

# Divine Viewpoint Strategy (Part 2)

## Review

In our last lesson we discussed the importance of developing a Divine Viewpoint (DVP) Strategy to deal with the difficult circumstances we face in life. Looking at the person of Joseph as an example, we learned that he interpreted his situation of dying through the viewpoint of his biblical worldview.

In the midst of his death, Joseph didn't lose control of his thoughts. He refused to see things the way an unbelieving Egyptian would. Rather, as a follower of God, he used God's word to direct his actions and calm his heart. We called this thinking strategy the **RCT (ReConnect) Drill**. We want to **reconnect our thoughts** with the God's Word when things get difficult. There are three components that Joseph used in order to maintain his Divine Viewpoint (DVP). These included:

1. **Recall** - when a stressful situation arises you recall a Scriptural text, fragment, promise, or story to quiet down and focus on the Lord.
2. **Connect** - once you have the appropriate Scripture in your mind you have to connect it to your situation. This often happens as you talk to God in prayer about your choice. Thinking through the Human Viewpoint (HVP) and Divine Viewpoint (DVP) choice you have before you.
3. **Trust** - we keep God's Word circulating in our mind, encircling our situation, until we can trust the Lord and move forward.

Developing this strategy takes focus and time. We can't apply this approach to thinking when we are in the middle of an emotional situation or under high stress. We must train our minds with this strategy before we get caught in a jam.

In working through this strategy in my own thinking, I find that each step in the ReConnect Drill can present its own set of challenges. The first two steps require that you understand what God has said concerning your situation. This of course takes time and commitment to learn and remember.

The third step of trusting is often the most difficult. This is because we cannot make ourselves trust God's Word without first being convinced.

*Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)*

Being convinced of God's Word is essential because we have to deal with so many hang-ups in our mind. We have thoughts bouncing around in our heads like, "why are you doing this to me God...I can't see the purpose for this terrible thing...if God really loved me He wouldn't have let this happen." These kind of thoughts are so familiar to us because we spend the majority of our time feeding the Human Viewpoint (HVP).

Think about it - how much time do you spend hearing HVP vs. DVP? For the average Christian the comparison is hardly one at all. Add up all the magazine ads, articles, movies, TV shows, commercials, books and conversations in the average day and you have one big dose of man's rebellious thoughts. Not to mention the fact that when we are not walking with the Lord our own mind gravitates toward HVP. These HVP thoughts all consist of lies designed to oppose God.

Trying to combat this in our mind is very difficult because our bible training is so little that when we get in a jam and we recall a fragment of Scripture the HVP, being so much stronger, just swallows it up and destroys it. The end result is our inability to walk by faith.

The strategy to overcome this problem is to reverse the trend. We want to develop a DVP that outweighs our HVP. We want to be convinced of God's truth when we are not in the thick of life's stressful circumstances. We need to transform our minds and swallow up temptations with truth in order to maintain our walk of faith.

This lesson builds on a few biblical confrontations of DVP vs. HVP and then further develops the need for training in the Christian worldview in order to be ready to give an answer to the curious unbeliever.

## **Clash of the Worldviews**

All throughout the Bible there are examples of God's worldview clashing up against man's worldview. As we study through this course we are going to become very familiar with this confrontation and it will help us to sharpen our thinking when we face a similar situation. The goal of each of these confrontations is to bring about a change of thinking.

### **God to Adam (Genesis 3)**

After Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, God confronted Adam with his disobedience. Their conversation in Genesis 3:8-19 is the first instance in the Bible where we see DVP vs. HVP.

*8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.*

After disobeying God Adam and Even hid from the Lord. Their response shows their understanding of responsibility to the Lord for their actions. As creatures they knew that they had disobeyed their Creator. It wasn't as if they were completely ignorant when God came looking. There was no safe neutral zone where the rules didn't apply. They weren't innocent and they knew it! They hid from God and His Word.

*9 But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"*

As God often does in the Bible He uses questions to help man think through what he has done. God wanted Adam to come clean with his sin and change his mind about what he had done.

Adam is asked to explain his situation. God's question reveals that He expected Adam to understand the true cause of his problem.

*10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."*

However, Adam only shared part of the truth, the outward consequences (his nakedness and Eve's invitation to eat).

*11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" 12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*

Notice how God responded to Adam by pressing for the specific historic facts. He wanted to show them their disobedience and responsibility (3:11, 13). God brought up these specific historic facts to show Adam his sin and to bring to light the truth of His Word. God wanted Adam to see how his HVP clashed with the DVP he was given.

While there were specific consequences to Adam and Eve's disobedience the confrontation of worldviews was successful. Adam changed his mind by no longer hiding himself and by believing God's new promise of grace by naming his wife Eve, which means to live.

We can learn from this Genesis 3 example that unbelieving man does not live with a neutral viewpoint. He already knows of God and His requirements for him (we will see

more of this later). As we develop our thinking to reflect God's worldview we need to realize that the goal is not to simply know what God says but for it to change our mind; to replace our HVP.

### **God to Job (Job 38-41)**

The second biblical example of DVP vs. HVP is God's address to Job in the final stages of his sufferings. Job had gone through one of the most extreme cases of loss recorded in the Bible. Even though he was a believer (cf. Job 1-2), his outlook of suffering had severe HVP problems. In Job 38-41 we see how God radically corrected Job's HVP.

God's words to Job made clear the huge distinction between Job as a creature and God as the Creator. In helping Job to see his limited abilities He also destroyed the idea that Job could develop his own viewpoint independently of God and His Word. Job's response was ultimately positive as he confessed his own limitations and changed his mind about God and his situation (Job 42:2-4, 6).

*2 "I know that you can do all things;  
no plan of yours can be thwarted.*

*3 You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?'  
Surely I spoke of things I did not understand,  
things too wonderful for me to know.*

*4 "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak;  
I will question you,  
and you shall answer me.'*

...

*6 Therefore I despise myself  
and repent in dust and ashes."*

From this second biblical example we learn the importance of the Creator/creature distinction. God will not allow us to treat him as a part of creation. God, man, and nature are not all on the same level. Man is a creature and is therefore dependent on God the Creator for everything - mentally, physically, and spiritually. Man's knowledge must be obtained from God's knowledge, or it becomes "words without knowledge" (Job 38:2).

### **Moses to Israel (Deuteronomy 32)**

Moses' words (actually a song) in Deuteronomy 32 gives us a third biblical example of a DVP vs. HVP. Moses is about to die but before he does he tells Israel of their coming days and future sin.

When Israel began as a nation, they were founded on a contract between themselves and God. If Israel broke the contract then God would judge them through a lawsuit. Deuteronomy 32 is the first occurrence in the Bible of this God-against-Israel lawsuit format.

God uses Moses to confront Israel who was ignoring God's DVP found in the law. Moses told the Israelites that all of history will ultimately glorify God (32:3-4). By appealing to historical facts, Moses tells the nation how God is faithful to His Word and as a result they should be convinced of their sin. Moses points to the historical fact that God had brought Israel up as a nation just as He had promised to Abraham (see 32:7-14), but:

*15 Jeshurun [Israel] grew fat and kicked;  
filled with food, he became heavy and sleek.*

*He abandoned the God who made him  
and rejected the Rock his Savior.*

*16 They made him jealous with their foreign gods  
and angered him with their detestable idols.*

Moses is not using the historical facts to prove that God exists. Rather, the facts were used within the framework of Scripture to bring about a change in the Israelites minds. God uses His Word to convince the Israelites of their sin with a goal replacing HVP with DVP.

### **Elijah to Israel (1 Kings 18)**

In a fourth example of DVP vs. HVP Elijah confronts the nation Israel about her worship of Baal. Using actual historic data Elijah shows God's faithfulness and man's sinfulness (18:25-39).

The unbelievers of Elijah's day decided that they could live in complete independence of God's OT Word. It was as if they were saying, "we don't need God and His Word, we can make our own god to worship!" Rather than continue to worship Yahweh, they invented Baalism and mixed Yahweh's divine attribute with a man-made god.

Although the unbelievers of this day didn't need further proof that God existed, Elijah added another work of Yahweh's faithfulness to the biblical record. This is seen as God consumes the oxen with fire whereas Baal was unable to respond.

Elijah reminded the people of what they already knew from the God's Word and had tried to forget in sin. As a result of this event there were those who changed their mind, they stopped believing the HVP and turned to DVP (18:37-39). Again the goal is

not simply to be educated about the power of God, but rather to have a change of mind.

### **Jesus to Israel (The Four Gospels)**

Each of the four Gospels show Jesus' DVP confrontation with Israel's HVP. Just like the other examples from the OT, Jesus uses historical evidence to convict the people of His day that they should change their minds. This often happens as He points to the miracles He performed. For example, He says in John 10:38

*But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."*

Even the authors of the Gospels made it a point to communicate God's Word as historical fact. Consider Luke:

*1 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. 3 Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.*

As you see DVP being communicated in the NT it doesn't take long to see that it is built on the previous framework of the OT. Much of what was fulfilled by Jesus was outlined in the OT.

Even through the miracles and references to historical fact, Jesus said that the reason the people didn't change their mind was because they refused to believe what was revealed in the OT.

*He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead. (Luke 16:31)*

These unbelievers were not in some neutral gray zone as if they were innocent in the development of their viewpoint: they were sinners who had suppressed the truth they had (i.e. OT) even before Jesus appeared. But this didn't stop Jesus from continually communicating the DVP vs. HVP.

### **Paul to the Gentiles (Acts 17 & Romans 1)**

This last example is of Paul in his approach to the Gentiles, especially seen in Acts 17:22-31 and Romans 1:15-32. This example is the most applicable one for us because it shows how Paul shared his faith to an unbelieving society like ours. In this clash of

DVP vs. HVP Paul indicated to his unbelieving audience that they were conscious of God even though they didn't have OT knowledge (Acts 17:22--29). They had seen God in nature and in their own heart and were without excuse.

*...since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. (Romans 1:19, 20)*

*Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy. (Acts 14:17)*

*From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. (Acts 17:17)*

Not only were these unbelievers aware of God they were trying to forget the truth they understood.

*The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness (Romans 1:18)*

In addition to suppressing the truth these unbelievers twisted it into weird idolatrous shapes.

*and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. (Romans 1:23)*

Unbelievers are far from being ignorant about God. In these accounts with Paul we can see how he pointed to their sin as creatures and guilt for trying to ignore God.

*Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1:32)*

Paul's motivation in confronting these unbelievers HVP was to have a true change of mind, not just for education (Acts 17:30).

## Being Prepared

By focusing on the study of DVP and how it is in confrontation with HVP we are preparing ourselves in some very specific ways. **Being prepared is an important concept in the Bible.** I want to illustrate how this study will prepare us to give an answer to the HVP in our minds as well as prepare us to answer the HVP of others.

Let's begin by looking at 1 Peter 3:15.

*"...but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (1 Pt. 3:15)*

This is the classic bible reference to what we Christians call apologetics. We need to break this verse down a bit to see the full impact.

**"But sanctify"** - The word sanctify means to set apart.

**"Christ as Lord in your hearts"** - We are told to set apart Christ as Lord in our hearts. This can be understood as a decision to set apart Christ as Lord in our minds. The mind and the heart are tied together. This is not a feeling only, but a convincing of the mind.

**"always being ready"** - This implies preparation beforehand doesn't it. Your mental devotion has been decided on beforehand and it should be always ready. Ready for what?

**"to make a defense"** - the word "defense", in the original Greek, is the word apologia from which we get the word apologetics. In English we get the word "apologize" from this but that's unfortunate because the Greek word is a lot more powerful. It didn't mean to "be sorry" for something. It was a word used for defending yourself in court. To give an apology in this sense is to literally give a defense for yourself. So this verse has to do with being ready to defend yourself against prosecution?

**"to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you"** - this element of the verse tells us to whom we are to give a defense and what that defense should consist of. The "who" is anyone who asks and you are to be ready to give an answer consisting of "the hope that is in you". What is this hope? Ultimately it is the hope you have in God's plan of redemption. At basic it is the hope of the Gospel message, and can grow to a larger scope from there. So this brings up an important observation. Is being ready to give a defense of God's viewpoint an optional thing according to Peter? Not at all. Apologetics is not only for Bible teachers. Apologetics is for the average, everyday Christian.

But then we must ask, "Why would anyone come with a question? Quite simply its because they observe something in your life, or see your response to something that happened. "Sanctify", that is "set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts" (that's the mind, the intellect), it's when we set Him apart as Lord and trust Him that people come with a question. And the context of 1 Peter 3 is the context of suffering. People are supposed to see Christians react to suffering differently than the non-Christian.

Recall Joseph and his final conclusion of having been wronged by his brothers, "God meant it for good?" We see how Joseph had a DVP perspective over and against the HVP of his scheming brothers? This kind of response to suffering causes the unbeliever to marvel and ask "How come you handle your suffering this way? That doesn't work for me. How do you do it, are you on pills, do you take drugs, how do you do it?" And this opens the door for an apologetic, a defense of Christianity.

So the apologetic comes in response to a question brought on by some event in your life. This is not going door-to-door ramming and cramming the Christian faith down somebody's throat who hasn't even asked. Rather, this is using the ReConnect Drill in the midst of a situation which brings about an apologetic encounter. And our responsibility is to be ready to give an answer. You see apologetics is not something that we take on the offensive. We don't start the encounter directly. We live life through DVP and it just happens naturally.

***"yet with gentleness and reverence"*** - For some reason this statement is often overlooked. There is a common idea that apologetics means some sort of negative confrontation where people are arguing in a heated way. But biblical apologetics is not that at all rather the defense of the faith is delivered with gentleness and reverence. Even our attitude to the unbeliever must be guided by DVP.

Something that is important to note here is that before we even get to the point of giving a defense, we have to first be ready. Does this mean we sit and study the art of all unbelief so we can offer an answer to it? Not at all. Nowhere in God's Word are we told to do that. Rather, as we study God's DVP we are constantly changing our minds about what we believe and because we live in the world of unbelief and because our hearts are inclined that way without God, we can constantly see the viewpoint confrontation.

This is how we become ready - we learn God's view on the matters of our life to the point that they can be recalled in the ReConnect Drill or for the purposes of an apologetic encounter.

## Willing to Change our Mind

In the previous lesson we stressed how important it was for DVP to be utilized in our everyday circumstances. Using the ReConnect Drill our goal was to maintain our walk of faith by ultimately trusting God's Word in our situation of life.

However, this lesson identifies more of what happens in the background when man is confronted with DVP. This is important to see because this course is a study of DVP and will use several bible based features to draw out the confrontation in our mind:

- **Historic Reality** - Just as we saw in the biblical examples above, the historical events were used to provide a foundation for further understanding of the Bible. We will study the Bible as it presents itself; real events in time.
- **Connected Truth** - Rather than learning the truths of the Bible in a mixed up order, we are going to string them together one by one showing how they each work together to form a "Big Picture".
- **DVP vs. HVP** - Our focus will be to teach the Bible against the way the world thinks. Rather than looking at each belief of the unbeliever separately, we will look at the root issues that make up unbelief in each area of teaching. As discussed in this lesson seeing the two perspectives will not only sharpen your own worldview but also prepare you to defend your faith.

There is no doubt that a worldview confrontation will occur in your mind as you learn more. We all have tons of HVP stored in our thinking that has to be discarded and reshaped by God's Word.

In a general sense we can see where God's worldview collides with man's worldview.

- God indirectly with the unbeliever in creation and their hearts
- God directly with the unbeliever through His Word
- God with the believer in transforming/conforming them

The final point above is where we are as believers. Realizing that you find yourself in a worldview clash with an unbeliever, that will come later. At this point we just need to be willing and prepare our minds for change. We want to be convinced of DVP so that we can walk by faith.

*Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)*