

Bible Doctrines (The True-Good-Beautiful)

T/G/B

- Eschatology
- Thanatology
- Ecclesiology
- Israelology
- Dispensationalism
- Doxology
- Hodology
- Soteriology
- Hamartiology
- Natural Law
- Anthropology
- Angelology
- Pneumatology
- Christology
- Paterology
- Trinitarianism
- Cosmology
- Theology Proper
- Bibliology
- Natural Theology

5: Hermeneutics
4: Linguistics
3: Epistemology 32
- Existence 50
- History 41
2: Metaphysics 32
- Trans. 50
1: Reality
- Logic 32,
- Truth 32

Opening: Being united to God by knowledge and love is the single greatest issue of our lives now and forever (Luke 10:27; John 15:1-15; Rev. 21:1-3; 1 Cor. 16:22).

Preparation for Bible class for the Realist doctrinal believer. When the Realist doctrinal believer faces a temptation, he sees it in his 2nd person loving dyadic relationship with God rather than getting in and out of a sphere. He seeks God's grace to raise up his intellect/will to the Good of God Himself, Psa. 16:2; 19:12-14; Col. 3:23; 1 Thess. 5:17. He lives in OWC.

2 Parts to Bible class (10 minutes on spiritual & philosophical foundations + 1 hour on love)

1. **Philosophical foundations.** There are only two systems: philosophical realism and BS-ism (Cartesianism-Comteansim)—there are no exceptions. We are either advancing in the Real or fiction as per Alice in Wonderland (which was written to show what happens when you leave Realism). The Realist has no interest in BS-isms on his journey of Truth, certainly not for Bible study. He wants Whole Truth as He seeks the Whole God. He is oriented to Reality.
2. **Spiritual foundations.** Sin and evil are always a result of disordered love (1 Jn 2:15-16) & the only solution is concurrent (not conduit) love for God, Psa 16:2.

Stage 3 – Christian metaphysician = life of glory!

- Metaphysical understanding of God, creation, the spiritual life, man, and Bible doctrine.
- Transcendent relationship with God rather than nominal relationship with God.

Stage 3

Holy Spirit  Bible Doctrine

Stage 2 – Christian doctrinal believer = life of doctrine!

- Still Nominal understanding of God. Increase in perinoetic truth about God & the spiritual life. However, still plagued with pagan philosophy in view of God's nature due to lack of metaphysics, which is due to modernism's philosophical assumptions. He has become more stable, but still very dependent on others for confidence in absolute truths.
- Orientation still more about words than the reality.

Stage 2

Holy Spirit  Bible Doctrine

Stage 1 – Christian baby = life of ups and downs.

- Utilitarian understanding of God.
- All baby believers have a great deal of pagan views of God due to pagan horizon of meaning. All baby believers are tossed here and there by kosmos diabolicus, Eph. 4:14.
- For baby believers it is primarily about pragmatism. In other words, if it works or feels good, they think it must be true.

Stage 1

Love 19

1. 1 Corinthians 13

- a. The challenge: consider this material in light of our 2nd order volitions, which are formed by deliberation of our 1st order wills: partial (“not yet”?), hardening (“no”), or complete (“yes, God I want the Whole Truth”!). God works concurrently with all things and that includes our volitions. This is what progressive sanctification is all about: e.g., partial (Peter) or complete (Paul), and hardening (Demas).
- b. The extremes: Stoicism to sensatism.
- c. The need to be anchored in Realism for objective understanding of God’s marvelous word. It is the only way to avoid the various constructs of the mind which may be coherent or tempting for one reason or another, but not anchored in the Real).
- d. The stakes: love for God, the root, hinge, and summit of all virtues.

2. Christ's perfect human nature: In order to understand human love, one must distinguish between man's intellectual loves (immaterial, universals) and sense loves (material, particulars). Let's note them in the Perfect Man, who had perfect intellectual love and perfect sense love, Luke 4:1-13; Matt. 26:31-50; Luke 23:32-46.
 - a. God assumed a true human nature, with all of its natural affections. As a matter of fact Christ's human nature was more human than ours, for it had no defect. This means that He suffered more on the Cross due to His pure nature. In Him we see the full flourishing of perfect human nature.

- b. Since man is a rational animal, he has rational desires as well as animal/flesh desires. This means that He delighted in the Father as the object of His intellective nature as well as He delighted in pleasurable sense objects through His corporeal nature, as we all do. Due to His intellective *virtue*, however, He did not experience certain temptations that come with being warped in evil. In our resurrected bodies we will enjoy the pleasures of our bodies forever.

- c. Christ had no disordered appetites or passions. However, this was because He was more human, not less. His passions never exceeded or trumped His reason, His intellectual nature.

- d. Christ was never fragmented, never divided against Himself. He always kept His sense appetites in line with his intellectual appetite as per the illustrations in the desert and in Gethsemane. His sense appetites always accepted the priority of his rational appetite. Physically, He shrank from death, but rationally He wanted to do the Father's will.

- e. Christ demonstrates for us how one's flesh can find something attractive and yet not be drawn into sin because the higher rational nature. The flesh can say "that looks good," but the rational can refuse to be drawn into assenting to that temptation. This is true of any pleasurable aspect of the flesh: food, sex, or the natural inclination to recoil from pain. For example, you can see money that was dropped by someone and see how good it would be to have that money, but in your intellect you give the money to the person who dropped it. This is virtue.

- f. Christ sense appetites (His will according to corporeal nature) naturally shrank from sensible pain and bodily wounding. However, his intellective will (will according to reason), chose the pain for a greater end. We see this, for example, when someone has a wound cauterized for health reasons even though their flesh nature shrinks from being burned.
- g. Christ's prayer in the Garden expresses His reluctance on a sense level. With God's help He was able to raise up His first order will to the second order volition. Thus, prayer is a means of receiving God's grace/help.
- h. Christ is our Exemplar, 1 Pet. 1:18-25; Matt. 11:29; 16:24; Philip 2:5; John 13:15; 1 John 3:16. Christ wanted to show that He assumed a true human nature and how it is not sinful for man to want something on the sense level against God's will, and He wanted to show the importance of submission of intellect to God (this is denying self, cf., Abraham).

3. The only solution to any and all problems of life is integration around the Ultimate Good, God Himself.
- In short, this is what “love” for God is. All love in integration around good.
 - Psalm 16:2: I said to the LORD, "Thou art my Lord; I have no good besides Thee."
 - All systems that do not have these concepts at the fore are defective.
 - Apart from seeing God as the Ultimate Good, the believer will never overcome sin and evil—though he may subjectively find methods that bring temporary peace.
 - Only God can fulfill our infinite appetites. Moreover, He brings infinite value to all of the temporal blessings of life. Unless and until the believer sees God, not problem solving, as the greatest issue, he will not seek God first and foremost for God’s sake alone. He will not love God foremost.
 - Moreover, he will live out his life fragmented and alienated from God as far as 2nd person dyadic relationship.
 - There is no intimate 2nd person relationship with God in carnality.
 - No person can love himself (seek his good in God and seek integration around God/good) properly without loving God properly.

4. Illustration of integration around God as the Greatest Good and the need for Realist concurrent spirituality, Acts 26:12-29; Philip. 3:4-21; Gen. 22; Isa. 6:8; Heb. 11.
 - a. The *amount* of Bible doctrine in Paul is not sufficient for this integration. No amount of doctrine in and of itself is going to cause one to see the world's treasures as dung.
 - b. Diligent *application* of Bible doctrine by Paul is not sufficient for this integration. No serious application of Bible doctrine is going to cause Paul to see the worldly achievements as dung.
 - c. The filling of the Holy Spirit is not sufficient for this integration. No filling of the Holy Spirit is going to transform a will that does not seek it, cf., "not yet" in 2nd order will.
 - d. While the above are necessary conditions, the integration takes place in concurrent activity between Paul's second order volition, not just second-order desire ("Lord give me . . . but not yet") and God. Love is a sufficient condition.

5. Responsive two-way friendship love **with** God as a Person requires far more than *physical closeness*. Being physically close to someone is not enough to have a close personal relationship with him. God can be indwelling me, but unless there is a 2nd person sharing of minds and wills, there is no *intimate* relationship with God. There needs to be direct and unmediated sharing of minds and wills for intimacy. God loves all and desires all to be saved, but His unilateral love does not in itself bring *mutual* closeness and intimacy.

6. Responsive two-way friendship love **with** God as a Person requires far more than *knowing a lot about God*. To have a rich, loving, shared, personal relationship with God demands more than doctrine. There must not only be a two-way meeting of the minds, there must be a meeting of the wills—most critically in 2nd person desire and volition.

7. Responsive two-way friendship love **with** God as a Person requires far more than the *mechanics of restoration of fellowship or the mechanics of the spiritual life*.
8. Responsive two-way friendship love **with** God as a Person requires far more than *needing Him as a person*. Hitler needed Goebbels, his doctor, to ward off physical pain. He needed Eva Braun to ward off psychological pain. He needed his mother when he was a child (food, protection), but that does not mean he loved them as persons in an intimate sharing manner. Personal love for God does not only consist of recognition of our need for Him for existence and provisions.

9. Responsive two-way friendship love **with** God as a Person requires *far more than simply appreciating* His so great salvation—though this is where we all start.

10. So, just to love God for giving us life, salvation and grace is not enough to establish a rich, shared, deep, personal friendship love relation **with** Him. What is required is a desire for His desire: His will—“to do all of My will.” We all recognize this in our relationship with our spouses. It is not enough to appreciate what they do, or that they are forgiving of you, or that they are physically sitting by you on the couch. What is needed is a compatible, loving, dyadic sharing of minds and “wills.” You have to care for them as a person. In true love there is never indifference to the individual *as a person*.

11. The highest form of love between God and man in the Bible is one in terms of friendship, John 15:15; James 2:23. Consider how Abraham had to integrate around the goodness of God and His promises to sacrifice his son. Abraham's trial had a way of integrating him by pitting his commitment to God's Goodness against his perceived (but not his real) self interest. This love requires harmony between the believer and God. It is a direct and unmediated relationship with God.

12. The single greatest hindrance for anyone in attaining a rich, mutual, shared life with God is soulish fragmentation—a love/hate relationship where part of the person loves God and part of him does not love God—or at least keeps a distance. The part that dislikes God is the part that will always keep a “safe” distance from God.

13. This fragmentation can only be resolved, “healed,” by God raising up the first order will to a second order good desire of the believer for a relationship with God. So, the key is in our second order “will.” If that will loves the world more than God, then integration is absolutely impossible.

14. God often brings suffering into the believer's life to aid him in bringing internal integration into his life around the Good, and thus be closer to Him. There is nothing like suffering to remove distractions and motivate believer to move in close to the Lord with all of his heart, soul, and mind, as illustrated with Job.

15. There is strong empirical (analogical) support that suffering is often a springboard to internal integration and personal growth. This is described by psychologists as posttraumatic growth or stress-related growth. Survey indicate that the majority of people who have been diagnosed with cancer, for example, say the experience was more positive than negative. The benefits included interpersonal relationships, appreciation of life, changed priorities, and growth in existential and spiritual matters. All of this change revolves around reorganization and reconceptualization of self. However, man can go in the other direction for he is free to use difficulties for integration or disintegration (like Saul of Tarsus Acts 26:14-19).

16. What makes it so difficult to enter into the realm of divine friendship love is our sinfulness and preference for ourselves, which tends to fragment us and make us very uncomfortable with God—consciously and subconsciously. Forgiveness alone does not resolve this problem. We remain alienated in many ways and there is no resolution until one totally gives himself to the Lord, Rom. 12:1. All of the mechanics and doctrine in the world cannot resolve this issue.

17. Communion: Celebration of God's grace of the Incarnation and Cross, 1 Cor. 11:17-34.