

Hey, are you a fox—or a hedgehog? We covered that topic a number of episodes back, but we're revisiting it to get more pointed and direct about our opportunity for great fruitfulness for God. So, let's expand our treatment of the fox and hedgehog—first, by re-examining what it actually means...what its origin is...and then by looking at how God's actions opened up something truly important to believers' everyday lives.

Now you know that a hedgehog is an animal kinda like a porcupine. And, of course, we all know what a fox is. And long ago, the Greek poet Archilochus wrote a brief lyric: "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." Then, much, much later, the 20th century British philosopher and thinker Isaiah Berlin grabbed ahold of the hedgehog vs. fox idea and made it what it is today: a speculative question about what the reality is or should be for leaders...and also just for ordinary people. Should we focus on knowing one big thing—supposedly like a hedgehog—or know many things...like a fox? Berlin himself would analyze famous folks like Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy and political theoretician Karl Marx and identify such folks as either a hedgehog or a fox. More about that in a minute.

So, I'm going to revisit a key position on that quickly here...then talk about how we can and should apply it. Here's the reality: when it comes to the way we each view the most important questions of life, *everyone is a hedgehog*, even if their one big *mistaken* idea is that they individually, personally are the center of the universe! And we've all kinda been there sometime or another, right?

But seriously, *everyone* has a governing set of beliefs, even if it's very self-centered. Hitler believed in a grand destiny of a German "Third Reich" that would rule for a thousand years—yep, he was a hedgehog whose vision would dramatically disrupt a whole continent and cost countless lives. And that type of outcome seems to have been one of Isaiah Berlin's concerns: those devilish hedgehogs who create social theories that catch on can be really dangerous for many—yeah, like Marx's political theories have been.

'Course, some atheist hedgehogs believe in a sort of aimless happenstance of creation with no guiding purpose. And that holds ultimate consequences for them and those they influence. And, of course, religions and philosophies of most every stripe have popped up over the centuries. All those observations to state this conclusion: *these multiple hedgehog views are in clear conflict with one another—and only one can be truly true*. And even when some folks say that other people's diverse views are just fine with them, they are still very likely to reconsider that when a cannibal approaches their house for dinner!

The real question is this: what is the hedgehog view that's *truly supported by both current and eternal realities*? Well, that's what the Bible reveals to all who would seek after the God revealed in nature (Romans 1) and would seek the whole counsel of the Word of God. But I must remind you that professing Christians *themselves* hold hedgehog views that are in conflict with one another—just look at the different views they truly hold dearest and how different the fruits that are yielded in their very different lives!

One of my favorite illustrations of this is the phrase used by many politically focused Christians who presumptively say they hold a "Biblical worldview." If you haven't peeled the banana on that phrase before, here's what it really means to say: I hold political opinions that other Christians can't legitimately disagree with because I am claiming my opinions are *God's preeminent worldview*. The trouble with that is, Christians with diametrically opposed opinions each claim *they* are the ones with "Biblical worldview."

But here's the thing. There's a very practical Bible passage that brings great clarity to all this—and it's both straightforward and yet elegantly profound. Paul was instructing the Corinthians when he wrote this: "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." That's 1 Corinthians 2:2 in the ESV. And that's the greatest hedgehog-reveal ever made by anyone short of Jesus Himself—that's because it encompasses the vital facets of the Bible story...from everlasting to everlasting.

Because you're a serious Christian, you know that our eternal joy and the ultimate destiny of all humanity hang on that. In short, the correct *hedgehog* belief in Christ rightly rules in hierarchy above and over every "fox thing" that people believe. But here's a very interesting thing to ponder: Paul was extraordinary as a fox, too. Paul fearlessly spoke to the philosophers at Mars Hill...after all, he spent many years living in the

city of Tarsus, thought by some as second only to Athens in the extent and quality of philosophical debate. And Paul didn't just know Christ, Paul knew the Law of Moses in and out...and he knew Jewish tradition...and Jewish learning...and the Roman empire experience...and human sin...and human conflict...and trials...and teaching...and, yes, tentmaking! But all of Paul's foxlike knowledge was held in conjunction with *and subordinated to* his most important hedgehog choice of Christ and Him crucified!

Here's the key point for us: when Christians' venerate—yeah, their spiritual “skin”—well, when that “skin” is cut open, what does the bleeding that results reveal? Is the ruling idea that Christ was a great teacher? ...Or that Jesus hung out with deplorables? ...Or that Jesus was a great philosopher? Of course, all these things are true in certain measure...but, again, just what is *really* ruling for these folks, in their minds, their hearts, their actions, their hope, their faith? Is it Christ and Him crucified...or something far lesser in scope? Yes, for Paul, it did all center on Christ the King and Him crucified...the sacrificial King leading the Kingdom of God this very day...and forevermore! Before the Cross, Jesus was not yet fully Messiah...because His sacrifice on the Cross was needed for the remission of our sins and our eternal fellowship with a holy God!

Here's the thing. Every truly born-again believer has been transferred to the Kingdom of God (Colossians 1:13) and is now an ambassador for Christ! This means the Kingdom is already here in the midst of believers...but Jesus's Kingdom is not yet fully consummated until He returns. That's the phrase many theologians use to describe the Kingdom—*already but not yet*. So, our privilege is to be Kingdom-minded ambassadors in *all* that we say and do. Here's Paul writing to the Corinthians (1:17, 19-24): “...Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ...Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” You see, Christ and the Cross is *the hedgehog foundation*...and the rest of enduring fox-level knowledge is subsumed into that hedgehog!

This is legit, timeless *Kingdom-talk*—the very highest *hedgehog-talk*—yes, the power of the Cross unto salvation for eternity for every person who will call upon the name of the Lord! That's the reason Jesus calls all of us as His disciples to fulfill the Great Commission—to make and thus help eternally impact new disciples. We must never forget that the *greatest loving of our neighbors* is manifested through sharing the gospel with others. Yes, we will love our neighbors to the fullest when we fulfill God's Great Commission assigned to us disciples as our great privilege. Anything less is, well—*much, much less!*

Hey, have you ever heard the piercing criticism of Christians that goes like this: *he's so heavenly-minded that he's no earthly good*...? But how about the opposite seemingly so prevalent: *being so earthly-minded that you're no heavenly good*...? But, still, those are false choices...because we're appointed to help foster people's relationships with God *both* here and now *and* forevermore—yeah, not neglecting either one! Yes, *Kingdom-minded* is all-encompassing—we are simultaneously earthly-focused and heavenly-minded! The gospel truly encompasses each person's fully-reconciled relationship with God *both now and forever!*

And all that is incorporated in this statement by Paul: *I know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified*. Absent building on the foundation of Christ on the Cross, all earthly-focus will be burned up (1 Corinthians 3:9-16). And without Christ's atoning sacrifice on the Cross, eternal life is an unbreachable chasm away!

So, yes, our hedgehog choice of Christ and Him crucified is foundational...definitive...crucial! And all the fox-knowledge in the world will come to nothing *eternally* without this hedgehog foundation. *But* lots of fox-knowledge *that is subordinated to that hedgehog* can yield precious results! So, in the Way of Jesus, we can forge the best that God intends: disciples so Kingdom-minded so as to help worthily manifest God's full measure of both heavenly impact and earthly good! *Now that's crazy good!*

A&A: Application & Action

1. For best results, you should work this “Application and Action” question fully before moving to the next one. So, in reality, are you truly working to be a fox...or a hedgehog? If not a hedgehog, why not? If you are a hedgehog, is it *I know nothing except Christ and Him crucified*? Why or why not? Be specific.

2. How is your hedgehog choice manifested in your everyday life as to witness and impact on believers? ...And on unbelievers? Say, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being best, how Kingdom-minded is your life and impact? Discuss.

3. How about your church or denomination? In all candor, what is the hedgehog idea held most dear by your chosen spiritual community? Be specific with examples of teachings and doings by your spiritual community.