

Leadership Tips

on Signs and Wonders

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QUOTES

“But I [Jesus] tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment... but when he, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.”

John 16:7-8, 13 (NIV)

“We Westerners have a big problem with assumptions when it comes to dealing with the spirit world. The root of this problem lies in our worldview... Ours is what is called a ‘naturalistic’ worldview, in contrast with many ‘supernatural’ worldviews in the world. Our focus is on the visible, rather than the possibility that invisible beings and powers affect our lives.”

Chuck Kraft, missionary, teacher and writer

“I [Jesus] tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”

John 14:12 (NIV)

“But too often I did not see God in the fullness of his mercy and grace. I trusted him to lead me, but I did not trust him to provide for me; I had faith to receive forgiveness of sins and salvation, but I had no faith for divine healing.”

John Wimber, pastor and writer

“Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles... and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Acts 2:43, 47 (NIV)

“In the first place, the Gospels speak of Jesus’ compassion toward the suffering (Mark 1:40-42)... Second, supernatural healing served as a sign of the Kingdom of God, offering powerful validation of Jesus’ identity and message... God still uses supernatural healing today to draw people to himself through its witness to His love and power.”

Jane Rumph, researcher and writer

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8 (NIV)

INTRODUCTION TO WORLDVIEW

Worldview Functions and Universals

(Kraft, *Christianity with Power*, 1989, Vine Books, Appendix A and B)

1. Every worldview provides a structure or pattern for the way people categorize or classify their perceptions of reality.
2. A second area that all worldviews treat is...person-group. This is the way the human universe is perceived in both its internal and external relationships, so that it can be understood in the same way by all the members of a society.
3. A third area addressed by every worldview is the matter of causality...matters surrounding such questions as, What causes things? What power lies behind such causation? What forces are at work in the universe? What results do they bring about? Are these forces personal, impersonal, or both?
4. The type of focus a people will have in the area of time/event is another part of life structured by worldview. All worldviews provide guidelines for people in this area.
5. All worldviews provide people with assumptions concerning space and the material world; whether it is a matter of how to structure a building or how to arrange the space within a building...or what value a society puts on material objects. The point is a people's worldview provides the rules.

Worldview Functions

1. Explain reality
2. Evaluating and validating reality
3. Assigning and prioritizing commitments
4. Interpreting reality
5. Integrating culture within the context of reality
6. Adapting culture to new concepts of reality

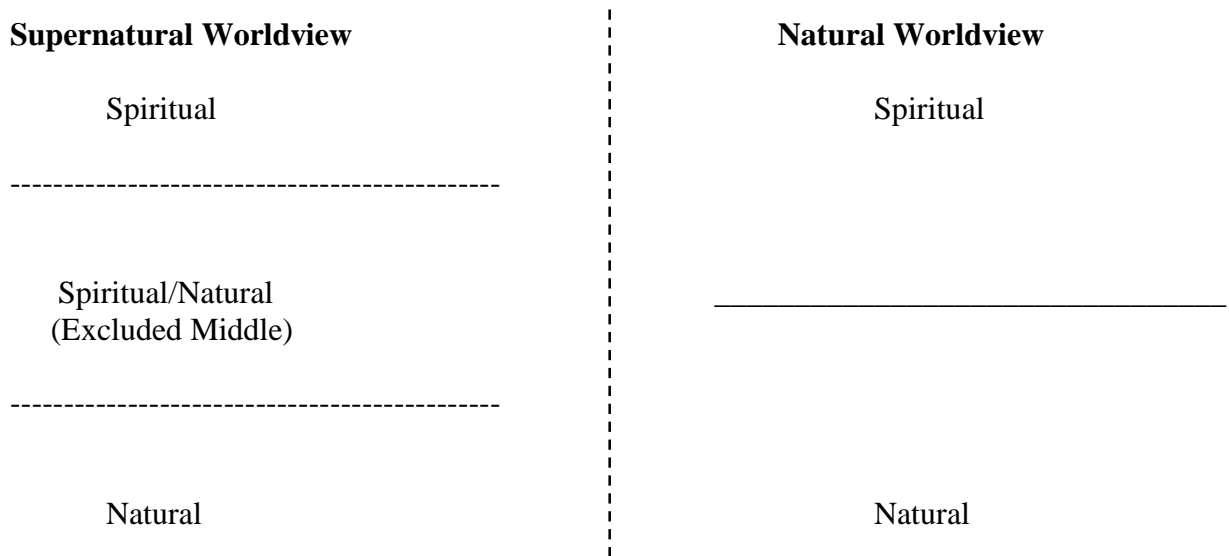
Worldview Paradigms

Biblical Societies	2/3 World Societies	Western Societies
Spirit Sphere	Spirit Sphere	Spirit/God Sphere
(God is primary focus. Spirits are lesser focus.)	(Spirits are primary focus. God is lesser focus.)	Human Sphere
Human Sphere	Human Sphere	Nature Sphere
Nature Sphere	Nature Sphere	

“We Westerners have a big problem with assumptions when it comes to dealing with the spirit world. The root of this problem lies in our worldview, since it stems from the way in which we have been taught to interpret life. Ours is what we call a ‘naturalistic’ worldview, in contrast with the many ‘supernatural’ worldviews in the world. Our focus is on the visible, rather than the possibility that invisible beings and powers affect our lives.” (p. 27)

The Excluded Middle

(Hiebert, “The Excluded Middle,” *Missiology*, January 1992)



The Evangelical Worldview

(Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, chapters 1-2)

“... it is clear that the traditional Western worldview patterns greatly affect the way evangelicals understand invisible reality. Evangelical worldviews have been formed within Western worldviews.” (p. 28-29)

A Critical Issue in Christianity Worldwide

“In our day, whether we are working cross-culturally or in our own backyard, we are increasingly confronted with a plethora of problems related to the spirit world with which evangelicals in the past have not dealt with adequately. To be relevant in twenty-first-century America, we need to grow in our understanding of the increasing challenges in this area.” (p. 20)

“... from a missiological point of view, animism is the biggest problem in worldwide Christianity. It has always been so in non-Western societies but is becoming more and more a facet in the West. This being true, in order to work effectively for Christ in today’s world it is becoming almost a prerequisite to understanding how to deal with animistic beliefs and practices. Learning what animism is and how it differs from biblical Christianity is, therefore, a necessary start.” (p. 20)

Anamism/Occultism vs. God-Given Authority

“Most animists agree...that spirits – especially evil spirits – are capricious and, therefore, dangerous. So these need to be watched and appeased. In addition, most animists believe that evil spirits can inhabit material objects and places.” (p. 21)

	Animism	God-Given Authority
Power	Power is believed to be contained in people and objects.	God conveys His power through people and objects.
Need	Animists feel the need to learn how to <i>manipulate</i> spirit power through magic or authority over Spirits.	We must <i>submit</i> to God and learn to work with Him in the exercise of power and authority from Him.
Ontology	Power is from Satan: He is the one who manipulates.	Power comes from God: He empowers and uses us.
God	God is good but distant; therefore, ignore him.	God is good and involved; therefore, relate to him.
Spirits	Spirits are fearful and can hurt us; therefore, appease them.	Evil spirits are defeated; therefore, assert God's authority over them.
People	People are victims of capricious spirits and never escape from being victims.	People are captives, but believers can assert Jesus' authority to free them.
Cost	Those who receive power from Satan suffer bondage and tragedy.	Those who work with God experience love and power to live abundant lives throughout life.
Hope	No hope.	Forgiveness, blessing, and eternal life. (p. 25)

BIBLICAL BASIS FOR SIGNS AND WONDERS

Old Testament Foundations

(Springer & Greig, *The Kingdom and the Power*, chapter 1)

- 1. God did them to show that He is God**
- 2. He did them for evangelistic purposes**
- 3. He did them out of compassion for His people**

1. God did them to show that He is God

- Staff becomes a snake – Exodus 7:8-13
- River becomes blood – Exodus 7:14-24
- Plague of frogs – Exodus 8:1-15
- Plague of gnats – Exodus 8:16-19
- Plague of flies – Exodus 8:20-32
- Plague on livestock – Exodus 9:1-7
- Plague of boils – Exodus 9:8-12
- Plague of hail – Exodus 9:13-35
- Plague of locusts – Exodus 10:1-20
- Plague of darkness – Exodus 10:21-29
- Death of firstborn sons – Exodus 11:1-12:42 (Passover)

2. He did them for evangelistic purposes

- Elijah on Mt. Carmel – I Kings 18:16-40
- Fiery furnace – Daniel 3:1-30

3. He did them out of compassion for His people

- Waters of Marah – Exodus 15:22-26
- Gideon – Judges 6:1-7:25

Examples of “The Excluded Middle”

- Testing of Job – Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7
- Resistance of Daniel’s prayer (21 days) – Daniel 10:12-14

New Testament Foundations

(Springer & Greig, *The Kingdom and the Power*, chapter 4)

- 1. They denote healing, deliverance, and spiritual gifts**
- 2. They are not restricted to the Apostles**
- 3. They are intended to encourage belief and deepen faith in Christ**
- 4. They illustrate God’s glory by demonstrating compassion and grace**
- 5. They demonstrate the coming of the Kingdom of God**

1. They denote healing, deliverance, and spiritual gifts

- “Signs and wonders” as healing and deliverance (Mark 16:17, 20; John 4:48, 54; 6:2; 9:16; 12:17-18; Acts 4:16, 22; 5:12, 15-16; 8:6-7, 13; 14:3, 8-10)
- “Signs and wonders” as miracles (Acts 2:22; 8:6-7, 13; II Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3-4)
- “Miracles” as healing and deliverance (Acts 8:6-7, 13; 19:11-12)
- “Signs, wonders, and miracles” through the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:18-19; Galatians 3:5)
- “Signs and wonders” related to spiritual gifts (Mark 16:17, 20; I Corinthians 14:22; Hebrews 2:3-4)

2. They are not restricted to the Apostles (Acts 6:8; 8:5-7, 13; 9:11-12; Hebrews 6:1-5)

3. They are intended to encourage belief and deepen faith in Christ

- Belief/faith involved in signs and wonders (Matthew 11:21; Mark 2:10; John 10:37-38; 14:11; Acts 4:29-30)
- Belief involves faith in Christ and his power (I Corinthians 2:4-5)
- Signs and wonders deepen faith (Matthew 11:5; Luke 7:16, 22; 8:39; Acts 4:20; 22:15; 26:16)

4. They illustrate God’s glory by demonstrating compassion and grace

- Witness of God’s grace and power to save sinners (Acts 3:12-13, 15-16; Romans 15:17-20)
- Proclamation in word and “deed” (Romans 15:18-19)
- Signs of forgiveness (Mark 2:1-12)

5. **They demonstrate the coming of the Kingdom of God** (Matthew 12:25-37; Mark 3:22-30; Luke 11:17-23; Acts 4:29-30)

INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION

Crucial Hermeneutical Issues

(Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, chapter 2)

1. The place of experience in the interpretation of scripture and life
2. How we handle experiential data that has no analog in scripture
3. How we apply our interpretation of scripture to our interpretation of experience
4. How we interpret the relationship between what happened long ago as presented in scripture and what happens today
5. How we handle blinding effects of Western worldviews on our understanding of the spirit world
6. Whether or not God has left us to discover at least some understanding of the spirit world through extra-biblical experience, just as He has done with understanding the material and human worlds

Beyond Conversion to Freedom

(Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, chapter 8)

“This Christianity without power has caused us to fall into a major part of Satan’s strategy. Our enemy, of course, does all he can to keep people from coming to Christ. But if he fails at this, he has a backup plan to move converts into prisoner-of-war camps. What do I mean by prisoner-of-war camps? In wartime, when soldiers are captured by the enemy, they are kept in camps that typically are walled or fenced in and surrounded with armed guards to keep prisoners from escaping. The prisoners, though they have been trained, equipped and sent out to conduct warfare, become disabled and useless. They are captives and no longer a threat to their enemy.”(p. 140-141)

1. “The first characteristic...is that we are so focused on the salvation message that we do not move on to what I believe is Jesus’ intended second step: freedom from past wounds and bondages.” (p. 141)
2. “A second characteristic of evangelicalism is the apparent lack of recognition that Jesus called us to warfare. We have been so influenced by the secular worldview around and within us that we, like non-Christians, consider the invisible spirit world fiction rather than fact.” (p. 141)
3. “A third disturbing characteristic of evangelicalism is the fact that many of us believe Satan is real but teach that all we have to do to defeat him is study Scripture and pray.” (p. 141)

“What Satan fears most, however, is not occasional conversions or the good things we do in Jesus’ name. *What he fears is that we will discover we are supposed to be an army and begin to act like it!* If we start liberating Christians from prisoner-of-war camps...the enemy would become very concerned.” (p. 142)

Deep-Level Healing (Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*, chapter 8 [also Kraft, *Deep Wounds, Deep Healing*])

“Deep-level healing is a ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit that attempts to bring healing to the roots of a person’s surface-level problems... The usual way of doing this is to ask Jesus to show the person His presence in the hurtful events so that the person can experience the fact that Jesus was there. He or she then gains the freedom that comes when problematic feelings and especially unforgiveness are given to Jesus...” (p. 145-146)

LEADERSHIP AND SPIRITUAL POWER

Biblical Spiritual Authority

(Adapted from “Influence, Power, and Authority” article by Dr. J. Robert Clinton)

“Effective leaders value spiritual authority as a primary power base.”

Types of Influence:

- Force – use of physical and/or psychological force to gain compliance
- Manipulation – use of partial information to gain compliance
- Power – use of personality, competency, position, rewards and/or punishment to gain compliance
- Persuasion – use of verbal skills to gain compliance
- Spiritual Authority – [by definition] is the right to influence conferred upon a leader by followers because of their perception of mature spirituality in that leader.

Spiritual authority is that

- characteristic of a God-anointed leader,
- developed upon an experiential base (giftedness, character, deep processing)

that enables him/her to influence followers through

- persuasion,
- force of modeling, and
- moral expertise.

Characteristics:

1. Ultimate source is through Lordship relationship with Christ
2. Power base is an experiential relationship with God
3. Primary power form is persuasion or use of word gifts
4. Ultimate goal of spiritual authority is the growth of people in coming to know Christ and learning to be his disciples
5. Evaluation of spiritual authority is the quality of character in the leader and the long term results of growth and spiritual maturity in his/her followers
6. Submission to God in spiritual authority is non-defensive. The leader does not use force, manipulation, or natural power to influence people.

Process:

1. Discovery of personality as a basis of influence
2. Discovery of other forms of influence (i.e. force, manipulation, persuasion)
3. Discovery of competency as a base of influence
4. Discarding of force/manipulation as basis of influenced and experimentation with other forms of influence
5. Use of personality, competency, position power to influence
6. Use of persuasion and competency power as primary base to influence (beginning to understand that effective ministry comes out of a “being” relationship with God)
7. Discarding of power base and discovery of spiritual authority as primary influence base
8. Use of spiritual authority as primary influence base along with appropriate use of power base and persuasion to accomplish God’s purpose for the people entrusted to the leader

Observations:

1. Spiritual authority is the major power base of servant leadership
2. Other power bases and persuasion needs to be based in mature spiritual authority
3. Leaders must develop mature followers who will grow in their sensitivity and submission to spiritual authority
4. Leaders who do not develop mature followers will find they have to use less ideal forms of influence
5. Spiritual authority can be abused if leader is not maturing and accountable to Christ and other mature believers
6. God uses deep processing (isolation, brokenness, etc.) to mature spiritual authority
7. Giftedness and/or anointing alone will not produce mature spiritual authority. Intimacy and integrity are foundational for the establishment of maturing spiritual authority for the long term

Misuse of Spiritual Power

(Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity*)

“One of the reasons many evangelicals turn away from the exercise of spiritual power is the widespread appearance that such power is being misused...” (p. 83)

“We who claim to work in the gifts of the Spirit are accountable to work in the fruits of the Spirit as well. And the first fruit of the Spirit is love.” (p. 84)

- *Power position* – “when we minister to others, we are in a power position. Whether we like it or not, what we say to a person (or to many persons)...comes with the authority of God. It is important, therefore, to watch our words and our attitudes lest we hurt the powerless one(s) we are seeking to help.” (p. 84-85)
- *Blaming the victim* – “a major problem of many who believe that the magic of faith makes people well is the tendency to blame the person who is not healed... That person, they assume, lacks the right amount of faith.” (p. 88)
- *Insecurity problem* – “because of our fears of inadequacy, we may try to promote ourselves at the expense of others. We become more competitive and, therefore, more intent on looking for ways to assert ourselves and to put others down.” (p. 89)
- *Legalism* – “a major problem of many Christian leaders is legalism – the attempt to make and keep people spiritual by making rules and regulations they must keep...when the personal or spiritual power of Christian leadership is misused as a way of enforcing legalistic belief and behavior, people are brought into captivity by the very ones who are charged by God to set the captives free.” (p. 90, 93)
- *Prophecy* – “the occurrence of inaccurate prophecies is so frequent that it makes one suspicious of the whole prophecy movement.” (p. 94)

- *Apostolic movement* – “I observe that lots of people are calling themselves apostles these days. And there are reports of serious abuses of that status...as always, when such people misuse power, it is the ‘little people’ around them that become hurt.” (p. 95)
- *Control* – “Christian leadership is often used, whether consciously or unconsciously, to control others. And the more spiritual power that is claimed, the greater the temptation to make use of that power to control.” (p. 96)

Abusive Leaders (Ken Blue, *Healing Spiritual Abuse*, 1993, IVP, chapter 8 – “Healed by Grace”, based on Matthew 23)

1. “Abusive leaders base their spiritual authority on their position or office rather than on their service to the group. Their style of leadership is authoritarian.
2. Leaders in abusive churches often say one thing but do another. Their words and deeds do not match.
3. They manipulate people by making them feel guilty for not measuring up spiritually. They lay heavy religious loads on people and make no effort to lift those loads. You know you are in an abusive church if the load just keeps on getting heavier.
4. Abusive leaders are preoccupied with looking good. They labor to keep up appearance. They stifle any criticism that puts them in bad light.
5. They seek honorific titles and special privileges that elevate them above the group. They promote a class system with themselves at the top.
6. Their communication is not straight. Their speech becomes especially vague and confusing when they are defending themselves.
7. They major on minor issues to the neglect of the truly important ones. They are conscientious about religious details but neglect God’s larger agendas.” (p. 134-135)

GUIDELINES AND DISCERNMENT

Tests of Authentic Healing Ministries

(Schwartz, *Faith or Fraud? Healing in the Name of God*, 1993, Zondervan)

1. Faith healing must not be based on financial support.
2. Healers are not substitutes for trained medical professionals.
3. God heals where, when, and how he chooses.
4. Legitimate faith healers make no guarantees, do not imply they will be successful, or otherwise raise false hopes.
5. Legitimate faith healers are comfortable with you using your own internal spiritual resources, relying upon your own relationship with God as well as the relationship you have within the community of believers.
6. Be wary of the healer who seems more concerned with putting on a show for the faithful than with helping you.
7. Be wary of traveling healers who come to town, seem to heal a few people in a dramatic service, then go on to the next community.
8. Be wary of the sincere individual who makes outrageous claims of personal power. The most legitimate faith healers are also the most humble of human beings.
9. Finally, be wary of the healer who does not also encourage you to pursue all [legitimate] paths available to you. (p. 190-193)

Sources of Discernment

(K. Neill Foster, *Sorting Out the Supernatural*, 2002, Christian Publications, Appendix 1)

1. *The Word of God* – “The Bible, rightly and clearly understood, will solve all kinds of discernment difficulties. It is unfailingly discerning, and no one who neglects the Word of God can be discerning.” (p. 322)
2. *The Holy Spirit* – “It is His clear goal to lead Christians into ‘all truth’ (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit is in the business of giving wisdom and discernment to Christians.” (p. 322)
3. *The church* – “The children of God need each other, and they obtain discernment from one another. The writer of the proverb put it this way, ‘In multitude of counselors there is safety.’ (Proverbs 24:6, KJV)” (p. 322-323)
4. *The discerning of spirits* – “It is the gift, the charisma that enables one to discern *spirits* (I Corinthians 12:10).” (p. 323)
5. *Experience* – “ ‘But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil’ (Hebrews 5:14). Discernment comes with time, trial and error, age, and experience.” (p. 323)
6. *Patience* – “The Scriptures are full of exhortations in favor of patience. ‘It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be *hasty* and miss the way. (Proverbs 19:2, emphasis added)” (p. 324)
7. *Full surrender* – “There is a very real sense in which abandonment to God provides a large measure of discernment, so much so that, I venture to say, abandonment of oneself to God, to the will of God, to the Word of God will certainly produce discernment [Romans 12:1-2].” (p. 324)
8. *Godly discipline* – “Devotion to Jesus Christ is logically followed by appropriate disciplines. Not surprisingly, discipline sharpens spiritual discernment and insight.” (p. 325)
9. *Observing the enemy* – “... sometimes we become truly discerning when we detect the activity of Satan [in the Scriptures]...” (p. 325)
10. *Christ* – “Christ is the secret of all discernment. His indwelling presence is the key to understanding, wisdom, insight and discernment.” (p. 326)

SIGNS AND WONDERS RESOURCES

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