

# THE QUESTIONS POST-MODERNS ASK

by David Lee Burris

## POSTMODERNISM

Postmodernism is a theory that questions grand narratives and objective truth. Instead, it focuses on how truth emerges through contextual and subjective circumstances.

### KEY THEORISTS

- 1 Michel Foucault
- 2 Jean Baudrillard
- 3 Gilles Deleuze
- 4 Jacques Derrida
- 5 Emmanuel Lévinas
- 6 Jean-François Lyotard

### KEY THEMES

- 1 Deconstructionism
- 2 Questioning regimes of truth
- 3 Social construction of reality
- 4 Power as productive
- 5 Dismantling fixed identities
- 6 Intertextuality

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I find it amusing when  
your demand  
for complete  
tolerance  
collides with  
your intolerance of  
differing opinions.



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## Problem of Authority in the Post-Modern World

Post-modernism was initially labeled as *deconstruction* which is more descriptive and which for purposes of analysis is the best term. Norman Geisler on this topic:

Deconstruction is a form of hermeneutics, of interpreting a text. As such it can be distinguished from other interpretive approaches. (It does not destroy but reconstructs meaning.) It is not negation that dismantles a text, but a criticism that remodels it. It stands against fixed rules of analysis...

- 1) Deconstruction embraces *conventionalism*. All meaning is relative to a culture and situation. There is no meaning prior to language.
- 2) Deconstruction accepts *perspectivalism*. All truth is conditioned by one's perspective.
- 3) Deconstruction holds a form of *referentialism*. There is no perfect reference or one-to-one correspondence between words & the meanings they confer. Meaning, therefore is ultimately untransferrable between writer and reader. We constantly change the context through which we view symbols. The context is limited. We cannot know from an infinite perspective.
- 4) Deconstruction is *differentialism*. All rational structures leave something out. The reader approaches the text with suspicion, looking for the "difference," the unknown something that is not there.

MODERNIST	POST-MODERNIST
Evangelism As Argument	Evangelism As Conversation
Win/Lose	Win/Win
Sales & Conquest	Friendship
Pressure To Make A Decision	Patience As One Considers The Gospel
Trying To Convert Someone	Joining Someone's Spiritual Journey
Punctiliar Conversion	Salvation As A Process



## Crucial Questions Post-modernists Ask

### Why do we even need God now that we have modern science?

Modern science can tell us the whats of life, but they cannot tell us whys. Science was never intended to answer metaphysical questions. There are realms beyond the scope of what science is designed to consider. Science cannot do everything. It can make life last a little longer, but science cannot stop death. Science can tell us what our universe is like, but it cannot determine what power holds it together. Many of the questions God asked Job still remain unanswered. It is often man's arrogance, not his knowledge, that causes him to ask such a thing. Scientists may analyze, but they cannot fulfill the hunger in man to adore that which is greater than himself. Man is incurably religious, and science can't fill the restlessness within us. The hunger of the soul is universal in time and culture; such hunger cannot so easily be dismissed by those who have worship at the altar of science. That man-made altar is insufficient to fill the greater needs of man.



## **Who says there is such a thing as “truth” anyway?**

People in all societies throughout the centuries have believed in truth. This is why there are laws on the books against perjury and bearing false witness. This is why men from every era have despised injustice and hypocrisy. Someone who finds out that he has been deceived suddenly has a new appreciation for the truth. Few people go to the doctor with a serious disease in order to remain uninformed; they do not want to be told that no one knows what disease they have. No, they want the truth. They realize that their physical life can only be sustained if they treat the true problem. Theoretically, people like to say there's no such thing as truth; but they will take this pessimism back in real life. In life they want the truth. What we must do is show the contradictions between the postmodern mindset and everyday real life. The fact is, a postmodern world is a fantasy.

If you are a Christian, a postmodernist might say to you, **“Hey, since you choose a Christian lifestyle, why can I not choose the lifestyle that is right for me?”**

Everyone has the right to choose whatever lifestyle he pleases, but everyone must understand that there are consequences to his choices. A long time ago, a younger son chose to live an ungodly life in a country of his choosing. He discovered that life without the stable foundations of home and faith could be bitter, empty and lonely. It is a shame that many people have to discover that lesson for themselves. Solomon said to the young men of his time: Rejoice, young man, during childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things. So, remove vexation from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are both fleeting (Ecclesiastes 11:9-10). God gave His laws for our good (Deuteronomy 6:24; 10:13). He has never wanted anything but what is best for us. God gave His laws to us to bless us and to protect us from evil. It is a basic misunderstanding of God to resent the laws He has given.

## How can you say that Jesus is the ONLY way to God?

Today if you tell many people “God loves you,” they are likely to respond, “Which God are you talking about?” Most people love and respect someone who does not believe in Jesus Christ. Many cannot imagine their nonbelieving loved ones being lost. Rather than face the painful reality of their spiritually lost condition, many prefer to revert to some form of universalism – believing everyone is saved. For them, God surely will not send anyone to hell. Again, comes the crunch. The Bible teaches that those who don’t believe in Jesus as the Christ are lost (Mark 16:16; John 3:18; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). The faithful Christian must make a choice either to place his trust in the teachings of Christ or his own thinking. It is, after all, Jesus who said He was the only way to heaven. Christians believe that, because we believe Jesus. It is confidence in the person Jesus that leads to confidence in the words of Jesus.

## How can I believe in a God I cannot see?

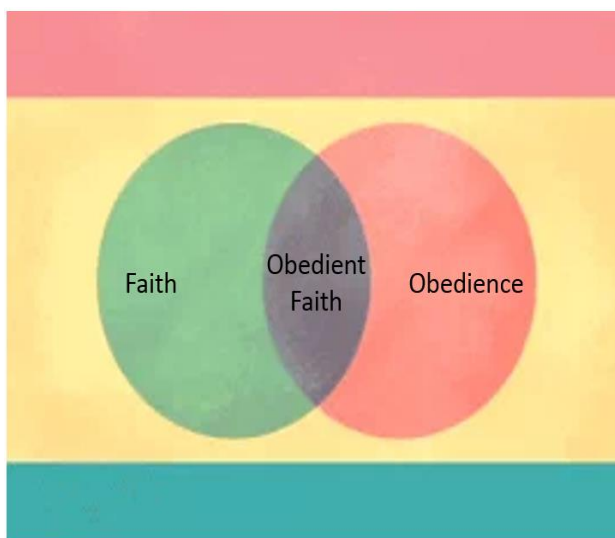
**As limited human beings we sometimes need to ask ourselves if we have seen everything. How much do we really know? You might ask, “What percent of all knowledge do you possess?” Perhaps he will say, “Less than one percent.” **Then ask, “Is it possible that the knowledge of God lies outside of your limited knowledge?”** A true postmodernist can never say he knows God is just a myth. A postmodernist cannot know anything. He may think he knows. If truth is not absolute, he can never make any final statement about anything. Whatever he says, he must take it back. The postmodern mindset is the highest form of agnosticism.**

Sanders, Phil. *Adrift: Postmodernism in the Church*. Gospel Advocate Company. Kindle Edition.

## AT THE NEXUS OF GRACE & GLORY

# Five Steps For Saving:

- HEARING:
- Romans 10: 17; Matthew 7: 24 - 27
- BELIEVING:
- Hebrews 11: 6; Mark 16: 15, 16
- REPENTING:
- Acts 2: 38; 17: 30; Luke 13: 3
- CONFESSING:
- Matthew 10: 32, 33; Acts 8: 36, 37
- BAPTISM:
- Romans 6: 3 – 5; Acts 8: 36 – 38



*O That Will Be Glory*

2. *Wh* O that will be glory for me, e grace,

*I an* Glory for me, glory for me; ce,

*When by His grace I shall look on His face, e*

*That will be glory, be glory for me. me.*

