



Christian Education Initiative

NO.5

Monthly Newsletter

JULY/AUGUST
2025



No more Shallow End, Dive Deep Into this Worthwhile Read:

This summer, CEI has put together a longer and far deeper collection of writings. We are diving beneath the surface and asking: What does a Biblical worldview really mean in practice? Is pain pointless, or can it refine our calling? From personal identity to cultural influence, we're unpacking the ideas that form the foundation. We explore how truth equips us, even when it's countercultural. We reflect on the shifting tides of modern education—and what Biblical clarity can restore. We consider rest not as luxury, but as sacred instruction. And above all, we invite you to wrestle, reflect, and re-center your faith in every corner of life.

Summary:

- Who is your God?
- Is there Purpose in Our Pain?
- Education: Where We Succeed, Where We Fail
- What do we mean by Biblical Worldview?
- Summit VI Reminder

Add to your calendar:

Summit VI:

Friday, September 26th

8:30AM-5PM

Saturday, September 27th

8:30AM-5PM

Who is your God?

By Mark Shepard

Last fall I took a worldview test sponsored by one of CEI's members. One of the questions addressed income equality and whether that is something God requires of a society. The correct response according to the test is that God does not require income equality, even though God encourages Christians to be generous toward those in need. The test position presents a distinction that is often misunderstood and to many may even seem contradictory. How can efforts toward bringing income equality not be in line with Christian generosity toward those in need?

Jesus taught people where to find joy, peace, contentment, etc., He fed thousands, and He healed many, however He never promoted a societal goal of individual equality in any material sense. That does not mean we should not work for better living standards for our fellow man, whether he be a neighbor or a person on the other side of the globe. A key aspect of this discussion is how we work to help others in need. Christian principles are not instructions to attain a certain earthly wealth, but rather they are principles on how to live a contented and wholesome life. Ultimately, how we live points to who is our god because the ideas we follow and what or who we trust identifies our god.

Being generous to those in need is wonderful and is, by definition, voluntary. Taking personal property from anyone else is stealing, even if you want to give it to a great cause or needy person or family. Stealing violates God's law (Exodus 20:13), so if we embrace stealing, we put something above God and display a lack of trust that God will provide for our needs as Jesus affirmed in Luke 12:6-7.

This presents the core problem with entitlement and wealth redistribution programs, including education vouchers, which have been growing in popularity across our nation, especially in more conservative-leaning states. If it is okay to steal for single-payer (state) education, then it is okay to steal for single-payer (state) healthcare. The case against it becomes purely about human preference. It seems that even those who claim to be God-fearing, limited-government, free-market conservatives are embracing wealth redistribution (using government force to take one person's property and give to another) as the solution for training up children.

Can a government steal? Does all property rightly belong to the government? Who rightly owns the fruit of a person's labor? That person or someone else? Are we still a nation that allows one man to own the fruit of another man's labor, as was the case before emancipation? Is that the kind of society we want to build and type of thinking we want to instill in our children?

These are important questions, especially for Christians, who embrace a moral code that among other things embraces personal property ownership.

Who is your God? Continued

Clearly there cannot be stealing without ownership. Even Jesus made clear that the state, Caesar, did not own all (Matt 22:21).

While entitlements come from and encourage coveting and a slave-system mindset that provides a right to the fruit of another person's labor or property, an even bigger problem is state-entitlements elevate the state over God. Thus, entitlements not only violate the Eighth (stealing) and Tenth (coveting) Commandments, but also the First Commandment (Exodus 20:3-17) and both Greatest Commandments (Matt 22:37-40).

Creating a new entitlement, which education vouchers most certainly do, once again raises the state, with its ungodly ways, above God as the object of our trust for providing our needs. In addition, the source of the widespread embracement of fraudulent ideas is masked. The lack of healthy thinking in our nation is not simply a lack of money issue.

Nothing is free, someone is paying. Financial help through voluntary donations is wonderful and demonstrates our responsibility to care for those in need; however, care is still needed to not foster entitlement-thinking or build unhealthy or unstable dependencies. Parents who embrace a mindset of entitlement to another person's property will pass that belief, like all other lived out beliefs, on to their children. Our nation is plagued with generational enslavement from parents embracing a right to another person's property. Like all other lived-out beliefs, entitlement-thinking and its enslaving consequences naturally flow to the next generation.

In our quest for a renewed appreciation for liberty, we must understand that a liberty-mindset, which is a mindset that embraces the realities of God's created design, order and ways and understands God as our provider and protector, will never be achieved from an entitlement-based education.

Is There Purpose in Our Pain?

By Gary House

Recent natural disasters, such as Hurricane Helene last fall and the recent flooding in Texas, have captured the attention and captivated the hearts of most Americans. While the extent of the physical damage has been staggering, even more devastating is the loss of lives. Whereas the initial reaction of most people to these catastrophes is one of sorrow for those who are impacted, seldom do individuals reflect on the real possibility that it can happen to them. It is always something that happens to others somewhere else. It is not uncommon, therefore, to lack preparedness or fail to equip ourselves to deal with any type of tragedy that we might encounter. We avoid the thought of it and resist allowing our minds to go there.

But since we live in a broken world, we must recognize that at some point in our lives we will face a sudden event that brings about tremendous loss or destruction. When tragedy strikes, what do we do? How will we react? Will we feel it was undeserved, that we are entitled to something better? Will we become bitter, and blame or even reject God? Will we ask “why” did this happen to me? Or, will we say, “why not”, since calamity is to be expected in our fallen world. In fact, a prominent theme in scripture is that we will face difficult trials, and even suffering, as a result. So, when tragedy becomes reality, what are we going to do?

Our son was twenty-five when he unexpectedly went to Heaven. Never would we have dreamed that we would lose a child. We were instantly thrust into what many believe is the worst thing that could ever happen. At that moment my wife and I became “bereaved parents” with no idea how to navigate this new and unwanted identity. We were shattered, numb, in disbelief, and confused. We wondered how we could go on and what we were now supposed to do for the rest of our lives.

I would like to share some of the life-changing lessons that we have learned and wish that we had fully known before we experienced the devastation of child loss. They are certainly applicable to any type of tragedy.

One of the most prevalent apologetic questions that causes people to doubt the existence of God is: “Why does a loving God allow pain and suffering?” This question presents a major obstacle worldwide to people acknowledging God and becoming Christians. For parents who have lost a child, the question is, “Why did a loving God allow my child to die?” If you believe that God is omnipotent, then you know that His power is unlimited, He has complete authority, and He can do anything. He could have intervened at the moment of death and saved our loved ones. He is the only One who has the power to do that. Why didn’t He? God could have done something different with our son’s story or that of the families of Helene, the Texas flood, or any other tragedy one has experienced. So why didn’t He?

We wrestled with this question for a very long time and finally came to a conclusion. We don’t know! And we simply aren’t going to know. We don’t know why God didn’t intervene in our son’s last battle to keep him here. No amount of questioning, no amount of detective work will ever give a definitive answer. We decided that we had a choice to make. We could continue asking the question for the rest of our lives, or we could place our trust in the Lord. “Trust the Lord” may sound like a trite saying when grieving the death of someone you love. What exactly does that mean? When we speak of “trusting the Lord,” there are several things that we mean. These are truths that we can trust and know for sure.

First, we can trust that the depth of God’s love for us is beyond our imagination. When we lose someone dear to us, we tend to think that no one loves them more than we do. That is not true, however.

God loves them more than we can even comprehend. He created them and they belong to Him. That should mean a lot to us, to know that God loves them with a depth that is beyond our imagination. If we truly understand this concept, it can be life changing. He loves us that way too. The ultimate evidence is Jesus' death on the cross. After losing our son, when we brought our sorrow to Him in lament, when we delved into the Bible with a new perspective, and when we truly trusted Him, we began to understand the depth of love that our Heavenly Father has for us.

Second, we can trust that God's intention toward us is always good. If you study the Bible to understand the character of God, you'll see that His intentions toward us are always, only, good. I encourage you to take time to study the attributes of God so you can really understand His character.

Third, we can trust that even though we don't know "why", and our prayers may not be answered the way we want them to be; He hears us, and He cares about our grief. He wants us to continue to cry out to Him and He wants to comfort us in our affliction.

Fourth, we can trust that He will hold us through the grief and pain and never leave us. We wrongly think that if we have enough faith, bad things will not happen to us. God's promise is not that nothing bad will happen to us, but that when it does, He will carry us. He doesn't always remove our suffering or difficulties, but He takes us through them. He doesn't always take away our pain, He gives us strength to make it through the pain. He lets the storms come, but He gives us peace amidst the storm. We live in a broken world, and until Jesus returns and makes it all new, there will be suffering. But He will hold you. As Corrie ten Boom said, "there is no pit so deep that He is not deeper still".

While we knew there were numerous scriptures about suffering, until we experienced the devastation of child loss, we had no idea how prominent the theme of suffering was in the Bible. Suffering is not easy; it is a difficult process. It's not something we usually ask for or would ever wish upon others. Suffering is hard, but as I heard someone say recently, "hard is hard – that doesn't mean it's always bad". When we face suffering, we really have a choice, we can reject God and blame Him for our suffering, or we can trust Him and let Him do something in us that otherwise might not be accomplished without this level of pain. Our focus should not be on the bad things that are happening to us, but on how we are going to respond to those difficulties.

Let's explore what can happen to us because of the suffering that we experience.

First, suffering can draw us into intimacy with God that can only be known through hardship. As much as we may strive to know God in the good times, it's just not the same as when we are at the end of ourselves, falling on our faces in agony, and crying out to the Lord. These are the times when we are the most honest with God. These are the times that we grow in intimacy with Him.

Second, suffering can deepen our trust in God. We sense His presence through the trial, and we experience His comfort. I can look back over the last nine years and see how God has held me, has comforted me, and has been there in every moment of my life. We can find peace and even have joy, fulfillment, and purpose amidst pain and grief.

Third, suffering produces character. Romans 5:3–5 states,

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Fourth, suffering can help us focus on eternity, not on earth. Many of our priorities change.

Paul says in Philippians 3:18–21,

For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Fifth, suffering can produce spiritual growth and maturity. James 1:2–4 says,

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

After listing the fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) Paul instructs in Galatians 5:24 that “those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires”. Suffering helps us learn how to “walk by the Spirit” (vs. 25).

Sixth, suffering can deepen our strength and resilience. God gives us the strength to walk through fiery trials, and He is right there with us. Facing things that would have seemed unimaginable before we suffered, we now know that we are not alone, and we have more courage to trust the Lord as we encounter additional suffering.

Seventh, suffering can fill our hearts with compassion. We begin to recognize the suffering of others in a different way than before, and we respond with compassion.

2 Corinthians 1:3–4 says,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

The pain and suffering that comes from life's tragedies changes us. Pain and suffering, and the grief that follows, usually come at a time we do not expect. We are caught off guard and not prepared for it. It will ambush us and disrupt our lives. It has a way of changing us more than any other experience that we might encounter. It makes us better people.

When suffering comes your way, cry out to the Lord. Share your pain, complaints, and struggles, asking Him for help, expressing your trust in Him even amidst your circumstances, and giving Him praise. This is the essence of lament. God invites us to lament, and He meets us there.

When tragedy becomes part of your life's story, you can find purpose in your pain.

Education: Where We Succeed, Where We Fail

By Dan Smithwick, Nehemiah Institute

Jesus said, "And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:32 Pilate retorted, What is truth? (John 18:38) Postmodernists say there is no such thing as objective truth. Some note that postmodernism was credentialed in the 1980s when the first university-level course was offered by that name at University of North Carolina, Charlotte chiefly using works of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida.

Since then education has been a train wreck rolling across America. It seems as though the Church has been standing on the sidelines watching this wreck go by, cursing the darkness, but not providing a strategy to win the worldview war being waged in America's schools.

But today we have to say, the Humanists have won; the Marxists are implementing their game plan for a new society by capturing K–16 schooling. However, most evangelicals seem to be saying, "No worry, the right Sheriff is back in town, all will be well soon."

Frankly, I find all of this extremely troubling. Have we forgotten the 10th Amendment? Do we not understand the biblically-based flow of government? The place for true course correction is not the White House, but our house.

It is in the family where the biblical principle of education must be recovered, Education: The transfer of Truth from one generation to the next.

This is the theme of CEI's Summit-VI, Advancing Christ's Kingdom Through Biblical Worldview.

I highly recommend you attend CEI's 6th Summit to hear today's experts address how to prepare the next generation for restoring America's Judeo-Christian worldview and culture via right education.

CEI Motto – “Biblical Worldview”

The Christian Education Initiative's Motto is:

“Advancing Christ's Kingdom Through Biblical Worldview Education”

For a few months our Executive Director, Kevin Clauson, has been dissecting CEI's motto, as stated above. In this installment, we will look at the meaning of “Biblical Worldview.”

Why does CEI explicitly use the term “biblical” to modify worldview? In our mission statement we use the term “biblical” to describe the type of worldview education we advocate and work for. (Note: We will not deal with worldview in this installment. Suffice to say that everyone has a worldview; it depends on what type.)

Most organizations and institutions which talk about worldview use the term “Christian” to describe worldview. That is not necessarily wrong, and it may seem that our distinction is just semantics. But there is good reason to use the term “biblical” instead of “Christian”. Shouldn't they mean the same thing? Yes, they should.

Much evidence suggests that many organizations and institutions do not base worldview specifics or applications on biblical principles, but rather on worldly principles wrapped in Christian language or even selective Bible verses. They either don't know what a truly Christian Worldview is or their view of Christianity has become so diluted that their worldview statements are really based on “tradition” or some new philosophical fads. That is what happens when Christian worldview sprinkles out-of-context, isolated words or phrases from the Bible (or a tradition supposedly based on such a term), such as “justice”, “love”, “kind”, et al.

Biblical worldview means that the starting point is Scripture, in context, and comprehensive. That in turn means looking at what the Bible says on a subject in all of Scripture text, in context, and letting Scripture interpret Scripture. When all of the biblical data on a subject is put together, we arrive at precepts or principles that make up a worldview that is genuinely Christian and which then can be applied to real world issues.

A quick example might help. (This is not an exhaustive analysis.) The issue of immigration and illegal aliens is very large today. Many evangelicals and liberals go only as far as Old Testament commands to treat the “stranger” kindly, through which they arrive at the conclusion that any type of immigration should be freely allowed by nation-states, with no restrictions, and/or that those who immigrate outside the legal processes should not be subsequently removed. This type of approach ignores the biblical issue of national boundaries, the rule of law, the role of governments with regard to “illegals”, and much more. Sprinkling non-contextual and non-comprehensive Bible verses (or words) on a subject does not necessarily make the conclusion “Christian” and certainly not “biblical”.

There is of course much more homework to be done on any topic or issue, and especially the specific issues which require biblically-based analysis. Some have done this, or at least started, already. But our epistemology starts with God’s Word (all of it) and we owe Him the service of interpreting it rightly and applying it to human problems.

Summit VI – Why Should I Participate?

By Marlene McMillan

The question at hand is not just, “Why should I attend?”, but, “Why should I participate?”. Your presence will make the event richer for all of us.

Everyone claims to have the most unique event, but this is not a canned, predictable Road Show. This is a custom designed Summit with a one-of-a-kind slate of speakers and some of the most interesting people you could ever put together in one place.

This is NOT a gathering of people-pleasing, go-along-to-get-along folks, but the leaders who have paid a high-price to stand for Truth, not compromise, and get out a message that takes courage since it is frequently not politically correct. These are experts in their fields: radio personalities, authors, professors, thinkers as well as doers, well-read, well-informed and courageous.

Speakers include Alex Newman expert of global education issues; Alex McFarland radio personality, author, and apologist; Dr. Anthony George pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA who is starting a Christian School; Law Professor Jeff Tuomala on the separation of School and state; Canadian Professor Dr. Scott Masson on how to incorporate a Biblical worldview into your subject; Dr. Cal Beisner expert on economics and global warming; Dr. Max Lyons master teacher trainer; and others on the schedule.

There will be presentations about the current trends in education from people who are not waiting for others but have gone out and built new models and tackled new challenges. There will be panels that will feature some new names and faces who have expertise of special interest to our attendees.

You should make plans now to join us in Lynchburg, VA September 26 & 27, 2025. Yes, it is time to make reservations and get plans finalized. More than a speaker's marathon with a bunch of booths, this is an opportunity to network up close and personal with people of like mind and expertise.

Your networking opportunities start on Friday morning and Saturday with chances to talk to the speakers and other attendees. You'll walk away not just informed—but equipped. Every session is designed to challenge assumptions, sharpen convictions, and spark lasting connections. Whether you're a seasoned educator or a parent stepping boldly into this space, your voice matters here. The Summit isn't just an event—it's a catalytic moment for those committed to restoring truth in education.

Summit VI Invitation Reminder

IF YOU HAVE NOT YET, REGISTER FOR CEI'S ANNUAL SUMMIT!

CEI's Summit VI will take place on September 26–27 in Lynchburg, Virginia. At the Summit you will be able to network with other individuals and organizations of like mind and hear from various speakers who will present important information on various topics related to our theme, "Advancing Christ's Kingdom Through Biblical Worldview Education."

Please note that the registration fee is \$75 per person OR \$125 per married couple (Children 6–17 are FREE). You can find more details and/or register by searching the link found below!

Register
Today!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
INITIATIVE PRESENTS

Summit VI

ADVANCING CHRIST'S KINGDOM THROUGH
BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW EDUCATION

WHEN

Friday, September 26th
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WHERE

Legacy Wealth
Management Building,
1971 English Tavern Rd.,
Lynchburg, Virginia.