

The Beauty/Glory of God.25

(Communion Special: Understanding the Nature of Love)

John 1 : 14

And the Word was made flesh,
and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory,
the glory as of the only begotten
of the Father full of grace and truth.

<http://www.fbcweb.org/sermons.html>

Crossway
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Philosophical/Theological/Doctrinal/Spiritual Mental Framework

Bible Doctrines (The True-Good-Beautiful!)

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

P.R. - 32

- Hermeneutics
- Linguistics
- Epistemology
- Metaphysics -11
(Trans. 28)
- Reality –Logic 32,
Truth 32

2/3/2013

God intends for every believer to be a pillar (**στυλος**) and support /foundation (**ἑδραϊωμα**) of the Truth (1 Tim. 3:15).

- All believers have been called by God to be pillars and supports of truth (yes, even in our age of Prometheus).
- Unfortunately, most believers today are illiterate in the metaphysical truths of God, creation, and love. The result is that the true nature of God and love has been bracketed out of reality, and the marrow of the spiritual life has been sucked out of the lives of believers leaving them with skepticism and fideism.
- We have lost our Christian mental heritage or framework which existed in the OT, NT, JC, and classical Christianity. Apart from recovery, it is impossible to have deep roots in JC or SL leaving us with fideism and devotionism).
- We have not only been robbed of the wonders of 'Ehyeh, TGB, His glory in creation, but the true nature of the love of God.
- This chart is the only way I know of dealing with this problem and cultish tendencies in our fragmented world.

Stage
3

Stage
2

Stage
1

Stage 3 – Christian metaphysician = life of glory!

- The believer who becomes a Christian metaphysician has a totally new mindset with regard to the nature of 'Ehyeh/Esse and the transcendentals.
- Only in metaphysics can a believer really understand Bible, the attributes and glory of God

Holy Spirit  Bible Doctrine

Stage 2 – Christian doctrinal believer = life of doctrine!

- Through BD, this believer has gained a great deal of divine viewpoint in his soul regarding God and the spiritual life.
- However, he continues to have some pagan views about God's *nature* due to lack of metaphysical development.
- He is stable, but still very dependent on others for confidence in metaphysical truths.

Holy Spirit  Bible Doctrine

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

- All baby believers have a great deal of pagan views of God due to the problem of pagan horizon of meaning.
- All baby believers are tossed here and there by the kosmos, Eph 4:14.
- For baby believers it is all about pragmatism or personal encounter with truth. If it works or feels good, they think it must be true.

History of Metaphysics

Ultimate reality of Being and beings

Biblical/'Ehyeh metaphysics: Ex. 3:14; Jn. 1:3; Psa. 19:1-3; Rm. 1:18-32; Acts 17:28; Col. 1:17; Rev. 4:11

The Ancient Period (624 B.C. –A.D. 135): Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, Zeno the Eleatic, Protagoras, Gorgias, Socrates, Democritus, Leucippus, Epicurus, Plato, Aristotle, Pyrrho, Epicurus, Zeno the Stoic, Epictetus (Plato and Aristotle were the most compelling metaphysical critics of materialism and reductionism in the Greek world).

The Classical Christian-'Ehyeh period (30-1349): Jesus Christ, Apostles, Plotinus, Church Fathers, Augustine, Boethius, John Scotus Erigena, Avicenna, Anselm, Al-Ghazali, Peter Abelard, Averroes, Maimonides, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Eckhart, John Duns Scotus, William of Ockham.

The Modern Period (1466-1900): Erasmus, Copernicus, Luther, Bacon, Galileo, Hobbes, Descartes, Pascal, Spinoza, John Locke (1632-1704), Newton, Leibniz, Berkeley, Voltaire, Rousseau, David Hume (1711-1776), Kant, Schelling, Fichte, Hegel, Marx, Bentham, Comte, Mill, Darwin, Kierkegaard, Marx, Engels, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche.

The Contemporary Period (1900-): Charles S. Peirce, James, Freud, Husserl, Bergson, Dewey, Whitehead, Russell, Einstein, Wittgenstein, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Carnap, Ryle, Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), Beauvoir, Quine, Ayer, Austin, Kuhn, Foucault, Derrida, Richard Rorty.

Monism, Pluralism
Atomism, Humanism,
Pantheism, Platonism
Aristotelianism
Essentialism
Rationalism
Radical Empiricism
Thomism, Nominalism
Humanism, Scientism
Agnosticism, Skepticism
Secularism, Deism
Idealism, Romanticism
Marxism, Anti-intellectualism
Evolutionism, Atheism
Existentialism, Pragmatism,
Hedonism, Positivism
Post-modernism,
Relativism, Functionalism,
Coherentism
Phenomenology
Existentialism,
Psychologism, Nihilism,

Classical Christian/'Ehyeh/Esse period on metaphysics of God, creation, man, and love (A.D. 30 – 1349). Although there were things that some of the classical Christians got wrong, for the most part they had very deep metaphysical insights into God, creation, man, problem of evil, and love. This is easily demonstrated by comparing and contrasting ancient and modern commentaries on the book of Job as well as examining the respective views the nature of God's love.

Modern and contemporary "metaphysics" on God, creation, man, and love (1466–). Due to rejection of metaphysics, modern man has almost no clue regarding the true nature of God's love or love in general. Love for modern man is primarily about existential feelings. Even biblical exegetes have serious flaws in their views of God's love. First, they do not start with the metaphysics of God's love as the grounding of all other types of love. Second, they start with modern mental framework and proceed with nominalistic methods of "exegesis" to determine the nature of love. Nominal definitions are dictionary definitions and the word's synonyms, etymology, and how it is used. Nominal definitions are only of words, not of essences. Essentialism, on the other hand, focuses is on the essence or whatness of a thing. Furthermore, one must make a distinction between concepts ("love" in mind), terms ("love" in public domain), and words (linguistic expressions of term).

The Beauty/Glory of God-25

John 1:1-5

1. Christ ('Ehyeh-Logos) is not only the source of all energy, matter, and information in all of creation, HE IS OUR LIFE! He did not come to make man better, he came to make dead men alive and then move them into the TGB. Consider how the *dark, reductionistic* naturalism is sucking the marrow out of Christianity. It is the reason for the difference between the classical Christian man and the modern Christian man.

The Beauty/Glory of God-25

John 1:1-5

2. Verse 5. Even though the darkness of our society is far worse than in any other time in history in many ways, history has shown us that it was in the darkest and bleakest of times that believers in the Word of God have gained some of the most grand and incredible views of God, cf. Isa. 53.

The Beauty/Glory of God-25

John 1:1-5

3. Consider the metaphysical connection between John 1:1-5, 43 with Job 38:5. Consider how Job's eyes were opened by 'Ehyeh metaphysics coupled with 2nd person relationship with God.

Job 42:5 "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees Thee;

The Beauty/Glory of God-25

John 1:43 – “Follow Me” (ἀκολουθεῖ μοι) – loving Christ.

1. Life is all about your choices (not your genes or environment). While genes and environment block certain paths, they never determine the *direction* of your life, advancement, and God’s destination for you in the Good Life.

Acts 17:24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25 neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things; 26 and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation, 27 that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.'

The Beauty/Glory of God-25

John 1:43 – “Follow Me” –loving Christ.

2. It is important to distinguish between the necessary and sufficient conditions for following Christ.

a. Necessary conditions for following Christ:

- ✓ Grace
- ✓ Genuine desire/love for Christ (desire to be nearer).
- ✓ Regeneration
- ✓ FHS (confession of sin and dependence on HS)
- ✓ 2nd person fellowship with God
- ✓ Daily growth in the Word/Reality (Truth, grace orientation, faith, prayer, Psds, FRT).
- ✓ Internal integration around the TGB.

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John 1:43 – “Follow Me” –loving Christ.

2. It is important to distinguish between the necessary and sufficient conditions for following Christ.
 - b. Sufficient conditions for following Christ:
 - ✓ 2nd person love relationship with Christ.

The Beauty/Glory of God-25

John 1:43 – “Follow Me” –loving Christ.

3. There are 3 aspects that need to be considered in being a lover of Christ: the subject, the dynamics, and the object.
 - a. The **subject** is the believer. The key is for the person to be integrated around the TGB. A person who is not integrated is divided against himself. Modern emphasis on subject ginning up more emotions, resolve, mysticism, and faith will never achieve true love. This anti-intellectualism often makes the believer more fragmented and less able to follow Christ or love God or anyone very deeply.
 - b. The **dynamics** of grace (2 Cor 3:18). We do not have the ability to see the beauty of Jesus Christ in and of ourselves.
 - c. The **objective** form—the objective beauty/glory of Christ. The greatest need today is understanding the object, Jesus Christ.

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John 1:43 – “Follow Me” –loving Christ.

4. Characteristics of the integrated believer, one who is able to love Christ enough to follow Christ:
 - ✓ Integrated around the TGB. Note the 5 disciples of John 1.
 - ✓ Continues to develop deep love for Christ which keeps him from deteriorating into legalism, pragmatism, shallowness, distrust.
 - ✓ Entranced by Christ’s beauty.
 - ✓ Takes delight in Christ
 - ✓ Sees the Lord as beautiful (Psa. 27:4; John 1:14)
 - ✓ Lives in the Good of God, Romans 8:28.
 - ✓ Continues to grow in the Christ-form.

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John 1:43 – “Follow Me” – loving Christ.

5. While it might sound easy to love Jesus, it is anything but easy.
 - ✓ The problem is not in the object or the dynamics. The problem is with the subject.
 - ✓ One has to have a very deep understanding of self, be integrated around the TGB, and have a very deep understanding of Jesus Christ, Bible doctrine, the spiritual life, and reality as such.
 - ✓ This is only possible by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and ‘Ehyeh metaphysics (John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:13; Acts 17:28; Psa. 19; Rom. 1:20).

The Beauty/Glory of God-25

The Nature of Love

1. God's love must be the pattern for all other loves (Job 38-39; Matt. 5:44-48; John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-11; 8:38-39; 12:9-10; 17-20; 13:8-14; 1 Cor 16:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:14; 1 John 3:1, 10-18, 23; 4:7-21; 5:1-3). God's love must be the starting point for the believer.
2. We need to make a distinction between the nature of true love and the power of the Holy Spirit to make true and deep love possible.

The Beauty/Glory of God-25

The Nature of Love

3. In the Classical Christian period (30-1349) God's love was the dominant paradigm for all aspects of love. Highest love and truest love was for God alone. There was a very deep understanding of God's love in all of creation, for all men, for believers especially, and even the healthy love the believer is to have for himself.

4. Unfortunately, virtually all modern Christians start with their own views of love and proceed to find passages to piggy back on those views (cf. emotional versus non-emotional preachers). This does not mean that they have no understanding of God's love. It just means that they have muddled views at best.

The Beauty/Glory of God-25

The Nature of Love

5. There are three dominate modern views on human love.
 - a. #1: Responsiveness account of human love. This is loving someone because x, y, z, is in them. This is loving someone because of qualities in the object of love. On this view love is engendered by characteristics in the object of love. There are reasons IN the beloved for the love. While this is appealing, it has problems:
 - Any intrinsic quality can also be found in others. Yet, true love seems to include the concept of non-substitutability.
 - Problem of constancy of love when the beloved no longer has those qualities that initially attracted you.
 - Makes love very fragile contrary to what we find.
 - We do not love our children more than other children primarily because of qualities in them.

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- b. #2, Relational account of human love. *Reason* for the love is based on relationship. The love here is based on the history of interaction. This is better than responsive account. However, just because there is a relationship, like marriage, does not mean automatic love.

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- c. #3, Volitional account of human love. Loved based on your decision to love. This highlights the role of the will. The value the lover sees in the beloved is the value that derives from the lover's love of the beloved. Why do you love me? "Oh, there is no reason, at least no reason having anything to do with you." The problem is that
- in this account there is no reason for love;
 - it seems counterintuitive. One could just as easily love another person.

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6. The Classical Christian view is built on the metaphysics of love (cf., 2,000 B.C. – A.D. 1349, OT, Job, NT, St. Bernard, William of Saint-Thierry, Anselm, Aquinas).
 - a. The ultimate proper object of love is God.
 - b. Since every human being is made in the image of God, the divine goodness is also reflected in every human person. Consequently, the proper object of love includes all human beings, even self (to truly love self is to orient to TGB, not selfishness).

The Beauty/Glory of God-25

7. The Classical Christian view of true love is made up of two interdependent and mutually governing aspects.
 - a. #1, a desire for the good of the beloved (TGB). This love does not depend upon anything good in the beloved. This good is objective and not based on what you might think is good.
 - b. #2, a desire for union with the beloved. This union is always according to the office of that relationship. This means that in the human race a parent's love for a child cannot be greater than for a spouse or vice versa. The union is only possible according to the office. Violation of any office undermines any good and therefore true love is destroyed. This means that no matter how "affectionate" or "loving" a parent or priest might feel toward a child, he is not loving the child if he has sex with the child because that is not an appropriate office. It is not objectively good for the child.

The Beauty/Glory of God-25

8. The single greatest hindrance to any person's capacity to love God as well as others is lack of internal integration around the TGB.
 - ✓ Apart from integrating around the TGB, the believer will be fragmented, which means that he will be alienated from himself (Rom. 7:15-25).
 - ✓ In state of alienation from self, the believer is double-minded (James 1:8; 4:8). He is frustrated and lacks wholeheartedness, thus he is unable to love the God with all of heart, soul, mind, and strength.
 - ✓ The fragmented believer has no union in self and is in fact alienated from self. In such state he is precluded from flourishing in any way.
 - ✓ The fragmented believer can never be at peace. No one can be alienated from self and be at peace.

The Beauty/Glory of God-25

9. The reason the believer who hates others lacks capacity to love God is because they are not oriented around the TGB and thus are alienated from self. In such alienation they have no capacity to love. To hold on to hatred is to be precluded from having capacity for love or life in God.

The Beauty/Glory of God-25

10. Refusal to forgive anyone affects one's capacity to love God and all others. If you cannot find it within yourself the desire to forgive others, it is because you in some sense do not stand in a right relationship to the nature of the TGB. There is some part of the TGB that you are alienated from. To the extent that you are alienated from the Good, to that extent you are divided within yourself.

- ✓ Because you are built in such a way that you can never be wholehearted around evil, some part of your mind will always reject the part of you that is rejecting the good (TGB).
- ✓ Anytime that you do something which is not good, you always have to fragment in mind and in will. When you fragment, you are alienated from yourself. When you are alienated from yourself, you cannot be close to anyone.
- ✓ There is no peace for anyone who is alienated from self.

The Beauty/Glory of God-25

11. A look at a fragmented Corinthian Lord's Supper due to failure to orient around the True, Good, and Beautiful, 1 Cor. 11:17-34.
12. May we at FBC redouble our efforts around the True, Good, and Beautiful and advance on the Glory Road.