

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”**  
**June 7, 2016**

- ✓ **2 Chronicles 17:1-18:34.** Righteous Jehoshaphat and virtue
- ✓ **Titus 3:8-11.** Virtuous or “warped/perverted.”
- ✓ **Psalm 99:1-100:5.** Prayer: 2<sup>nd</sup> person relationship with God.

**COMMENTS:**

**2 Chronicles 17:1-18:34.** Jehoshaphat was the son of Asa and he reigned from 872–869 B.C.. He was remembered for his devotion to the Lord. He sent Levites throughout the territory of Judah to instruct the people in the Book of the Law. The Lord rewarded the king with peace and international respect. His fighting forces grew in strength. Note his virtue in **2 Chronicles 17:6** *And his heart took delight in the ways of the LORD; Moreover, he removed the high places and wooden images from Judah.* The phrase translated “took delight” (וַיִּגְבַּהּ לְבָבוֹ) literally means he was great in his heart (in his inner life). As we have been studying, the quality of each person’s character or inner life is described in terms of vice or virtue. Note that it does not say he was great when he was in some fellowship state and not great when he was not in some fellowship state. Of course, this is not to deny that we become great by walking/fellowshipping with the Lord and filled with vice when we do not walk with the Lord. It is to deny that fellowship is some state which determines a person’s *instant* character or quality *at a given time*. As 1 John 1:7 clearly says, fellowship is about *walking* in the light to fellowship with the Lord, not being in some powered up state that fluctuates. Our characters are our settled dispositions created by God, who is the efficient cause, and created by us as the formal causes as we actualize goodness or actualize sin. Every actualization of obedience to the Word of God creates virtue. Every actualization of disobedience creates vice in our inner life. The more we obey the Lord the sweeter God’s commands are as we develop more capacity to appreciate goodness as such. The more we obey sinful lusts, the more depraved we become, which manifests itself in being enslaved to some sinful habit, which usually manifests itself in having to confess sins constantly. In sum, a true and deep desire to be able to “delight in the ways of the LORD,” as we see in Jehoshaphat, is not accomplished in an instant after one confesses his sins “to regain the filling of the Holy Spirit.” This is not only self-evident in life, it is self-evident throughout the Word of God. Jehoshaphat did not even have the full ministry of the Holy Spirit that is available to believers today *to walk with the Lord and thus actualize a virtuous life*. In sum, as we have been studying at FBC and in these readings: virtue is all about a settled disposition of right thinking, right wishing, and right feelings. Our intellects, wills, and emotions have a healthy character about them (virtue) or an unhealthy character about them (vice). This indeed is the way people are portrayed in the Bible and is a self-evident truth of life as demonstrated by the way believers are as we think of them and describe them, for example “what a good person,” or “what a selfish person.” Anyone can go from having a weak or ill-disposed character (vice) to a strong and good-disposed character (virtue), but it is not going to be accomplished by the machinations of spiritual formulas. It can only be accomplished by actively walking with the Lord, which means the cessation of actualizing evil and sin in the life, the latter of which creates the bad habits, inclinations, and taste for evil that destroys capacity for what we see in Jehoshaphat: “his heart took delight in the ways of the LORD.” What is the fundamental quality of our lives with respect to God and evil? What are we actualizing? The difference between a believer who is a dirty old

man or dirty old woman and one who is not is going to be directly tied to what they have actualized in their minds and life or refrained from (like autoeroticism, fornication, adultery, exposure to pornography) over many years rather than what they gain in an instant by being in some conduit state. Desire for sin is always linked to seeing sin as a good in some way. True desire for God and goodness as such is seeing goodness as good and sin in all of its ugliness, which requires a real power, a puissant for good, which is just another way of talking about virtue.

**Titus 3:8-11.** In keeping with the topic on virtue and the need to actualize goodness as such, note verse 8. Note the emphasis on devotion to what is good “for these things are excellent and profitable for everyone.” Titus was to promote good works, for they go hand in hand with sound doctrine. Doing the good works is what actualizes the virtue as one walks with the Lord. Consider the difference between a believer who knows he should help the poor and does nothing to help the poor and the believer who knows he should help the poor and actually does help the poor. Who really cares about the poor and what God’s Word says about helping the poor? Which one is virtuous? To create virtue not only is the believer to actualize the Word of God in his life as he walks with the Lord, he is to avoid evil lest he actualize evil habits and character in his soul as per Titus 3:9. You do not have to take my word or the Word of God on it, you can try it yourself. Take a bad habit, a vice, and stop doing it and see how your attitude changes with regard to that vice. Note the last verse in this section where a believer is called warped, a sinner (lives in habitual sinful habits), and self-condemned (lives with self-condemnation due to his constant sinful thought life and actions). Does anyone really think that all he needs to do is use 1 John 1:9 and he will be filled with the Spirit, which will instantly make him a virtuous man? I wonder why John did not say that in that passage or in anywhere in its context—he does not even mention the Holy Spirit (which is not to deny His importance, even though it is to deny the Holy Spirit conduit power model for instant virtue based on 1 John 1:9).

**Psalms 99:1-100:5.** Note the mention of prayer in 99:6-8. As we have noted, the Christian life is all about *on ongoing and developing 2<sup>nd</sup> person intimate reciprocal relationship with the Lord throughout each and every day.* Prayer to God is the most effective means of developing that relationship, which is why we are commanded to pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17). It is one thing when I think about God in terms of myself (1<sup>st</sup> person) or in terms of Him (3<sup>rd</sup> person), it is quite another when it is in 2<sup>nd</sup> person personal “You and me” relationship. The God of love seeks us and what He seeks more than anything else is a relationship with us, a relationship that takes place when we share our lives with Him as He shares His life with us. He does long to be our Best Friend and there is nothing like talking with a Best Friend and in so doing sharing our lives with the object of our love and respect.

*Romans 11:36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.*

Pastor Don