

A Blueprint for Thinking by R.C. Sproul

Study Guide

These five lectures develop five interlocking elements of a Christian worldview:

Epistemology — How do we know what we know? **Metaphysics** — What is ultimately real? **Theology** — Who is the truth? What is God like? **Anthropology** — What is man, and what gives human life meaning? **Ethics** — How does truth command us to live?

Sproul's controlling concern is that everyone possesses a worldview, whether consciously examined or merely absorbed from the surrounding culture. The Christian therefore must learn to think deliberately about reality from the perspective of God rather than allowing feeling, convention, or cultural fashion to determine what is true and right.

The five disciplines form a logical structure. What one believes about knowledge affects what one believes about reality; metaphysics leads to theology; theology determines anthropology; anthropology has ethical consequences.

LESSON 1 — HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT WE KNOW?

I. Central Subject: Epistemology

Sproul defines **epistemology** as “a science that deals with the question, ‘How do we know what we know.’” It concerns not merely *what* we believe, but why we believe it, what evidence justifies it, how the knowledge was acquired, whether our senses or reasoning can mislead us, and how truth is distinguished from illusion, error, or opinion.

II. Worldview as the Larger Framework

Sproul begins with Melville’s *Moby Dick*. Different members of the crew look at the same gold doubloon and perceive its significance differently. Pip summarizes the phenomenon: “I see, you see, we all see.” The illustration introduces the concept of **worldview**: the framework through which a person interprets reality and understands the meaning of life. As Sproul says, “Now, everybody has a worldview.”

Human beings encounter the same reality through different histories, assumptions, interpretive grids, and perspectives. Philosophers and theologians may deliberately examine and revise their worldview; many people simply inherit one unconsciously. The Christian task is to seek “the mind of Christ,” attempting to affirm what God affirms and deny what God denies. A worldview is therefore more than a collection of beliefs; it is the interpretive structure through which beliefs, experiences, facts, and values are understood.

III. Thinking Versus Feeling

Rodin’s *The Thinker* becomes the recurring image for the series. Sproul argues that contemporary culture has shifted from thinking to feeling: “We live in a world where preferences have supplanted objective truth.” His concern is not that emotions are illegitimate, but that personal feeling cannot determine objective truth.

The posture of *The Thinker* also illustrates that serious thought requires labor. The German artistic concept **fruchtbare Augenblick**, “the fruitful moment,” refers to capturing in one scene the moment that best expresses the essence of a subject. Rodin depicts thinking as concentrated labor.

IV. The Elvis Illustration: Evidence Must Be Evaluated

Sproul recounts a television program proposing that Elvis Presley was still alive. What disturbed him was less the hypothesis itself than the ease with which viewers accepted it on weak evidence. His epistemological question was, “On what basis are these people evaluating the data, analyzing the argument, coming to their conclusions?”

A conclusion may accidentally be true while the reasoning used to reach it remains poor. Epistemology therefore examines the **basis for belief**, not merely whether a belief happens to correspond with reality.

V. Rationalism and Empiricism

Rationalism emphasizes the mind and rational processes as the primary route to knowledge. Logic is central to rational inquiry, but at its extreme rationalism risks becoming detached from the external world because the mind by itself cannot supply sensory access to physical reality.

Empiricism emphasizes sense perception—sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell—and generally holds that knowledge of the external world comes through experience. The basic distinction is therefore: **rationalism emphasizes the mind; empiricism emphasizes the senses.**

The scientific method brings rational and empirical activity together. Sproul summarizes the process: “This is how we learn; we see, we hear, we think.” Neither reason nor sensory experience is sufficient by itself.

VI. The Limitations of Sense Perception

The senses give access to the external world, but they are fallible. Sproul uses altered perception under LSD as an illustration: how can someone determine whether an extraordinary sensory experience represents heightened perception or distortion?

We cannot dispense with the senses, but they can be limited or distorted and therefore must be interpreted and evaluated. Sproul connects this with the New Testament witnesses, who appeal to what they saw and heard concerning Christ; their testimony has an empirical dimension.

VII. The Function of Logic

Sproul says, “Logic has no content. Logic gives no information.” Logic does not supply facts about the world; it regulates reasoning so that invalid conclusions are not drawn from the information we possess.

Truth cannot ultimately be contradictory because contradiction would make God a liar. Sproul therefore insists, “Christianity is not rationalism, but it is by all means rational.”

Rationalism is a theory about the source of knowledge; **rationality** means thinking consistently according to sound reason. Christianity does not claim that reason alone supplies all knowledge, but it does claim that Christian truth is rational rather than contradictory or irrational.

Key Points

Understand **worldview** and **epistemology**; why feeling does not establish truth; the distinction between **rationalism** and **empiricism**; why reason and sensation are both necessary; the function of logic; the distinction between a true belief and adequate grounds for that belief; and why Christianity may be rational without being rationalistic.

Core takeaway: A Christian worldview requires serious reflection upon how beliefs are formed and justified. The foundational question is: **How do we know what we know?**

LESSON 2 — WHAT IS BEYOND THE PHYSICAL?

I. Central Subject: Metaphysics

Sproul distinguishes the questions **how?** and **why?** His childhood friend Donnie was fascinated by how things worked; Sproul was more preoccupied with why things existed and why events occurred. The *how* question often belongs to empirical investigation, while the *why* question pushes beyond immediate physical description. “Metaphysics searches for that which lies above and beyond the scope of the physical.”

Historically, metaphysics was central to ancient philosophy. Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, and others sought **ultimate reality**.

II. Proximate Reality and Ultimate Reality

Sproul distinguishes **proximate reality** from **ultimate reality**. A proximate explanation accounts for something at an immediate level; an ultimate explanation asks what finally accounts for the existence of the whole chain of causes and realities.

A blue rug appears simply to be blue, but further inquiry reveals light, perception, matter, molecules, atoms, subatomic structures, and large amounts of empty space. As Sproul says, “the why question pushes us to the question of ultimate reality.” Each explanation may answer one question while raising a deeper one.

III. Ontology

Sproul defines **ontology** as “the science or the study of being.” The Greek-derived term *ontos* refers to being. Ontology asks: What exists? What does it mean to exist? What kind of being does something possess? What is ultimate being? Why is there something rather than nothing?

A physicist can describe what energy does or provide a mathematical equivalence, but Sproul presses the ontological question: **What is energy?** He is asking about its “isness,” not merely its effects or measurements.

IV. “Out of Nothing, Nothing Comes”

A foundational principle in Sproul’s metaphysical argument is **ex nihilo nihil fit**, “out of nothing, nothing comes.” Nothing has no properties, powers, potential, or capacity to

produce being. Therefore, if anything now exists, reality cannot ultimately derive from absolute nonbeing.

Sproul's second principle follows: **If something exists, then something must possess the power of being in itself.** By this he means a being whose existence is not received from something else, but which possesses existence in itself rather than dependently. This moves the argument toward ultimate, self-existent being.

Sproul does not deny that one state of existing matter could change into another. His objection concerns absolute nothingness becoming something. A “singularity” that explodes is already something and therefore describes change in existing being rather than a transition from nonbeing into being.

V. Descartes and Certainty

Sproul invokes René Descartes: **cogito, ergo sum** — “I think, therefore, I am.” Descartes attempts to reach something he cannot rationally doubt: his own existence as a thinking subject. Sproul describes the next step as, “‘If I am,’ Descartes was saying, ‘God must be.’”

The point is not that the statement “I exist” by itself proves the Christian doctrine of God. Rather, the existence of a dependent being raises the question of what ultimately grounds existence itself. For Sproul, this illustrates the movement from the certainty of present existence toward the need for self-existent being.

VI. Teleology

Teleology concerns purposes, ends, and goals. Sproul says, “the science of teleology is the science of purposes and goals.” The Greek **telos** means end, purpose, or goal.

Ontology asks, **What is?** Teleology asks, **What is it for? Why does it exist? Toward what end is it directed?**

VII. The School Curriculum Illustration

Sproul describes a school curriculum in which every activity had a carefully identified immediate purpose. He then asked the principal, “What is your ultimate purpose?” Individual purposes cannot intelligently be selected without some larger goal governing them.

For education, the decisive question becomes: **What kind of person are you trying to produce, and why?** A **proximate purpose** is the immediate goal of an activity; an **ultimate purpose** is the overarching end governing subordinate goals.

VIII. Why Teleology Matters

Sproul objects to excluding teleological questions from science or public thought. A civilization may know increasingly well *how* things work while becoming unable to answer *why* they matter. “How we perceive metaphysics, how we perceive being, and how we perceive purpose touches the very heart of our lives.”

Key Points

Understand **metaphysics**; how and why questions; proximate and ultimate reality; **ontology**; *ex nihilo nihil fit*; Sproul’s argument from existing things to self-existent being; *cogito, ergo sum*; **teleology** and **telos**; and the distinction between proximate and ultimate purpose.

Core takeaway: An adequate worldview must account not merely for the mechanisms of the physical universe, but for **being itself and purpose itself**.

LESSON 3 — WHO IS THE TRUTH?

I. Central Subject: Theology

The third component is **theology**, though Sproul says that in order of importance it should come first: “How a person understands the character of God I think, more than any other concept, determines how we live.” Christianity is therefore fundamentally **theocentric**—“God-centered.”

II. Faith and Reason

Sproul begins with his experience in a skeptical seminary. He identifies two inadequate reactions to skepticism: unbelief and retreat into mindless or blind faith—“I believe it, and that settles it.”

He rejects the idea that Christianity requires intellectual surrender. Christians are called to give reasons for their hope, and skeptical objections themselves rest upon assumptions that can be examined. “Our faith in God is a reasonable faith. It is not an irrational leap in the dark.”

Historical evidence, archaeology, sense perception, rational thought, and Scripture are not competitors to faith; they can serve Christian understanding. Prayer likewise is not a substitute for thought.

III. Everything Has Theological Significance

If God is Creator and sovereign over the entire universe, theology cannot be confined to an isolated category called “religion.” Every fact belongs to God’s creation and derives its ultimate meaning through relation to Him.

Sproul cites Cornelius Van Til: “There’s no such thing as a brute fact, and there’s no such thing as a mute fact, because every fact is tied to its Creator and finds its meaning and its significance in its relationship to God.”

A **brute fact** would be a fact existing independently of God; a **mute fact** would be a fact without theological significance. Van Til’s point is that no fact can be fully understood in isolation from God: both its existence and its ultimate significance are related to its Creator.

IV. “All I Need to Know Is Jesus”

Sproul challenges the claim, “I don't need to know any theology. All I need to know is Jesus.” His reply is essentially: **Who is Jesus?** The moment one answers, one is doing theology. Theology cannot be avoided; the question is whether it is careful and biblical or confused and unexamined.

V. The Holiness of God

The more clearly God's holiness is understood, the more clearly sin is understood. Sproul observes, “What we call ‘normal,’ God normally calls ‘evil’ when judged against the character of His holiness.”

For Sproul, God is personal, moral, ethical, holy, and commanding. He does not merely exist as a metaphysical explanation; His character places moral demands upon human beings.

VI. The Sovereignty of God

Sproul argues that many Christians affirm divine sovereignty while substantially limiting its meaning: “Most Christians salute the sovereignty of God but believe in the sovereignty of man.”

Within Sproul's Reformed framework, divine sovereignty includes God's comprehensive rule and ordination. A diminished doctrine of God therefore produces distorted views of humanity, salvation, grace, and obedience.

VII. Reformed Theology and Grace

Sproul connects the Reformation tradition to an awakening to God's greatness, majesty, holiness, and sovereignty. From these truths follows a fuller doctrine of grace: “Until you face a God who is holy and who is altogether sovereign, you don't know what grace means.”

The tax collector's prayer—“Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner”—illustrates complete dependence upon grace rather than a mixture of grace and human merit.

The sequence is: **holiness → human sinfulness; sovereignty → human dependence; sinfulness + dependence → the wonder of grace.** Grace ceases to be amazing when people possess an inflated view of themselves and a diminished view of God.

VIII. Theology as Worldview

Sproul closes by arguing for Christianity as an entire **life and worldview**, with the character of God at its center. A Christian worldview cannot be built around an undefined deity; it requires “a sound and deep biblical concept of the character of God.”

Key Points

Understand the relationship between **faith and reason**; why Sproul rejects blind faith; **theocentrism**; why every fact possesses theological significance; Van Til’s “brute fact” and “mute fact”; why knowing Jesus necessarily involves theology; the significance of God’s holiness and sovereignty; and why these doctrines make grace intelligible.

Core takeaway: A Christian worldview is God-centered. Reality, humanity, morality, suffering, grace, and ordinary life cannot be correctly understood without a serious doctrine of the character of God.

LESSON 4 — HOW DOES TRUTH RELATE TO ME?

I. Central Subject: Anthropology

Anthropology asks what it means to be human. Sproul connects the decline of belief in God with a corresponding crisis concerning human identity and dignity: “Where God is no longer at the center of people's thinking, it is inevitable that the question of human dignity becomes a matter of grave concern.”

The lesson asks: Who am I? What makes a human being distinctively human? Does human life possess objective dignity and purpose? What are humanity's origin and destiny?

II. Anthropology Determines Human Treatment

Sproul states the governing principle: “How we understand humanity in large measure controls how we treat human beings, how we value human beings.” Ideas about humanity are therefore never merely theoretical; anthropology eventually affects law, ethics, human rights, dignity, sexuality, violence, responsibility, and the value placed on life.

III. Human Frailty

Sproul draws attention to Scripture's comparison of human life to grass. Human beings flourish briefly and then die. Recognition of mortality raises questions of meaning, objective significance, and whether human value is permanent or temporary.

IV. Sartre: “Man Is a Useless Passion”

Jean-Paul Sartre's atheistic existentialism represents one answer. Sproul quotes Sartre: “man is a useless passion.” Human beings love, fear, suffer, laugh, weep, hope, and desire, but if there is no transcendent source of meaning, Sartre concludes that these passions ultimately accomplish nothing.

Sproul's point is that atheistic existentialism takes the absence of transcendent meaning seriously.

V. Nietzsche and Nihilism

Nietzsche similarly reaches **das nichts**—nothingness or the abyss. Human existence, in this account, has no ultimate purposeful origin, final destiny, objective goal, or ultimate meaning.

Sproul disagrees strongly with Nietzsche and Sartre but respects the consistency with which they trace atheistic premises toward nihilistic conclusions.

VI. Sproul's Critique of Secular Humanism

Secular humanism seeks simultaneously to affirm a universe without transcendent divine purpose and strong objective claims about human value and dignity. Sproul sees a contradiction: if humanity is ultimately a cosmic accident moving toward nonbeing, on what metaphysical basis can universal human dignity be established?

He cites Francis Schaeffer: “the humanist has both feet firmly planted in midair.” Sproul calls humanism **borrowed capital**: it retains conclusions about human dignity inherited from a worldview whose theological and metaphysical foundations it has rejected. In other words, it continues to spend moral conclusions that, in Sproul’s argument, it no longer possesses the worldview resources to ground.

VII. Christian Anthropology: Sin and Dignity

Christianity simultaneously affirms that humanity is profoundly sinful and possesses extraordinary dignity.

Human beings are fallen and corrupt. Sproul invokes Romans 3 and the Reformed doctrine of **total depravity**. Here **total** refers to the extent of sin’s corruption through the whole person, not to every person being as wicked as he could possibly become.

Yet Sproul also says, “Christianity takes sin seriously because it takes people so seriously.” Murder, hatred, rape, theft, and abuse matter because their victims are human beings made in God’s image.

VIII. The Image of God

The biblical foundation of human dignity is the **imago Dei**—humanity uniquely created in the image of God. Humans are appointed to reflect God’s character within creation. This explains humanity’s dignity and purpose as well as the seriousness of sin.

Sin does not merely violate another human being; it misrepresents the God whose image humanity was created to bear. Sproul therefore calls sin “cosmic treason.”

IX. Freedom Versus Autonomy

Sproul’s distinction is concise: “You could have man as free but never autonomous.”

Freedom is genuine creaturely choice within creaturely limits. **Autonomy** is self-rule or self-law—existing without higher authority. Only God possesses ultimate sovereignty; human freedom therefore always exists beneath divine authority.

X. Christian Ground of Human Meaning

Human significance rests upon God at both ends of existence: **origin** — divine purpose; **identity** — image of God; **present meaning** — life under divine authority; **destiny** — eternal glory prepared by God.

Sproul concludes, “Our humanity is defined by Him, and therein we find dignity.” Because human beings have meaningful origin and destiny, everything between creation and consummation matters.

Key Points

Understand **anthropology**; why theology affects anthropology; Sartre’s “useless passion”; Nietzschean nihilism; Sproul’s critique of secular humanism and “borrowed capital”; total depravity; the compatibility of profound sinfulness with profound human dignity; the **image of God**; and the distinction between **freedom** and **autonomy**.

Core takeaway: Human beings receive their definition, dignity, limits, purpose, and destiny from God.

LESSON 5 — HOW DOES TRUTH COMMAND ME?

I. Central Subject: Ethics

Ethics concerns right and wrong, duty, justice, righteousness, obligation, and human conduct. Sproul connects ethics directly to anthropology: “Again, our anthropology determines ultimately our ethics.” How human beings are defined affects how they ought to behave and how they ought to be treated.

II. Right and Wrong as a Clue to Reality

Sproul invokes C.S. Lewis’s *Mere Christianity*, particularly “Right and Wrong as a Clue to the Meaning of the Universe.” The existence of moral obligation raises metaphysical and theological questions: Why should there be an **ought**? What gives moral duties authority? Why should justice matter?

III. Dostoyevsky: God and Moral Obligation

Sproul quotes Dostoyevsky: “If there is no God, then all things are permissible.” The argument is not that unbelievers cannot behave morally; it concerns the **objective foundation and authority** of moral obligation. If no transcendent moral authority exists, what ultimately turns personal or social preference into objective duty?

IV. Kant’s Moral Argument

Sproul explains that Kant regarded God as practically necessary to meaningful ethics. The argument is: **meaningful ethics requires genuine justice; complete justice is not achieved in ordinary life; final justice requires an ultimate righteous Judge with sufficient knowledge, righteousness, and power; humans must survive death for such justice to be accomplished; therefore the moral structure of existence points toward God, judgment, and immortality.**

Kant is not saying simply, “Morality proves God exists.” As Sproul presents him, Kant’s point is that moral obligation and final justice become fully coherent only if God, immortality, and judgment are assumed. It is an argument from **practical necessity**, not a theoretical proof.

V. Accountability and Significance

Sproul says, “The good news of nineteenth-century philosophy was that man is no longer accountable to God. The message of twentieth-century philosophy is that man no longer counts.”

His reasoning is that accountability and significance are connected. If human action has no ultimate accountability, then ultimately it makes no difference whether one behaves one way or another. Freedom from ultimate judgment can therefore become loss of ultimate significance.

VI. Moral Relativism

Moral relativism denies universal or objective moral norms and makes right and wrong dependent upon individual preference, social convention, cultural expectation, or group interests.

Sproul argues that complete relativism cannot be lived consistently. A person may verbally deny objective right and wrong but immediately appeal to fairness or justice when personally wronged. Moral indignation often reveals an implicit belief in standards transcending preference.

VII. “You Can't Legislate Morality”

Sproul distinguishes two meanings of the slogan. In its older sense, passing a law cannot guarantee inward moral transformation or obedience. In the newer sense criticized by Sproul, government should not pass laws involving moral judgments.

Sproul argues that legislation inevitably involves moral evaluation. Laws against murder and theft plainly embody judgments about right and wrong. The real question is therefore not whether law embodies morality, but **which moral judgments will inform law**.

VIII. Cultural Foundations

Sproul describes civilizations as historically resting upon some unifying framework of **theology, philosophy, or mythology**. He argues that American culture moved from a predominantly theological foundation, to a philosophical foundation, toward what he calls a mythological foundation rooted in moral relativism.

His broader structural point is that **a society cannot function without some operative conception of truth, morality, and value**.

IX. Nietzsche: Master Morality and Herd Morality

In **master morality**, the exceptional individual creates his own values, refuses external authority, and exercises his **will to power**. Sproul describes Nietzsche's existential hero as one who defies God and creates his own law.

In **herd morality**, people adopt the standards of the surrounding group without serious independent moral reflection; they "go with the flow." Sproul rejects Nietzsche's master morality but agrees with his criticism of thoughtless conformity.

X. Social Convention Is Not Moral Truth

Sproul asks, "Did the rightness or wrongness change? The ethic didn't change. Ultimately, what changed was the instinct of the herd." He thereby distinguishes **moral truth** from **social convention**. Changes in public acceptance do not, by themselves, establish changes in moral truth.

Moral norm, social convention, majority opinion, and individual preference may coincide, but they are not identical.

XI. Moral Courage

Because cultures exert pressure toward conformity, Christian ethics requires **moral courage**. Sproul uses Boris Yeltsin's resistance during the Soviet coup as an illustration of standing against the herd despite immense pressure. Moral courage means acting according to perceived moral truth despite social pressure or personal cost.

XII. The Christian Ethical Mandate

Sproul summarizes Christian ethics: "The bottom line of Christianity is that we are called to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Ethics is therefore grounded not in convenience, fashion, popularity, preference, or self-created law, but in God and His righteousness.

XIII. The Self-Defeat of Absolute Relativism

The statement "There are absolutely no absolutes" is self-defeating because it presents itself as an absolute claim. Sproul also argues that relativism collapses in practice because people continue to protest when they themselves encounter injustice. For

him, relativism functions as an attempt to remove divine moral accountability rather than as a coherent foundation for ethics.

XIV. The Entire Course in Five Questions

Sproul concludes by joining the five disciplines: “How do you know? That's a question of epistemology.” “What is real ultimately, that's a metaphysical question.” “Who is the truth is a theological question.” “How does the truth relate to me and define me is an anthropological question.” “And how the truth commands me is an ethical question.”

CUMULATIVE SYNTHESIS

The five lessons form a progression:

Epistemology: How can I know truth? → **Metaphysics:** What is ultimately true or real?
→ **Theology:** Who is the ultimate reality, and what is He like? → **Anthropology:** Who
am I in relation to that God? → **Ethics:** How, then, ought I to live?

Errors in one area therefore spread into the others. A defective epistemology can distort one's view of reality; a defective metaphysics can eliminate purpose; a defective theology produces a defective anthropology; and a defective anthropology produces defective ethics. Sproul warns, "Ignore one of them and you will have a distorted view of the world and of your own life."

KEY TERMS

Worldview — the interpretive grid through which a person understands reality and his own life.

Epistemology — the study of knowledge; "How do we know what we know?"

Rationalism — an approach emphasizing reason or the mind as the route to knowledge.

Empiricism — an approach emphasizing sensory experience.

Logic — rules governing valid inference; it regulates reasoning but does not itself supply factual content.

Metaphysics — inquiry into ultimate reality beyond immediate physical appearances.

Ontology — the study of being.

Ex nihilo nihil fit — "out of nothing, nothing comes."

Teleology — the study of ends, purposes, and goals.

Telos — end, purpose, or goal.

Theocentric — God-centered.

Sovereignty of God — God's supreme rule and authority over reality.

Holiness of God — God's absolute moral purity and distinctness.

Anthropology — the study or doctrine of humanity.

Nihilism — the conclusion that human existence lacks ultimate meaning, purpose, or value.

Humanism — in Sproul's discussion, a worldview seeking to ground human dignity and meaning without a transcendent theological foundation.

Total depravity — sin's corruption extending throughout the whole person.

Image of God — the biblical foundation for distinctive human dignity and calling.

Freedom — genuine creaturely action and choice within God's sovereign order.

Autonomy — absolute self-rule or being a law unto oneself.

Ethics — inquiry into right and wrong, obligation, righteousness, justice, and conduct.

Moral relativism — denial of universal objective moral standards in favor of preference or convention.

Master morality — Nietzsche's ideal of self-created values and self-legislation.

Herd morality — morality determined by conformity to prevailing social opinion.

Moral courage — willingness to follow moral conviction despite social pressure or cost.

HIGH-VALUE DISTINCTIONS

Distinction	Meaning
Truth vs. feeling	Feeling is subjective; truth concerns what actually is.
Rationalism vs. rationality	Rationalism makes reason the primary source of knowledge; rationality means conformity to sound reason.
Reason vs. sensation	Reason interprets; sensation provides access to the external world.
Logic vs. information	Logic regulates inference; it does not supply empirical facts.
Proximate vs. ultimate reality	Immediate explanations versus what finally accounts for the whole chain of reality.
Ontology vs. teleology	What something is versus what it is for.
Immediate vs. ultimate purpose	A particular goal versus the final goal governing subordinate goals.
Faith vs. blind faith	Christian faith has rational grounds rather than requiring intellectual retreat.
Human dignity vs. human sinfulness	Humans possess great dignity as God's image-bearers while remaining deeply sinful.
Freedom vs. autonomy	Humans make real choices but are never sovereign or independent of God.
Moral truth vs. convention	Something does not become morally right merely because society accepts it.
Moral relativism vs. tolerance	Relativism denies objective norms; tolerance concerns response to disagreement.
Accountability vs. autonomy	Ultimate accountability gives actions significance; autonomy seeks independence from higher authority.