankind with the solutions of Christ. Try to find an area in their life that has problems. Offer Jesus as the solution.
  - 3) Focus on their natural need for forgiveness. Pray for conviction of sin.
  - 4) Offer eternal life. Humanism offers no hope for the future. All human beings have a natural desire for eternal life. Here is a great opportunity in the evangelism of humanists.
  - 5) Finally, explain that they can have a relationship with God. Humanists replace fellowship with God with social awareness (supporting a cause or a social issue). This, however, does not fill the empty place left in the life of someone who does not know God. Touch the need of their heart. Offer them Jesus!
4. The general biblical response (to humanism) is that we must consider the implications of Jn 15:5 (Deism), Prov 3:6 and Col 3:23 (secularism), Heb 13:8 (relativism), 1Cor 10:31,33 (humanism), and Jn 6:44 and 1Cor 2:14 (intellectualism, in general). The human mind and abilities are very important, but only when the mind and abilities are subordinate to the Word of God.

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## Discussion Point

Discuss ways in which you are vulnerable to intellectualism and/or humanism.  
How can you protect yourself?

### D. Sensationalism.

1. Definition of Sensationalism.
  - a. Truth is based on experience and emotion.
  - b. An advanced form of this type of authority is mysticism (truth is completely transcendent and without reason) In its extreme form, sensationalism becomes a person's primary authority.
  - c. Aspects of sensationalism can also negatively affect those who make Scripture their primary authority.
2. The general biblical response (to sensationalism) is that we must consider such scriptures as 1Sam 3:21 and Is 22:14. Experience and emotion are very important, but only when those experiences and emotions are subordinate to the Word of God.

## Discussion Point

Discuss ways in which you are vulnerable to sensationalism? How can you protect yourself?

## Discussion Point

In conclusion to this section, discuss ways in which intellectualism and sensationalism are opposites to one another.

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## E. Materialism.

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1. Definition of Materialism.
  - a. Truth is defined according to the tangible, physical environment only. As in naturalism, nothing supernatural exists.
  - b. From such authority is formed liberation theology and hyper-prosperity theology.
  - c. In its extreme form, materialism becomes a person's primary authority.
  - d. Aspects of materialism can also negatively affect those who make Scripture their primary authority.
2. The general biblical response (to materialism) is that we must consider the implications of Acts 8:18, 1Tim 6:10, Lk 16:13, and Rom 14:17. Material things can be very important, but only when those material things are subordinate to the Word of God.

### Discussion Point

Discuss ways in which you are vulnerable to materialism. How can you protect yourself?

## F. Spiritism.

1. Definition of Spiritism.
  - a. Truth is obtained through contact and communion with spirits.
  - b. In its extreme form, spiritism becomes a person's primary authority.
  - c. Aspects of spiritism can also negatively affect those who make Scripture their primary authority.
2. The general biblical response (to Spiritism) is that we must consider such scriptures as Deut 18:10-11 and 1Chron 10:13. Communication with the spirit world is very important, but only when that communication is subordinate to the Word of God (that is, only when the communication is with the Holy Spirit).

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## Discussion Point

Discuss ways in which you are vulnerable to spiritism? How can you protect yourself?

## Discussion Point

In conclusion to this section, discuss ways in which materialism and spiritism are opposites to one another.

### G. Legalism.

1. Definition of Legalism.
  - a. Truth is found on the surface of things as opposed to within the substance of things. Methods and forms are stressed at the expense of content. The external is focused upon while the internal is ignored.
  - b. In its extreme form, legalism becomes a person's primary authority.
  - c. Aspects of legalism can also negatively affect those who make Scripture their primary authority.
2. The general biblical response (to legalism) is that we must consider the implications of Rom 7:6 and Mt 23:23-24. Forms are very important, but only when those forms are subordinate to the Word of God.

## Discussion Point

Discuss ways in which you are vulnerable to legalism. How can you protect yourself?

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## H. Hedonism.

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1. Definition of Hedonism.
  - a. Truth is based on pleasure and the avoidance of discomfort. For example, sex outside of marriage is practiced when truth, values, beliefs and actions are based on pleasure.
  - b. In its extreme form, hedonism becomes a person's primary authority. Even Christians can be overtaken with pleasure as an obsession.
2. The general biblical response (to hedonism) is that we must consider such scriptures as Lk 8:14, Titus 3:3, 2Tim 4:3, and 1Tim 5:6. Pleasure can be very important, but only when those pleasures are subordinate to the Word of God.

### Discussion Point

Discuss ways in which you are vulnerable to hedonism? How can you protect yourself?

### Discussion Point

In conclusion to this section, discuss ways in which legalism and hedonism are opposites to one another.

## I. Denominationalism.

1. Definition of Denominationalism.
  - a. At its best, denominations provide administering systems for church governance. They provide doctrinal unity for those within and allows for the sharing of resources.
  - b. Denominations as service organizations for church governance and shared resources can be good. However, when denominations, as defenders of doctrine, exalt their views, traditions and interpretations over the scriptures, then their efforts can be reduced to divisiveness and rigidity.
  - c. In extreme form, denominationalism becomes a person's primary authority.

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2. The general biblical response (to denominationalism) is that we must consider the implications of 1Cor 3:3, Acts 5:29, and 1Cor 11:18. Unifying around a common vision can be very important, but only when the purposes to do that are subordinate to the Word of God.

### Discussion Point

Discuss ways in which you are vulnerable to denominationalism. How can you protect yourself?

## J. Universalism.

1. Definition to Universalism.
  - a. Truth is based on the concept of universal brotherhood and the eventual salvation of all people.

### Author's Comment

Unitarians form themselves around this view of authority and the modern day ecumenical movement can, in some cases, represent a mild form of this structure.

- b. In its extreme form, universalism becomes a person's primary authority.
    - c. Aspects of universalism can also negatively affect those who make Scripture their primary authority.
2. The general biblical response (to universalism) is that we must consider such scriptures as Mt 7:13,14, Lk 13:24, and Mt 22:14. God's grace, mercy, and love are very important, but only when those attributes of God are understood according to and subordinate to the Word of God.



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## Discussion Point

Discuss ways in which you are vulnerable to universalism? How can you protect yourself?

## Discussion Point

In concluding this section, discuss ways in which denominationalism and universalism are opposites to one another.

## Course Conclusion:

We are instructed to not conform to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom 12:2). Some of this renewing must come by not conforming to other types of authorities. We must be transformed to have formed within ourselves a source of authority based on the Word of God. In this way our world view will positively influence our beliefs, which will in turn, positively affect our values, and ultimately, our actions.

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## APPENDIX

### A. Examples of Traditionalism.

#### Example #1

#### 1. Mariolatry.

##### a. What does it mean?

- 1) At it's worst it is a cultic doctrine that makes Mary a God. She is worshipped. At it's best it is a series of dogma that has no biblical basis. It produces an extreme distortion of the identity of Mary.
- 2) The idea of the Immaculate Conception was created by Pope Pius IX in 1854. It says that Mary was born without original sin. For this to be true, one of the following must be true also:
  - a) Mary was not born within humanity (that is to say that she was not human).
  - b) There was a chain of sinless births. This would have to extend back to Adam being sinless. This would deny the fall of man.
  - c) Basic theology does not deny the fall of man. Therefore, the usual implication of the Immaculate Conception is that Mary is extra-human.
- 3) The Ascension of Mary was created by Pope Pius XII in 1950. Mary was taken bodily (translated) into heaven. This is not in the Bible.
- 4) Prayers to Mary (called the rosary) and other prayers, are offered to Mary so that she will answer them and help people who pray them.
- 5) All of these doctrines result in some degree of worship of Mary.

##### b. Why do people practice this?

- 1) For some it may be difficult to approach Jesus because the personal relationship that he offers may not be taught in the church.

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- 2) God is viewed as being far away. There is an unhealthy fear of God that makes him unapproachable. This leaves an empty place in the life of people.
  - 3) The empty place is filled by an understandable figure, a mother figure! The mother figure is caring, compassionate, and soft. She is very approachable.
- c. The proper response.
- 1) Jesus! It is necessary to offer the personal aspects of Jesus. Evangelism must emphasize the opportunity to have a real and intimate relationship with God through Jesus.
  - 2) The following scriptures could be used: Jn 15:14; Mt 11:28; Lk 10:38-42; 1Tim 2:5. To show that Mary was a human being, you could use Lk 2:22-24 and Lev 12:8 to show that she had to offer sacrifices to God like anyone else.
  - 3) She needed forgiveness. She needed a savior like all other human beings (Lk 1:47).
  - 4) It can also be shown that Jesus himself would not agree with the exalted position given to Mary (Lk 11:27,28; Mk 3:31-35).
- d. What can be kept or valued?
- 1) We can give honor to Mary as we give to Paul (an example to be imitated).
  - 2) We can imitate Mary's pure faith (Lk 1:38,45), and her simple humility (Lk 1:46-48).

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## Example #2

Notes —

2. Baptism and salvation of infants.
  - a. What does it mean?
    - 1) Infants are sprinkled with water.
    - 2) This cleanses them of original sin and they are saved.
  - b. Why do people practice this?
    - 1) The need for a personal salvation experience may not be taught in the church. The gospel is not presented in a way that challenges the individual that he needs to make a decision. He needs to repent and give his life to Jesus.
    - 2) Instead, someone else makes the decision for you when you are a baby. Biblically, that is impossible.
  - c. The proper response.
    - 1) Jesus! It is necessary to emphasize the need for repentance. Then the Holy Spirit can convict the person that he is a sinner. It must be understood that to receive a personal Savior the person must make a personal decision. Jesus taught that we must decide to give our lives to Him.
    - 2) The following Scriptures could be used: Rom 6:3-10; Acts 8:36-38; Acts 2:38; Mt 16:24-25.
  - d. What can be kept or valued?
    - 1) We can dedicate our babies to the Lord and express our commitment to teach them about Jesus.
    - 2) This communicates to the whole church body that we desire that they grow up as Christians.

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## Example #3

Notes

### 3. Purgatory.

#### a. What is it?

- 1) It is a place and state of punishment. The soul suffers in order to be cleansed before going to heaven. Prayers of the saints and money make possible the transfer.
- 2) In the Roman Catholic tradition, for example, this is done through the Mass (prayers are said and money is given).

#### b. Why do people believe in it?

- 1) There is a lack of understanding and acceptance of the final, sufficient, and complete work of the cross.

#### c. The proper response.

- 1) Jesus! It is necessary to emphasize the work of the cross and the cleansing power of the blood. Focus on the fact that there is complete forgiveness of sins in Jesus.
- 2) The following Scriptures could be used: Jn 19:30 ("It is finished" the debt is paid in full). Also 1Jn 1:9.

#### d. What can be kept or valued?

- 1) The idea that Christians suffer is very biblical. We do suffer the sufferings of Christ in this life because Christ is in us (not because we are saved by suffering). See Phil 3:10; Jn 15:20; 2Tim 3:12; Col 1:24.

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## Example #4

Notes —

4. Penance.
  - a. What is it?
    - 1) Sins are confessed to a human representative of God and the representative gives the person a certain act to do in addition to turning from the sin.
    - 2) The completion of the act insures forgiveness.
  - b. Why do people practice this?
    - 1) There is a lack of ability to trust Jesus completely for forgiveness of sins.
    - 2) There is a desire to earn forgiveness.
  - c. The proper response.
    - 1) Jesus! It is necessary to emphasize the “penance” of confession and repentance unto God. Explain the doctrine of forgiveness by the blood of the cross.
    - 2) Use the following scriptures: 1Jn 2:1,2; Jn 6:28,29; Gal 2:21.
  - d. What can be kept or valued?
    - 1) Christians do need to confess sins one to another (Jms 5:16).

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## Example #5

Notes —

5. The Mass (from Roman Catholic tradition).

a. What is it?

- 1) The Mass is a sacrifice (without blood). Day and night, worldwide, Jesus is being sacrificed (over 50,000 times a day).
- 2) He dies again and again with each Mass that is given as if the sacrifice at Calvary was not complete and final.

b. Why do people practice it?

- 1) There is a lack of ability to see the immediate availability of salvation.
- 2) The sacrifice at Calvary is not seen as being complete. The work of Jesus on the cross is not viewed as a complete and final work.

c. The proper response.

- 1) Jesus! Show that the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was final and complete. Salvation is available now in Christ. Furthermore, stress the resurrection and the ascension. Jesus is not on the cross anymore. He is in heaven!
- 2) Use the following scriptures: Eph 1:20; Mt 27:51; Heb 9:24-28; Heb 10:11,12; Heb 6:4,6.

d. What can be kept or valued?

- 1) The idea of meeting together to celebrate the cross.

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## Example #6

Notes —

6. Mediators other than Jesus.
  - a. What is it?
    - 1) Jesus is replaced by others who are mediators between God and man.
      - a) Living representatives of God - the mediator stands in for Jesus and represents Him on earth. In one tradition, he is said to be “alter Christus” (another Christ). The mediator performs many acts on behalf of the people.
      - b) Dead representatives of God—specific prayers are offered to specific spirits in order to receive their help.
  - b. Why do people practice this?
    - 1) When there is no personal Jesus, to provide solutions, there is a need for substitutes.
  - c. The proper response.
    - 1) Jesus! Jesus must be accepted as the only mediator. Emphasize that Jesus is always available and always wants to help us.
    - 2) Use the following scriptures: Jn 14:6; Is 8:19; 1Tim 2:5; Mt 27:51; 1Pt 2:9; 1Sam 28:8-19; Rom 8:26; Heb 7:25.
  - d. What can be kept or valued?
    - 1) We are representatives of Christ. His ambassadors (2Cor 5:20). Christ lives in us (1Pt 2:9).



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## Example #7

Notes —

### 7. Excessive authority given to a leader.

In this illustration we will refer to the tradition of the Roman Catholic church, regarding the Pope. It should be realized, however, that other churches can and do err in this area even though they use different titles.

#### a. What is it?

- 1) The Pope has a Divine title (Holy Father). He sits as Christ in the Vatican. His words are God's words. He is infallible. He makes undeniable doctrine.
- 2) Pope Leo XIII claimed that he held the place of God almighty upon the earth.
- 3) Boniface VIII declared that he was God. He said that "to be subject to the Pope is necessary for salvation."

#### b. Why do people practice this?

- 1) The lack of a relationship with Jesus creates a great need for a replacement.
- 2) The spiritual is replaced with the tangible.

#### c. The proper response.

- 1) Jesus! Emphasize that Jesus is a personal Savior. He alone is perfect. He alone is the Head of the Church.
- 2) Use the following scriptures: Rom 3:10,23 and Eph 1:22.

#### d. What can be kept or valued?

- 1) Respect for leaders of the Church (1Thes 5:12,13).

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## Example #8

Notes —

8. Statues, shrines, and necklaces.
  - a. What is it?
    - 1) All of these things become objects of worship (idols).
      - a) Prayers are offered to statues.
      - b) A shrine is a special place to worship.
      - c) Necklaces are worn as Holy objects.
    - 2) All of these objects are revered as being special and Holy.
  - b. Why do people practice this?
    - 1) Many times people steeped in tradition have a theology of good works instead of a theology of faith.
    - 2) The spiritual world seems so distant. Like faith, it seems so intangible. Worship in the Spirit seems so intangible. People turn to a more tangible form of theology and worship.
  - c. The proper response.
    - 1) Jesus! Emphasize the reality of the resurrection. Show that Jesus is a personal Savior. Spiritual relationship with Him through faith is something that is real. It can be experienced.
    - 2) Use the following scriptures: Eph 2:8-10; Jn 4:20-24; Acts 17:22-31; Mk 7:3,4,18-20.
  - d. What can be kept or valued?
    - 1) It is dangerous to keep anything that can be worshipped!

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## Example #9

Notes —

9. The Eucharist and transubstantiation (the physical presence of Christ at communion).
  - a. What is it?
    - 1) Miraculously, the bread and wine are changed into the actual body and blood of Christ.
    - 2) The elements are thought of and treated as if they were God.
  - b. Why do people practice this?
    - 1) People have the need for the tangible.
  - c. The proper solution.
    - 1) Jesus! Stress the spiritual presence of Jesus Christ.
    - 2) Use Mt 28:20.
  - d. What can be kept or valued?
    - 1) The actual spiritual presence of Jesus at the Lord's Supper.

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## Example #10

Notes —

10. Sacraments as a way to salvation.
  - a. What is it?
    - 1) Sacraments form a system of religious rites. This system serves as a channel through which to receive salvation.
  - b. Why do people practice this?
    - 1) It builds confidence. Because of a lack of faith in the work of the cross, there is a need for a tangible system of events that will insure salvation.
  - c. The proper response.
    - 1) Jesus! He is the only true channel to salvation.
    - 2) Use Eph 2:8-10 and Jn 14:6.
  - d. What can be kept or valued?
    - 1) The symbolic use of biblical sacraments (baptism and the Lord's Supper).

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## Example #11

Notes

### 11. Lack of Assurance.

- a. What is it?
  - 1) In some traditions the idea of assurance of salvation is impossible.
  - 2) The Council of Trent, for example, stated: “Anathema is the person who says they have assurance of salvation.”
- b. Why do people practice this?
  - 1) One of the dangers of traditionalism is the promotion of salvation by works.
  - 2) A person cannot know his final status of salvation until after his works are completed (after he dies). Thus, assurance of salvation is impossible.
- c. The proper response.
  - 1) Jesus! Explain that we cannot trust in our own lives. We must trust in the life of Jesus. Jesus life is over. There is no more waiting for the person who trusts in a life that has already happened.
  - 2) Use the following scriptures: Jn 1:12; 3:16,36; 19:30; Acts 4:12; 2Cor 1:9; Phil 3:3-9; 1Jn 2:5; 3:2,14,19,24; 5:13.
- d. What can be kept or valued?
  - 1) It is true that we must endure until the end. We must finish the race (Mt 24:13; 1Cor 9:24-27).

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## B. Religious Cults.

### Author's Comment:

We are warned to be weary of other supposed authorities (see Col 2:8). In extreme cases of not adhering to this warning we can be taken “captive through philosophy and empty deception. Those who fall prey to this deception may even fall into a cult. We will briefly consider two of the most deceptive cults.

#### 1. Jehovah Witness.

- a. It began in 1879 under the leadership of Charles Russell.
- b. They use the Bible as their Holy Book. However, they place reason above the Bible. If what is written in the Bible goes against human reason then it is denied. Their doctrine (false doctrine), therefore, is based on extreme humanism.
- c. Their doctrines: they deny the Trinity, they deny the divinity of Christ, they deny the pre-existence of Jesus, they deny salvation by faith, they deny the need for a supernatural Savior, they say that Jesus already returned (secretly) in 1914.

#### 2. Mormonism.

- a. It began in 1830 under the leadership of Joseph Smith.
- b. They use the Bible as a Holy Book. However, the Book of Mormon is used as a higher authority (Smith received the contents of this book from the angel Moroni and he translated them from mysterious golden plates). Thus, their doctrine (false doctrine) is based on extreme cases of both traditionalism and mysticism.
- c. Their doctrines: they deny the Trinity, they deny the divinity of Christ, they deny the pre-existence of Jesus, they deny salvation by faith, they deny the need for a supernatural Savior, they deny the fall of man (in Mormon doctrine Adam is God the Father), they believe in and practice salvation by polygamy.

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## 3. Evangelizing people who are part of a cult.

- a. Most important is to emphasize the divinity of Jesus Christ. This, of course, is a foundational problem. Use the following scriptures:

Jn 20:28	Heb 1:8	Jn 17:5
Jn 8:51-59	Mt 28:18	Jn 10:30
Lk 5:21-24	Mk 2:5-11	Col 1:16
Heb 1:3	Matt 14:33	Jn 9:38
Jn 14:9	Jn 8:58	Mk 14:62

Use Is 6:1-3 with Jn 12:41, and Is 8:13 with 1Pt 3:15 (especially with Jehovah's Witnesses).

- b. Focus on the availability of salvation by faith in Jesus. Salvation by works is another foundational problem. Ask the question: "Have you been forgiven?"
- c. Offer the opportunity to have a relationship with God. Perhaps, this is the most foundational problem.

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