



## Discerning the Honey from the Hemlock

As discussed in the first week of this course, we as Christians, are to be in the world, but not of it. Figuring out *exactly* how to do that may take the better part of a lifetime; however, growing in the ability to discern the honey from the hemlock, determining truth from falsehood, is an important step along the way.

While discerning truth from lies is obviously vital, falsehoods are often skillfully disguised and cleverly masquerade as truth.

Because the study of economics is fundamentally about us, what we choose, what we value, how we interact with each other in the market and how we produce goods and create wealth, we must learn how to apply biblical truth to our understanding of ourselves, (why we do what we do, choose what we choose, and value what we value) to our understanding of basic economic principles (incentives, opportunity costs, trade), as well as to our understanding of economic systems (capitalism, socialism, communism) and how they affect human flourishing.

Some might call this exercise in discernment refining your Christian Worldview. Art Lindsley from the Institute for Faith, Work and Economics describes this as using the Bible "as spectacles to view the world."

The purpose of this assignment is to practice using those spectacles by reading about the life and ideas of Ayn Rand. Rand was an influential intellectual of the twentieth century and her most famous book, *Atlas Shrugged*, sold more copies than any other book in the world, save one, the Bible. Rand was both a virulent atheist and, as Richards states, was "morally obtuse." Her works have appealed to many and contain some truth (honey) worth investigating as well as some hemlock, poisons which if not discerned, could be deadly.

For this assignment, read specific sections (as noted below) for the article *Check Your Premises: Ayn Rand Through a Biblical Lens* by David Kotter, Dean of Theology at Colorado Christian University. While his article is excellent, you will not need to read it in its entirety for this assignment.



First, access the article *Check Your Premises: Ayn Rand Through A Biblical Lens* in this week's CT Assignment tab on our website and read the Forward by Art Lindsley.

Next, read:

- Introduction
- Overview of the Life of Ayn Rand
- Key Contributions of Ayn Rand
- Overview of the Philosophy of Ayn Rand

Finally, write a 5-paragraph essay which includes:

- An introductory paragraph describing the extent of Rand's influence and why her ideas appeal to so many.
  
- The body of the essay should identify three of Rand's four convictions (found in the Overview of the Philosophy of Ayn Rand) that contain both honey and hemlock. What about each conviction is honey; i.e., that which seems good and true? What about each conviction is hemlock; i.e., that which is dangerous, fatal and false? Explain how the falsehoods conflict with a Christian worldview.
  
- A final paragraph offering your conclusion about Ayn Rand and her ideas.

Put on your biblical lenses and get to work!