

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
May 1, 2016

- ✓ **Judges 1:1-2:10.** From half-measures to downright apostasy.
- ✓ **Philippians. 1:1-11.** The source and power of the virtue of love.
- ✓ **Psalm 61:1-62:12.** God is the issue in all testing that comes from this broken, evil world.

COMMENTS:

Judges 1:1-2:10. This section takes us from the half-measures of the Israelites in driving out the Canaanites to the death of Joshua and the new generation: *Judges 2:10, When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.* Oh my! What a damn shame! After all the Lord had done in providing them a land, the new generation just throws it all away in idolatry as illustrated in the verses that follow. This is nothing short of rejection of God’s grace as all “negative volition” comes down to rejection of knowledge of God evident in creation and in supernatural revelation. In their case, it is also a rejection of the special grace of God bestowed upon them. We really do not know how much responsibilities the parents bear in the new generation not knowing the Lord. Did the parents fail to teach their children as commanded in Deut. 6:5-6? Or did the children simply reject the knowledge of God that the parents had given them? We see both in our country. Many, actually most, Christians do not teach their children the Word of God or the history of God’s dealings with man. But then again, many children forget their Lord even after being faithfully taught by their parents. There is a whole new generation of Americans who do not know the Lord. They live in a land that has been given to them but do not know the Giver. They do not recognize that ultimately it was the Lord that gave them our land of freedom and opportunity. One generation goes and another comes, but the Word of God abides forever. Just as sure and night follows day once a generation rejects the Lord, it will become idolatrous as demonstrated in the following verses. Just as sure as night follows day, once a people becomes idolatrous, their basic standards of morality and meaning in life devolves in all kinds of madness as Romans 1:16-32 illustrates. Moral degeneration in a country really does come down to a spiritual problem, which no politician could ever fix. Cursed is man who trust in man!

Philippians 1:1-11. Note Paul’s prayers in verse 9-11. In verse 9 he prays that believers would continue to grow in divine love. Note that the word love (ἀγάπη) does not have an object. Is he talking about love for God or love for fellow believers? I think that Paul is more concerned with the source of love than the object of love. The love is from God and such love would include both love for God and each other, a truth that is emphasized throughout the Word of God. A person cannot love God if he does not love other believers (1 John 4:20). The two loves always go together. This is a supernatural love that comes directly from God, as indicated by Paul’s prayer, and not something one can tap into simply by confessing sins or working some “spiritual” conduit model. It is directly infused in the believer by a decision of God based on a willing soul. Paul prays for this love to “abound.” Note the two domains of this love: “knowledge and all insight” (both nouns are governed by one preposition and the idea of direction is present). This knowledge and insight is not primarily propositional; rather, it is a

personal and spiritual knowledge of God. Note in verse 10 we have the purpose of this love: that they might be able to discern what is excellent. It is growth in love that enables one to distinguish the really important issues in life and fully prepare oneself for the Lord. In sum, Paul prays that the love of the Philippians might overflow within the domain of knowledge and insight “that they may approve of the things that are excellent.” Consider what this says about the power of divine love to direct one in all of the issues of life by enabling one to see what really is important. At the conclusion of Paul’s intercessory prayer, he prays that they will be filled with fruit of righteousness that is produced by Jesus Christ—all “for the glory and praise of God.” Again, consider the tremendous efficacious power of love as a virtue in 9-11 from the source of prayer, to its ability to give on wisdom on what is excellent, to the preparing the believer to be holy and blameless in the presence of God. Is it no wonder that Paul prayed for the Philippians’ love to abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment leading to a life of being able to approve of the things that are more excellent that would lead to them being sincere and blameless until the day of Christ? Wow! Talk about transformational power of divine love!

Psalm 61:1-62:12. In this section of Scripture David finds himself very weak and inadequate. So, he turns to real strength of His God, who is His Rock, and His promises. David turns to God as His “Refuge” and high “Tower.” Note David’s emphasis on God loyal love/mercy (*chesed*) and truth in 61:7. Note how David makes God the issue in his life as he faces this testing from this evil and broken world as he declares that God is his “only rock and salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved” (62:2). The issue in all testing is God, period! He is where the focus must be—not on this or that spiritual formula that supposedly is going to enable us to manipulate some victory merely by “using” the Word of God or the Holy Spirit. The issue in every test is to move closer to God and you do not need a lot of spiritual formulas (=religion, functional view of God and His Word) to do that. All you need is a desire for God as exemplified by David in 62:5: “My soul, wait silently for God alone. For my hope is from Him.” As you face testing from this evil broken world—*not from God*—it is not so much the what but the Who, such has always and will always be the case. Let us not be stupid and think that it could be about anything else but our second person relationship with God—‘loving God with all of our hearts, souls, minds, and strength,’ which is far more important than any of the “stupid” the details of life.

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

Pastor Don