

The background of the slide is an abstract composition. On the left side, there are several concentric circles in shades of blue and teal, creating a tunnel-like effect. In the center of these circles, there is a small, colorful vortex or nebula with orange, red, and blue hues. The right side of the image is a soft, out-of-focus background with warm, orange and yellow tones, suggesting a sunset or sunrise sky.

# Worldview Thinking

Revisiting the Fundamental Orientations of Our Minds and Hearts





# Welcome!

We are glad you chose to join us this morning for Part 13 of our series on *Worldview Thinking*. As the concept image suggests, we have been created to continually grow in knowledge and wisdom, to love the Lord our God with all of our mind and all of our heart, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Proverbs calls out to each one of us: “Let the wise hear and increase in learning” (1:5), and promises us that if we will seek for wisdom, insight, knowledge, prudence, and understanding, we will “find the knowledge of God” (2:1-5). The rewards are eternal - and infinitely more satisfying than silver or gold.

# Introduction

For the serious student of *worldview thinking*, engaging in self-analysis to determine the connection between *beliefs* and *behavior* is essential. The truly wise person will be able to examine his behavior and find its source in his beliefs and convictions. If, for instance, this person is critical, harsh, and bitter towards someone who offended him, he should be able to easily trace his actions back to his true beliefs about forgiveness and grace. Similarly, a wise person should be able to contemplate her beliefs and come close to predicting what behaviors she might exhibit when those beliefs are lived out in real life. A person who struggles to discern what the belief-behavior connections are may find breakthrough insights through wise counselors or mentors.



# Introduction

However, this is not the only means by which our beliefs and behaviors may be understood. Since our thinking is the cause of our bringing things into the external world through the use of our bodies (behavior), we must also regularly engage in the **disciplines of reading and study** in order to know God and grow to maturity in Jesus Christ. The church would do well to reject the shallow anti-intellectualism which has silenced its relevance and effectiveness in the world and embrace *all* of God's revelation given to us through creation, His Word, and His Son. By His grace, we can turn from the voices of our secular culture, give ourselves wholeheartedly to "the God who is there," and renew our minds and hearts with a biblical worldview which magnifies Him, His laws, His covenant, and His authority over all of creation.



In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Lewis invites us “to a shuttered window in the dark and stuffy room in which we are trapped, where he bursts the shutters open and shouts, ‘Look! Look out there!’ And what he shows us out there is a landscape – a landscape in which we may see all sorts of terrors and glories that we had never dreamed of, trapped in the dark of our prison” (Thomas Howard).

“Do you think I am trying to weave a spell? Perhaps I am; but remember your fairy tales. Spells are used for breaking enchantments as well as for inducing them. And you and I have need of the strongest spell that can be found to wake us from the evil enchantment of worldliness which has been laid upon us for nearly a hundred years. Almost our whole education has been directed to silencing this shy, persistent, inner voice; almost all our modern philosophies have been devised to convince us that the good of man is to be found on this earth” (C.S. Lewis).







# What Is Reading?

- **Read**, v., “to scan or study writing silently or by oneself or for one’s own benefit. To inspect and interpret in thought (any signs which represent words or discourse); to look over or scan (something written, printed, etc.) with understanding of what is meant by the letters or signs; to peruse or be in the habit of perusing (a book, periodical, the work of an author, etc.)” (OED).
- “There is the book; and here is your mind. As you go through the pages, either you understand perfectly everything the author has to say or you do not” (Adler).
- Reading is “the art of being taught” (Adler).





# What Is Reading?

- **The Art of Reading:** “The process whereby a mind, with nothing to operate on but the symbols of the readable matter, and with no help from outside, elevates itself by the power of its own operations. The mind passes from understanding less to understanding more. The skilled operations that cause this to happen are the various acts that constitute the art of reading” (Adler).
- Reading is an activity that “directs our thinking” (Sire).
- Reading is an activity that “takes us places” (Sire). Books are portals through which we enter into other worlds.
- Reading “returns you to otherness” (Bloom).



# Why Read?

1. To gain increased wisdom, instruction, understanding, insight, and discretion for living (Prov. 1:1-7). “Wisdom has to do with the practical matter of learning how to live a life that is pleasing to God” (R.C. Sproul).
2. To receive doctrine, reproof, correction, & training in righteousness (II Tim. 3:16-17).
3. To learn things that we could not learn from any other source. “One of the most important advantages the Bible gives us is that it provides information that is not available anywhere else....Only God can provide us with an eternal perspective and speak to us with absolute and final authority” (Sproul).





# Why Read?

4. To glorify the self-disclosing God and enjoy Him forever.
5. To avoid living solely by our feelings and experience.
6. To learn God's commandments and precepts. "Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes" (Ps. 119:12).
7. For entertainment and enjoyment (though it is the least demanding kind of reading and requires the least amount of effort; Adler).
8. To learn how to listen well (there is a close relationship between reading and listening).
9. To learn to use our imaginations.

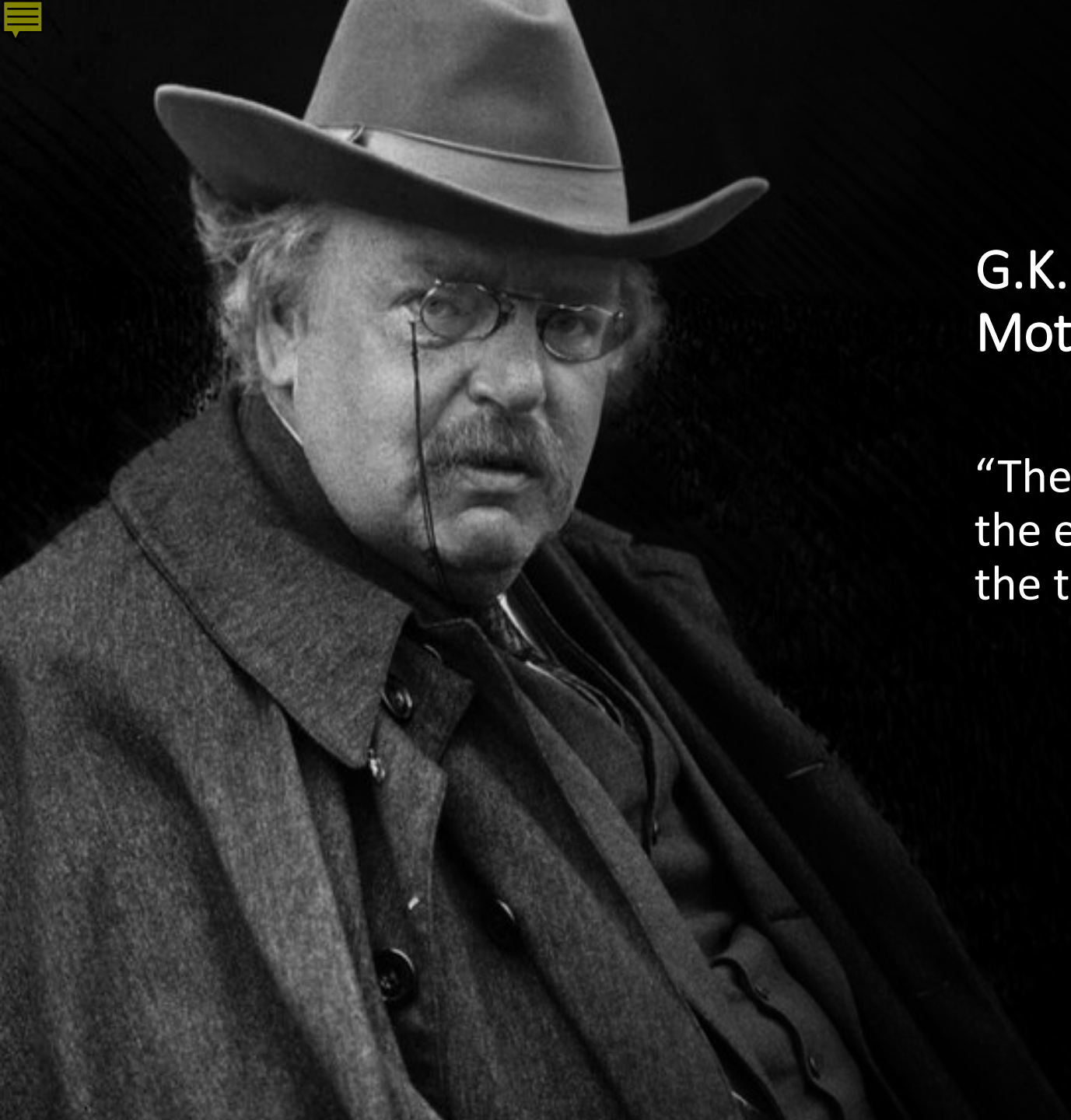


# Why Read?

10. To know God. “Knowing about God is crucially important for the living of our lives...We are cruel to ourselves if we try to live in this world without knowing about the God whose world it is and who runs it. The world becomes a strange, mad, painful place, and life in it a disappointing and unpleasant business, for those who do not know about God. Disregard the study of God, and you sentence yourself to stumble and blunder through life blindfolded, as it were, with no sense of direction and no understanding of what surrounds you. This way you can waste your life and lose your soul” (J.I. Packer).

***Being informed is prerequisite to being enlightened*** (Adler).





## G.K. Chesterton on Motivation for Reading

“There is a great deal of difference between the eager man who wants to read a book, and the tired man who wants a book to read.”



# C.S. Lewis Finds Chesterton

“It was here (in the hospital after he was wounded in WWI) that I read a volume of Chesterton’s essays. I had never heard of him and had no idea of what he stood for; nor can I quite understand why he made such an immediate conquest of me. It might have been expected that my pessimism, my atheism, and my hatred of sentiment would have made him to me the least congenial of all authors. It would almost seem that Providence, or some ‘second cause’ of a very obscure kind, quite overrules our precious tastes when it decides to bring two minds together. Liking an author may be as involuntary and improbable as falling in love. I was by now a sufficiently experienced reader to distinguish liking from agreement.”

# Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

“Reading maketh a full man;  
conference a ready man; and  
writing an exact man.”



“Some books are to be tasted,  
others to be swallowed, and some  
few to be chewed and digested.”



Former Lord Chancellor of England





# Bacon's Full Statement

“Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to **weigh and consider**. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy (by proxy), and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books, else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. **Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.** And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit (understanding): and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not.”



# Os Guinness on Reading the Classics

1. Western literary classics confront us with fundamental choices over our understanding of words, reading and art, as well as citizenship, civilization, faith, and the whole notion of the true, the good, and the beautiful.
2. Words have supreme value and an inescapable importance for the life of the mind and the human spirit.
3. Books have the capacity to restore what is fundamental to our continuing liberty and vitality.
4. Books contribute to our ongoing discussion of the primary themes of life and death, right and wrong, triumph and tragedy, which we all confront in being human.

# Simone Weil

“In reading as in other things I have always striven to practice obedience. There is nothing more favorable to intellectual progress, for as far as possible I only read what I am hungry for at the moment when I have an appetite for it, and then I do not read, I *eat*.”



1909-1943





# What Reading Does to the Mind

“From Erasmus in the sixteenth century to Elizabeth Eisenstein in the twentieth, almost every scholar who has grappled with the question of what reading does to one’s habits of mind has concluded that the process encourages rationality; that the sequential, propositional character of the written word fosters what Walter Ong calls the ‘analytic management of knowledge.’ To engage the written word means to follow a line of thought, which requires considerable powers of classifying, inference-making and reasoning. It means to uncover lies, confusions, and overgeneralizations, to detect abuses of logic and common sense. It also means to weigh ideas, to compare and contrast assertions, to connect one generalization to another. To accomplish



# What Reading Does to the Mind

this, one must achieve a certain distance from the words themselves, which is, in fact, encouraged by the isolated and impersonal text. That is why a good reader does not cheer an apt sentence or pause to applaud even an inspired paragraph. Analytic thought is too busy for that, and too detached.”

- Neil Postman (1931-2003), *Amusing Ourselves to Death*



# How Books Can Be Dangerous

- “Books are dangerous,” writes James Sire, “because the best of them are powerful conveyers of ideas, points of view, moral persuasion and the like.”
- Emily Dickinson wrote the following poem to substantiate this claim:

*He [her father] buys me many Books –  
but begs me not to read them –  
Because he fears they joggle the Mind.*





# Reading Directs Thinking

- This means the reader gives his mind over to the text, along with the primary meanings that begin to form.
- The mind of the reader becomes one with the text.
- The world of the text becomes the world of the reader.
- Our mental pictures draw on our own past experiences. “Beyond the literal sense and the literary meaning, the text we read acquires the projection of our own experience, the shadow, as it were, of who we are” (Alberto Manguel).
- Our minds are in tandem with the mind of the speaker of the text.



# Reading Directs Thinking

- The Bible “provides information that is not available anywhere else....Only God can provide us with an eternal perspective and speak to us with absolute and final authority” (R.C. Sproul).
- “The one book to which we need not fear to yield up our very lives is the Bible. And it is one of the great contributions of the Christian tradition to emphasize this book and to encourage its being read both intensively and extensively. If any reading ever should direct thinking, it is the reading of the Bible” (James Sire).



# Thinking Directs Reading

- This is the normal mode of studying.
- As we read, we look for the truths that are presented as well as for the errors that we detect.
- We employ the filter of God's Word and accept the ideas that cause us to think God's thoughts after Him (analogical thinking).
- We may say to ourselves, "I agree with this author," or "This mindset is totally different from mine," or "That is just false."
- The important thing is not the acquisition of knowledge, but the increase of our wisdom for living *coram Deo* (before the face of God).



# Practical Considerations



# Intermittent Windshield Wipers & Reading

It is reported that the inspiration for his invention stems from an incident on Kearns' wedding night in 1953, when an errant champagne cork shot into his left eye, leaving him legally blind in that eye. Nearly a decade later in 1963, Kearns was driving his car through a light rain, and the constant movement of the wiper blades irritated his already troubled vision. He modeled his mechanism on the human eye, which blinks every few seconds, rather than continuously.

Robert William Kearns, Inventor

1927-2005





**Mortimer Adler**  
1902-2001

## Adler on Variable-Speed Reading

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- Variable-Speed-Reading, “the aim being to read better, always better, but sometimes slower, sometimes faster.”
- Blaise Pascal said that “when we read too fast or too slowly we understand nothing” (*Pensées*).
- “The average reader reads about two hundred fifty words a minute. That is fast enough” (James Sire, *How to Read Slowly*).



# More Practical Considerations

- **Old vs. new books:** “It is a good rule, after reading a new book, never to allow yourself another new one till you have read an old one in between. If that is too much for you, you should at least read one old one to every three new ones” (C.S. Lewis).
- **Read authors you have not read before:** “In reading [G.K.] Chesterton, as in reading [George] MacDonald, I did not know what I was letting myself in for. A young man who wishes to remain a sound Atheist cannot be too careful of his reading. There are traps everywhere – ‘Bibles laid open, millions of surprises,’ as Herbert says, ‘fine nets and stratagems.’ God is, if I may say it, very unscrupulous.”



# More Practical Considerations

- **Is it a worthy book to read?** “If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly” (G.K. Chesterton).
- **Read the best books:** “Read the best books available on the topics that are most relevant to your call in life” (Sire).
- **Read secular authors:** “Therefore, in reading profane authors, the admirable light of truth displaying in them should remind us, that the human mind, however much fallen and perverted from its original integrity, is still adorned and invested with admirable gifts from its Creator” (John Calvin).

# Read As Long As You Can – Until the End

“When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments” (II Tim. 4:13).



Rembrandt van Rijn  
*The Apostle Paul*  
c. 1657