

# Visual Valet

Personal assistant for  
Christian thinkers and  
teachers



"Best after third reading"

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**T** TRANSFORMING  
TEACHERS

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It is hard to find students – or teachers – who have been instructed on how to develop as a Christian thinker. The subject is incomprehensibly large because it involves everything in creation as well as the infinite Creator. Busy teachers and maturing students need something to help them get started. The Visual Valet is just such a personal assistant. Though it may not be sophisticated enough for philosophers and educational theoreticians, it will assist you in becoming a distinctively Christian thinker and teacher. Like a Swiss army knife, it may be incomplete and unsuitable for large projects, but extremely valuable for many daily tasks.

The Visual Valet is a reminder that God has been and always will be involved with His universe and in individual lives. It also provides a framework for organizing what God says about Himself and His creation, allowing fragments of Biblical knowledge to relate to each other and interact with other concepts. This common framework allows people to share their insights and collaborate effectively. It is also a guide for making the connections that are central to Biblical integration. Because it is suggestive rather than prescriptive, it is possible for people of different interests and abilities to profitably use the same model. Most importantly, the Visual Valet is simple enough that it can be taught to students so they can learn to relate all of life and learning to God and His Word—the mark of a Christian thinker.

## Visual Valet



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As a diagram, the Visual Valet is less "forgettable." It is also expandable, as everything is not specified. Being simple and concise encourages its involvement in ordinary thinking rather than only special prepared occasions.

Individuals will develop their own specific techniques as they begin to think Biblically. However, an assistant can help to get started. Once a foundation is in place, it will be possible to evaluate resources that will enhance and further develop distinctively Christian patterns of thought.

Christian young people are taught how to have devotions, study the Bible, and lead worship. All too often, however, they are left to figure out for themselves how these "religious" activities relate to what they study in school. Many, consciously or unconsciously, assume that there is no connection. Learning how to relate everything in life and learning to God and His Word does not happen automatically. Modeling is critical, but many teachers feel that they do not know how to apply Biblical integration in their classes even though they feel that they should. Without help, it is all too easy to perpetuate the kind of teaching learned from many of our teachers who left God out of the classroom. Fortunately, every believer has the Holy Spirit as an indwelling teacher, and He has promised to finish the task of making us like Jesus in our thinking and every other way.

*And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)*

*...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)*

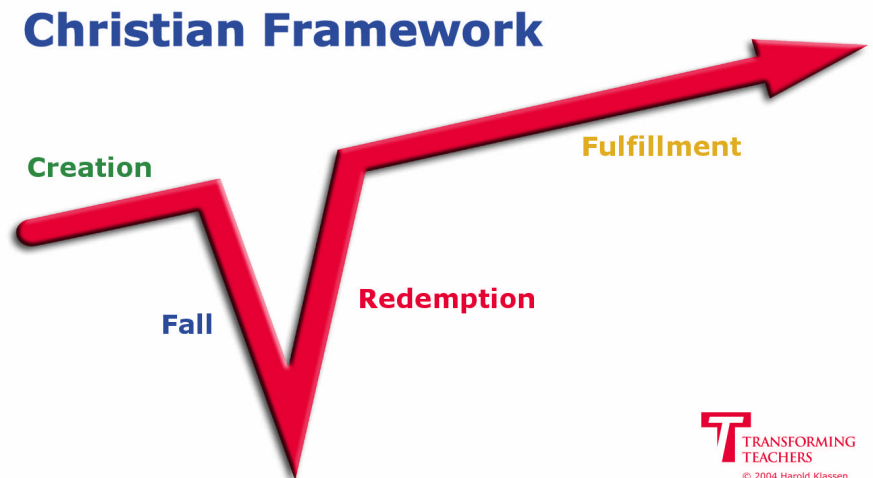
## Right Foundation—Christian Framework

The natural inclination, when trying to integrate the Bible with other subjects taught in school, is to add the Bible to the subject. However, Biblical integration lies in the opposite direction. The subjects being taught need to find their place in the "big picture" of what God has done and is doing in His creation. Without a clear framework to understand the "big picture", it is difficult to relate any thing to it and impossible to clearly communicate the relationships to anyone else.

A collection of "spiritual gems" in our minds may be so haphazardly arranged that they are rarely applied personally, shared with someone

else, or perceived as valuable. Without organization, it is difficult to "be ready to answer" anyone who asks questions (1 Peter 3:15).

Christian thinking rests on four great cornerstones summarized by the Visual Valet: Creation, The Fall, Redemption, and Fulfillment. The Christian framework or Biblical worldview illustrated by this diagram can include all God has revealed about what He has done, is doing, and will do in the universe, as well as His work in each individual's life. The diagram of God's activity is a modification of diagrams in DeVern Fromke's [\*The Ultimate Intention\*](#) (1964, p. 73). Because all we know of God can be related to this simple framework, we can keep expanding our knowledge and understanding for the rest of our lives—through all eternity.



## Creation

The Bible begins by telling us that God made everything and He made it good.

*God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.  
(Genesis 1:31)*

The New Testament underlines that anything visible or invisible is the result of Christ's purposeful creation.

*For from him and through him and to him are all things....  
(Romans 11:36)  
For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on*

*earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. (Colossians 1:16)*

He is directly involved in everything we study. All things have a beginning and a direction. Because He made everything "for" Himself, everything has meaning and value to Him. Although we may not yet understand His purpose, the conviction that all things are more than the result of random meaningless processes, over incomprehensible periods of time, gives purpose and direction to teaching and learning.

We do know that one of His purposes in creation was to reveal Himself and His nature. Paul assures us that *"since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made" since "God has made it plain" (Romans 1:19-20)*. Even without words His creation fulfills His purpose of revealing Him in all His glory.

*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. (Psalm 19:1-4)*

Since everything is *"through Him"* (Romans 11:36) and *"in Him all things hold together"* (Colossians 1:17), Christ is not only involved with the origin of everything, He is also intimately involved with everything's current state. If He were not continuously sustaining *"all things by His powerful word"* (Hebrews 1:3), all of creation would cease to exist. The material universe does not have an existence independent from God any more than the worlds of our dreams have existence independent of the dreamer. God continually "daydreams" all of created reality, so He is at all times involved with all things.

Although we commonly subdivide reality into the natural and the supernatural, it is much more appropriate to speak of the Creator and creation. In this way, we can avoid classifying angels and demons with God in the supernatural. Instead of separating all of the "supernatural" from the natural world of non-living objects, living creatures, and people, we must see the Creator as having priority over any and all of creation which is totally dependent on Him.

Without this God-centered perspective, the value of studying any subject depends entirely on what an individual and/or society deems interesting

or useful. Without a common agreement, teaching and learning becomes a very individualistic affair with no basis for evaluation of any kind.

## **Fall**

An appreciation of creation with an understanding of the Fall is the only way to make sense of both the nobility and cruelty of people, the beauty and the squalor, the harmony and the conflict. The profound consequences of man's deliberate rejection of God's purposes and his attempt to be independent of his Creator cannot be ignored. Everything is no longer good as it was when God created it. Pretending it is still good inevitably leads to disappointment and the loss of all standards of goodness. If the world as we know it is good, then who wants goodness? On the other hand, a one-sided focus on all that is wrong with creation can quickly and logically lead to total despair.

The nature of some things has been changed, including people's hearts, human bodies, and plants.

*As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one. Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Romans 3:10-18)*

*To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children." (Genesis 3:16)*

*To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." (Genesis 3:17-19)*

The Fall also brought the misuse and misunderstanding of all things. Because God's presence and purposes in creation have been rejected, people are not able to understand what He has made.

*For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. (Romans 1:21)*

Instead of everything glorifying God by fulfilling its God-given purpose in dependence on Him, independent spirits chose to use creation for their own purposes. When misused, things fail and conflict. The harmony and beauty of the universe has been lost because of sin, and now all of creation "groans" because of its unnatural state.

*We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. (Romans 8:22)*

Not only has our personal relationship to God been severed, but our relationship with the spirit world, the inanimate universe, the animate world, others and even ourselves has been corrupted, although not totally destroyed.

Nothing is as it was, and as fallen creatures we have neither the desire nor the power to do anything about our hopeless condition. We are going "our own way" (Isaiah 53:6) and that continually leads us further and further from God's ways and purposes.

## **Redemption**

The good news is that God has continually been involved with His fallen creation to bring it back to Himself. He is not "*willing that any should perish*" (2 Peter 3:9) and has therefore been active since the Garden of Eden in drawing people back to Himself.

*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:44)*

The entire Bible testifies to the reality of God seeking fallen people, rather than people seeking God. He has done everything to demonstrate the futility of our chosen way. His love and patience, as well as His holiness and justice, have all been graphically portrayed in the lives of real historical people as they interacted with the Redeemer who seeks to bring His Creation back to Himself.

God used all kinds of methods to communicate with fallen people including dreams and prophets, but the form of communication He preserved for us is His written word, the Bible. All that God did to make it possible for sinful people to once again enter into His holy presence culminated in Jesus Christ.

*In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.*

*Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 1:1-2, 10:19-22)*

Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension confirm the love of the Father as well as His complete provision for our restoration to Himself and His purposes for our lives.

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 3:16, 14:6)*

He came to free us from the bondage of sin so that we could do God's will and from the blindness of sin so we could once again see God in His creation and in His Son.

*The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. (Romans 8:7-9)*

*But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.*

*But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. (2 Corinthians 3:14, 16)*

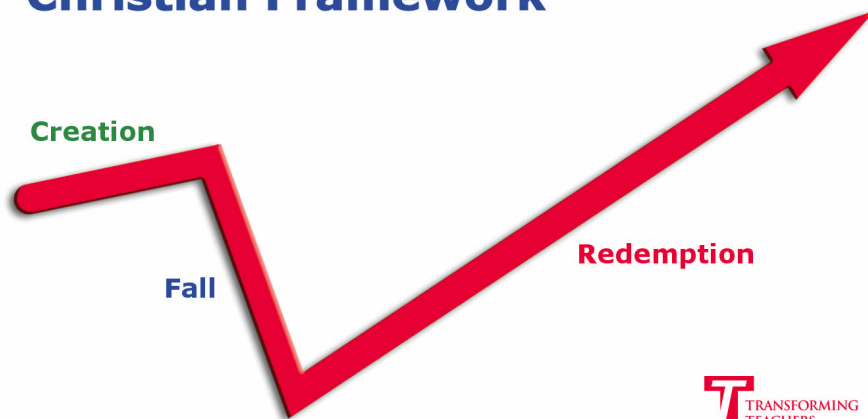
*"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19)*

*Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:9)*

## Fulfillment

Although some discussions of a Biblical worldview mention all four elements of our framework, others mention only three. Those that do not mention fulfillment usually include the basic ideas within redemption and creation. Discussing fulfillment separately, however, has the distinct advantage of clearly addressing what happens after a person becomes a Christian.

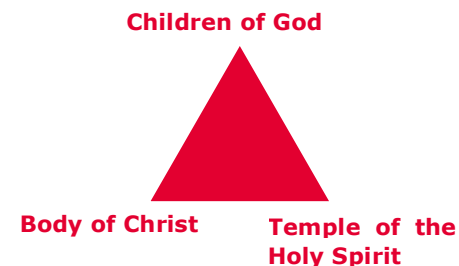
## Christian Framework



There is a danger in not considering what God's intentions are for His children after He has dealt with the problem of sin. Without considering what God wants, it is easy to fall into a man-centered way of thinking in which solving man's sin problem is God's only role in the universe. In fact, sin can seem inevitable instead of an unwelcome intruder, because God's grace and mercy would have no expression without it. By focusing on God's eternal intentions, which began before creation and continues through eternity, it is easier to avoid a man-centered perspective and develop a God-centered perspective. Thus fulfillment is included as a separate element of our framework, with the arrow reminding the user that the process continues throughout eternity.

Three pictures, each related to a person of the Trinity, help us to remember some key truths about God's intentions and what He wants us to fulfill.

Father—children  
Christ—body  
Holy Spirit—temple



The Bible teaches that God the Father made us to be His children, living in intimate relationship with Him. He placed us in a universe created and sustained by Him. Every element therein was to be a reminder of Himself, including people who are made in His image.

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)*

We not only live within a great "museum" filled with countless artifacts of God's past handiwork, but also in a busy "workshop" where He is continually active. He is not a distant, unknowable God. On the contrary, He desires to meet us every day in the midst of His creation, just as He did in the beginning.

*Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. (Genesis 3:8)*

As the Body of Christ we are to be used by Him to accomplish His purposes. We use our bodies to do what we need to do. In like manner, the Body of Christ is what He uses to do His will. The New Testament speaks repeatedly about the individual's relationship to others in the body and each one's unique contribution to the whole.

*Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. (Romans 12:4-6)*

*The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is*

*with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

*Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.*

*The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (1 Cor. 12:12-27)*

His purposes include ministry within the body, but also ministry to those who are not yet part of the body.

Being a temple reminds us that worship is central to our created nature. Even if we refuse to worship God, we cannot stop worshipping. So we begin worshipping something in creation instead of the Creator.

*They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen. (Romans 1:25)*

His plan is for us to be wholly dedicated to Him, to worship Him in all we do, and to be a visible presence of God wherever we are in order to draw others to worship Him as well.

*In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)*

The indwelling Holy Spirit also reminds us that we are totally dependent on God to accomplish any of His purposes. It is His life and power that enables us to think, live and teach in a distinctively Christ-like way. Without His work in our lives we have neither the desire nor the power to do God's will.

*For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. (Philippians 2:13)*

Scripture repeatedly reminds us that everyone and everything was made to reveal God, to be used by Him, and to worship Him. It really is all about Him, not about us or any other part of His creation. These purposes of God are eternal, but we are to begin deliberately fulfilling these purposes as soon as we become new creations in Christ.

*And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (2 Corinthians 5:15-17)*

However, without an eternal perspective, none of what we experience here makes any sense.

*If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.*

*If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." (1 Corinthians 15:19, 32)*

The Visual Valet can assist anyone in organizing and communicating the essential elements of the Christian faith. Even the youngest student can learn that God made everything, that sin wrecks everything, that Jesus fixes everything, and that God uses everything. Biblical scholars can also use the Visual Valet to develop their understanding, and ours, of each aspect of the framework. Every sermon, every Bible class, and all the personal time spent in reading, studying, memorizing and meditating on God's Word should develop our understanding of what God is doing.

**God made everything  
Sin wrecks everything  
Jesus fixes everything  
God uses everything.**

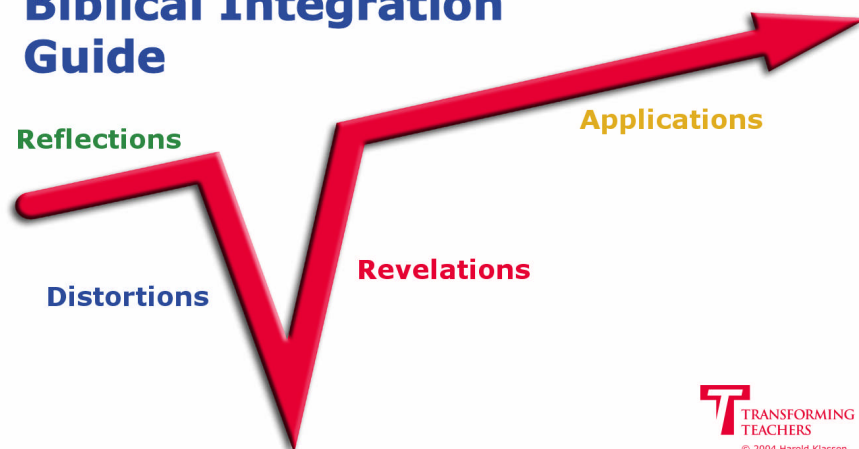


But research (George Barna, [Teenagers' Beliefs Moving Farther from Biblical Perspectives](#), Oct. 23, 2000) and observation of Christians—starting with ourselves—confirm that our understanding and practice of God's truth is very limited compared to the knowledge we have accumulated. At least part of the problem is a perceived detachment of Biblical truth from almost everything that is not Biblical.

## Right Connections—Biblical Integration Guide

To move toward Christ-centered living and learning, Christians must begin to recognize the connections between what the Bible has to say and everything else that we are, know, and do. Because most Christians have little experience bringing together the Biblical and non-Biblical, it is very helpful to have something like the Visual Valet to not only remind us of Biblical truth, but also to suggest where we should look for connections. The connections between non-Biblical material and the Bible are suggested by four different words that are related to the Visual Valet: reflections, distortions, revelations, and applications.

### Biblical Integration Guide



Biblical integration is not about finding the "right verse" or "the only" Christian way to deal with every class and every subject. It is about fitting everything we know and teach into the very BIG picture of what God is doing. It is about expressing God-given uniqueness and creativity while being the teachers He has called each one of us to be.

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the*

*Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)*

## Reflections

The study of non-Biblical material should reveal reflections of God. Because everything and everyone was created to reveal something of God and His glory, we need to continually look for ways in which what we are studying or doing helps us understand God better. Science does not interpret Scripture. However, through science, it is possible to understand more of some aspects of God's nature and activity. For instance, God's power is clearly seen in the world of the sciences, while His relational nature is seen in the social sciences, His order in mathematics, His gift of communication in languages and literature, and His creativity in the arts.

"Research on a phenomenon known as inattentional blindness suggests that unless we pay close attention, we can miss even the most conspicuous events" (Siri Carpenter, [Monitor on Psychology](#), Volume 32, No. 4 April 2001). People may not see the reflections of God in a subject because their training, experience, and convictions direct their attention to someone or something else. However, by studying the context in which the subject is first introduced in the Bible and other passages, they will begin to discover some of what God wanted to say through the material they are studying. The Bible does not contain everything that God wants to say, but it does give direction to the study of God's creation. Their study will have new meaning and direction as they begin to see more and more of God in it—and we have His promise that if we seek Him, we will find Him.

*There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or eat or smell. But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deuteronomy 4:28-29)*

## Distortions

Most people can see the more obvious distortions of God's good creation, like murder, rape, terrorism, pollution, sickness, war, and child abuse. Though they may not acknowledge sin as the source of such distortions, they do accept their existence. However, there are many more subtle distortions that are not so quickly identified. Good things are misused for

selfish, personal ends instead of God's glory. Parts of the truth are treated as the whole truth (Mark Eckel (2001). *Classroom strategies for Biblical integration: an ACSI one-day enabler*. Colorado Springs, CO:ACSI, p. 14) and 'inconvenient' parts of the truth are ignored. Some part of the creation is expected to accomplish what only God can do. People are often completely unaware of these distortions until the Bible reveals to them that their natural response or perception is indeed wrong. Without a word from God, they assume that their sin-blighted power of perception and understanding gives them an accurate picture of themselves and the world around them. If a person is not careful he can be trapped into living as if these distortions were part of God's plan rather than an expression of man's sinful tendencies.

The Visual Valet is a reminder that distortions are to be expected in everything because of the Fall. Distortions of man-centered, rather than God-centered presuppositions will produce problems in the methodology and conclusions of non-Christian researchers. But every Christian needs to humbly realize that his own conclusions will also be distorted by a sinful heart. That problem has to take precedence over the correction of other people's problems.

*"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (Matthew 7:3-5)*

## Revelations

What we know of God's activity isn't based on our hunches or feelings, but on what He has revealed in the Bible. From the beginning God has communicated with people because He wants us to know Him and His ways. However, because He is so much greater than we are, even though we've been made in His image, we are dependent on His self-revelation. Without it we could never figure out even part of what He is doing. We will never know everything about Him or even understand all that the Bible says, but we do have an objective standard, something that we share and to which we are accountable. We are not dependent on unverifiable convictions, because the Bible always takes precedence over what we think we've discovered in the world, in ourselves, in our relationships with others, and even our relationship with God. It is

important, therefore, that we begin by looking at what God reveals in the Bible.

Often it is only when the Bible says something contrary to the way a person has normally considered things, that he realizes his thinking and behavior need correction. Therefore, the idea of distortions and revelations fit closely together. God does not leave His children without hope by only identifying problems. He is also interested in transforming them from sinful patterns of life to godly ones.

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16)*

We are not left to our own inadequate devices to determine what is a reflection of God, and what is a distortion. He has clearly revealed Himself in the Bible. He has taken the initiative to give us insight into all aspects of His creation through the Bible. We are able to test everything, to determine what is good and what is not on the basis of what the Bible says, and then to hold on to the good.

*Test everything. Hold on to the good. (1 Thessalonians 5:21)*

People are looking for the answer to sin's distortions in places where it cannot be found. All sorts of solutions are suggested to change environmental factors, to change personal behavior, build a better society, rid the world of pollution, etc., but the correction of sin's distortions is never found in man's efforts. The ultimate solution is a change of the wicked heart of man, which can only be achieved by God Himself. Solutions, which restrain evil, are valuable. Those in authority have a responsibility to implement them, even though they cannot change a person's heart. God told Eli that He would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons made themselves contemptible, and he failed to restrain them.

*For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons made themselves contemptible, and he failed to restrain them. (1 Samuel 3:13)*

However, solutions also need to recognize the very real presence of personal evil, as well as Satan's destructive influence. When we recognize the limitations of external corrections, we can avoid the problem that Paul discussed:

*Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"?*



*These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence. (Colossians 2:20-23)*

The Visual Valet is a reminder that the distortions of sin can be corrected by what God has done in Christ. Man is not seeking God, but God is continually seeking to bring people to Himself. No one can say that sin is irresistible because Jesus lived in a sinful world, yet was without sin.

*For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)*

He has paid the penalty of sin through His death, He has broken the power of sin through His resurrection, and He will deliver His Body from the presence of sin when He returns from heaven to which He has ascended. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were not able to make perfect those who drew near to worship.

*The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Hebrews 10:1)*

In the same way, no political, social, or religious system can take the place of the "one sacrifice" by which He, Christ, "has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (Hebrews 10:14). Part of God's redemptive work is to reveal ultimate answers to the very real problems that we see all around us.

This knowledge of the right way is always intended to change who a person is and ultimately how he behaves. Unless a person is ready to obediently repent of his own way and do things God's way, he will never really be able to understand God. Knowledge and understanding are tied to obedience.

*Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: "I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand." (Isaiah 1:2-3)*

## **Applications**

The Visual Valet is not just theoretical, but also suggests applications for all we learn, so everything will fulfill God's ultimate intention that people live in loving relationship with Him. The motivations and directions of every life need to be impacted by what the Bible has to say. "Why do I have to learn this?" should not be answered with pragmatic, personal-enrichment arguments. Rather, answer with a sense that everything is both motivated by the love of Christ and an expression of that love. Any lesser motivation is not worthy of a child of God (1 John 3:10), an ambassador of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20), a brother of the Son of Man (Hebrews 2:11). The only source of this divine love is the indwelling Holy Spirit, so everyone needs to be constantly sensitive to His direction. In fact, "expressions" could also summarize how God's intention is fulfilled as His love is expressed in all relationships.

The three Biblical descriptions of the Christian's relationship to God are helpful reminders of some of the applications.

**Christians are the children of God.** No area of research into God's creation should be rejected, because every area reveals something of Him. We all need to be reminded to seek ways to enrich our relationship to our heavenly Father by becoming more familiar with His handiwork. Just as paintings, sculptures, handwork, writings, meals, and construction all reveal something of the artist or artisan, so God's works reveal Him. But His desire is not that His children know about Him, but that they know Him intimately. All truth should produce greater intimacy with the heavenly Father.

**Christians are the Body of Christ.** The individual Christian obeys Christ, is united with other Christians in diversity, and lovingly serves unbelievers. God's purpose in Christ is that He have a glorious body made up of all the redeemed. This body is made up of individuals who have been gifted by the Holy Spirit with different ministry motivations, ministry roles, and ministry results. Christian education is preparing them for a life of service directed by the head of the body, Jesus Christ Himself. Christians are not being prepared to do things for God, but Christ is joining them together so that He can accomplish His purposes in the world.

The body of Christ, like any body, is how Christ expresses Himself and accomplishes His objectives. The members of the body must function together for the body to be healthy and able to do what the head demands. The purpose of the care and feeding of the body is not just to maintain its existence, but to allow the head to direct it and use it. A

body on life-support systems which maintain its life but are unable to restore its usefulness is recognized by everyone as unnatural. Christ's body needs to grow and develop, be fed and cared for, so He can accomplish His purposes among those who are not part of the body.

**Christians are the temple of the Holy Spirit**, both individually and collectively. Fulfillment of God's purposes always involves a response of thankfulness, praise and worship. Since the Creator is always greater than any of His creation, our study of anything expands our ability to appreciate His greatness, our smallness, and the wonder of His gracious love for us.

Each of the pictures that God uses to describe the Christian's relationship to Him and others will both limit sinful tendencies and fire sanctified imaginations so that Christians learn to live life not as divine puppets or rational robots, but as maturing members of God's family, the delight of His heart.

Since everything was created to bring glory to God, the study of anything in creation should provide glimpses of God. Wherever they look, believers should expect to find reflections of Him. These will add to their appreciation of God whose Word they study. However, because of the fall, both the creation they study and their own understanding of it have been distorted by sin. The Bible identifies these distortions, and the indwelling Holy Spirit uses the Word to convince people of their sin, God's righteousness and His coming judgment.

*When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment (John 16:8)*

The Bible also reveals how believers can avoid a self-centered and unbalanced misuse of creation as the Holy Spirit guides and teaches them.

*But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.  
But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. (John 14:26, 16:13-15)*

He also provides them with the power to practice the truth.

Although even the unregenerate man can see reflections of God's glory and overwhelming evidence of the unnatural presence of death and evil in the universe, the Bible is the only record of God's provision of redemption. The solutions to the world's problems do not lie in education or in government, but in spiritual rebirth. However, it is not just a relationship to a powerful Creator that God wants to restore. God the Father desires to have a dynamic, intimate relationship with each of His children. Jesus Christ desires to act in this world through His body and the Holy Spirit indwells each believer to make them individually and collectively a temple of worship.

## Right Questions—Big Question Guide

If teachers are being transformed by their understanding of God and His purposes, they will have a transforming impact on their students. As they look at what they teach from the radically different perspective revealed in the Bible, their excitement about the meaning and purpose of "common" things will be contagious. Their thankful spirit will stand in stark contrast to the selfishness that is so rampant. Their humility and love will bring life and hope into situations of darkness and despair—even if they are not allowed to quote the Bible or use Christian vocabulary. In fact, even in Christian environments, too many Bible verses may produce a negative rather than a positive response.

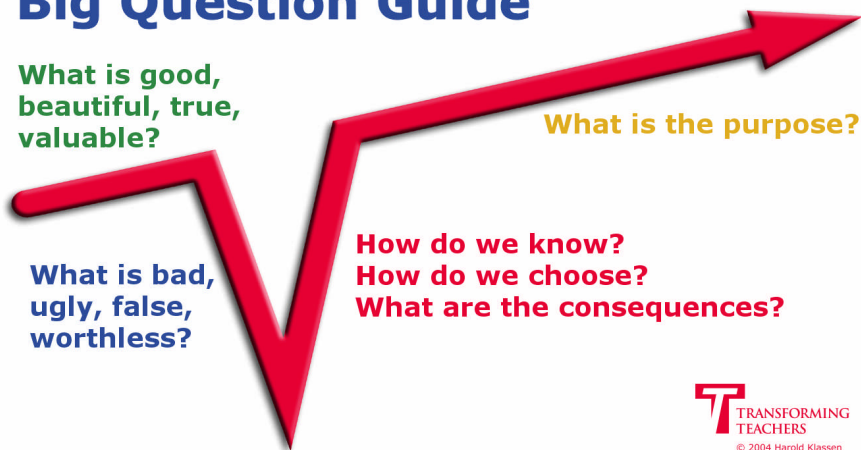
Everyone made in God's image has been given the opportunity and responsibility to personally decide the foundation upon which they will build their life. Change is never easy and usually takes longer than anyone would like. Patience and creativity are required of teachers who want to make a difference in the lives of their students.

The Visual Valet can assist a teacher to equip students to make informed personal decisions about the key questions of life, as well as introduce truth where it may not yet be wanted.

Jesus' practice, particularly in a hostile environment, was to ask penetrating questions. Teachers may not be able to explicitly share all or any of their own Christian thinking—their Christian framework or the connections they've discovered between what they're teaching and what God is doing—but they can ask critical questions. Post-modern thinking may reject the reality of absolute truth, but it is often able to do so because of sloppy thinking rather than careful analysis. By forcing students to consider inconsistencies and the consequences of the thinking of the media, authors, historical figures, and themselves, the Holy Spirit will have something He can use in their life and they will be without excuse (Romans 1:20). Change may not come immediately, but part of

the foundation for Christian thinking will have been established. Even if it is rejected, the student may, like Paul, find it hard "...to kick against the goads (Acts 26:14).

## Big Question Guide



Everyone has some idea of what is good, beautiful, true and valuable as well as what is bad, ugly, false and worthless. These are closely related to what a person thinks about the purpose of life and the universe. But we must also consider how we make the right choices – and why we so often make wrong choices – as well as the consequences of the choices. By focusing on teaching materials and learning to analyze what they reveal about these “Big Questions”, students will have many opportunities to consider their own thinking. Teachers will not consciously or unconsciously “brainwash” students by unwisely using their position of authority or their relationship with the students. Students will be encouraged to take responsibility for their choices and will have a basic tool to evaluate the bewildering variety of new input, which they will continually encounter. Sooner or later, the students will ask their teachers about their personal answers and such honest questions can receive open answers in the classroom or in private conversation.

## So How Can the Visual Valet Assist You?

- **The Visual Valet can remind you to implement Biblical integration.**

Good intentions are not enough when it comes to practicing Christian thinking; it must be done to make a difference. The most thorough model that is unused is less valuable than one that is simple, but actually put into practice.

God’s intention is not that people should simply know more about Him and become proud, or that they understand more of Him and become more accountable. Rather, He intends that knowledge and understanding lead to wisdom, where truth transforms a life from the inside out. God wants us all to think like Christians so that our teaching will be distinctively Christian in nature and not just in name. Any other response to His truth would be foolishness, not wisdom. Wisely choosing His way will produce disciples who will be able to teach others also.

- **The Visual Valet can help you organize all God says about Himself and His creation.**

Elements of Biblical knowledge should be related to each other and connected to other concepts. However, the framework is expandable, so it does not need to be abandoned as you study further.

A common framework will allow different individuals to share their insights and collaborate effectively. Education based on Christian presuppositions runs contrary to society’s patterns of thinking and even to the experience of most Christians. Making the change from non-Christian education to distinctly Christian education will require teachers to work together to make a difference in their schools and classrooms. Either in accountability groups or as an entire faculty, you can help others by sharing this simple and concise visual outline.

- **The Visual Valet can guide you in making the connections that are central to Biblically integrated Christian thinking.**

Because it is suggestive rather than prescriptive, it is possible for people of different interests and abilities to profitably use the same model. It can be adapted and developed in as many ways as God gives insight, but there is a constant check with the BIG picture of God’s activity. Details can always be analyzed separately, but the four major themes of a Biblical worldview will keep the imagination sanctified and obedient to Christ.

*We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5)*

- **The Visual Valet can help you develop critically important thinking skills in your students.**

You can encourage them to consider challenging perspectives that are different from the suffocating, godless mould of the world's thinking.

*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)*

Most importantly, the Visual Valet can be taught to students so that they can learn to think like Christians. Biblical integration is not merely an exercise for academics pursuing advanced studies, but it is an essential part of every thinking Christian's life. If each generation is to be transformed by the renewing of their mind, it is vitally important that they be taught from the earliest age to connect God's special revelation of Himself in Christ as recorded in the Bible with everything else in His creation.

- **The Visual Valet can help you become a distinctively Christian thinker and teacher.**

It is simple enough to be understood by young children and open-ended enough to be used by sophisticated scholars. May it be like a Swiss-army knife, a practical tool enabling you to make progress in the great project of becoming a Christian thinker and teaching your students to be Christian thinkers as well. May God transform us as teachers to He can use us in the process of transforming our students, and may they be used to transform their world for Him—transformed teachers transforming the transformers.

*For further information, please contact the author at [hklassen@transformingteachers.org](mailto:hklassen@transformingteachers.org) or see the Resources on [www.transformingteachers.org](http://www.transformingteachers.org)*

Born in Vancouver, Canada, Harold Klassen has a broad educational background. He earned a Bachelor of Religious Education from [Canadian Bible College](#) in 1970, followed by a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Physics and teaching certification from [Simon Fraser University](#) in 1975. In 2003, Harold earned a Masters of Science in Education from [Philadelphia Bible University](#).



After teaching two years in a public school in Canada, Harold joined the staff of [Black Forest Academy](#), a school for missionaries' children in Germany. He taught chemistry, physics, math, Bible, and computer science during his years in the classroom from 1977 to 1998. He was also the High School Principal for six years, the school's librarian for seven years, and responsible for operations for a year.

Harold was the Business Manager for the German branch of [Janz Team](#) from 1998 to 2000. Since then, he has served as Assistant to the International Director of Janz Team while taking a leadership role in staff development. In addition, he has taught seminars to equip teachers in Romania, Poland, China, Malaysia, Canada, and Germany.

Harold's background played an integral role in shaping his vision for Christian education. As a student in a public university, he found that the pedagogy he was learning wasn't congruent with his personal understanding of the nature of man. He resolved to uncover God's purposes and principles for Christian teachers.

While at Black Forest Academy, Harold delved into the philosophy of distinctively Christian education and began to implement those principles in the classroom. His passion for the subject led him to develop a theoretical framework, which he began to share with other educators who keenly felt the need for God-centered teaching.

Today, Harold continues to assist teachers around the world as they use their classrooms to shape the thinking of new generations of students. His mission is to equip them to teach their students that all of life and learning is related to Christ and the Bible. Harold pursues this goal through speaking and writing, and you'll find much of his materials available on this website. It is the culmination of several decades of personal study, experience, and a genuine passion for distinctively Christian thinking and teaching.

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