

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

P.R. - 32

Hermeneutics

Linguistics

Epistemology 9
Existence 27

Metaphysics -32
Trans. 50

Reality—Logic 32,
Truth 32

3/8/2014

Opening passages: John 8:32; 1 Tim. 3:15; Rom. 1:20-21; Matt. 22:37-40; 1 John 2:15-16; 1 Tim. 6:6-11; 2 Tim. 4:10; 2 Pet. 1:2-9; Num. 6:23-24.

Our greatest challenge in growing in full knowledge, PR (biblical realism), is not really on the cognitive level. The greatest obstacle is overcoming all of those *isms* that have taken root in our lives: those philosophies of Satan and his kosmos diabolicus that are ubiquitous in the world in which we live, and move, and breath; those philosophies of anti-realism in our souls that are so hostile to Christ and the Word of God (e.g., humanism, positivism, pragmatism, hedonism, pluralism, relativism, scientism—which are all subsumed under secularism).

The 1st part of class seeks to establish the Realism of God and creation. The 2nd part deals with secularism’s destruction of the Transcendental.

What the goodness/love + sovereignty of God guarantees in your life. God is not a Grandfather!

Stage 3

Stage 3 – Christian metaphysician = life of glory!

- Metaphysical understanding of God.
- Virtuous love for God: Intellective, volitional, emotional love of God. Enduring fellowship.
- Life of “above all you could ever ask or imagine”

Holy Spirit  Bible Doctrine

Stage 2

Stage 2 – Christian doctrinal believer = life of doctrine!

- Nominal understanding of God.
- Through BD this believer has gained a great deal of perinoetic truth about God & the spiritual life.
- However, he continues to have some pagan views about God’s *nature* due to lack of metaphysics.
- He has become more stable, but still very dependent on others for confidence in absolute truths.

Holy Spirit  Bible Doctrine

Stage 1

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.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-27

1. ICE method of hermeneutics is a good rule of thumb. However, unless it operates in the context of PR, it cannot deliver one from false presuppositions or deliver the whole truth regarding God, creation, and human nature. To get the whole truth requires PR. The strength of ICE is primarily in things that cannot be accessed by the senses, like positional truth. Every believer must ask himself, if he wants the whole truth or if he is into Christianity *mainly* for pragmatic purposes.
 - Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
 - Job 38:28 "Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew?"

EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-27

- Matthew 5:45 in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.
- Matthew 6:26 "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?"
- Matthew 6:27 "And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life's span? 28 "And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin,

EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-27

- Job 42:5 "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees Thee;
- Exodus 3:14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" 15 And God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-27

2. What makes God's existence different from any other thing that exists, is that God and God alone has aseity. God and God alone exists by His own power. Nobody made Him or caused Him. His existence is and of Himself which differs from every creature. All other things are 2nd causes. You, me, stars, planets—absolute nothing else has self-existence. God and God alone is the I AM. He has the power of Being in and of Himself. To get this is to move into a much deeper and richer daily life of worship.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-27

3. Failure to grasp the aseity of God has a major impact on your view of God, creation, and the spiritual life
 - Without understanding the aseity of God, you will adopt some form of scientific anti-realism (like spontaneous generation like the God-hating French Encyclopedists of the 17th century).
 - Without understanding the aseity of God, you will not be able to love and worship God as you should (Rom 1:21). You will be not be able to see the love/goodness of God and sovereignty of God in all events of your life. You will not be able to see how God is drawing you to Him in all things.
 - Without understanding the aseity of God, you will, by default, grow in the various kosmic “isms” as you grow in secularism and anti-realism.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-27

4. Review of the 6 views and a word about agnostics (tender minded).

- 1- Physicalism. Totally implausible, even for random directionless evolution.
- 2- Agnosticism. There are 2 kinds of people: tender minded and tough minded.
 - ✓ Tender minded put practice above theory; the tough minded put theory above practice.
 - ✓ Tender minded think that happiness is the most important thing; the tough minded think that truth is the most important thing.
 - ✓ Tender minded start with their own feelings; the tough minded start with facts.
 - ✓ Good philosophers & good doctrinal Christians are all tough minded.
 - ✓ There are about 4 dozen arguments for the existence of God, which can be divided into tough minded and tender minded arguments.
 - ✓ One of the most successful approaches to the tender minded is the Pascalian wager approach.
- 3- Deism.
- 4- Conservationism.
- 5- Concurrentism.
- 6- Occasionalism.

MATTHEW 6:19-21

The Transcendental Treasures vs. the Transient/Secular Treasures

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Matthew 6:19-21



MATTHEW 6:19-21

Matthew 6:19-21 Μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅπου σὴς καὶ βρῶσις ἀφανίζει καὶ ὅπου κλέπται διορύσσουσιν καὶ κλέπτουσιν· 20 θησαυρίζετε δὲ ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐν οὐρανῷ, ὅπου οὔτε σὴς οὔτε βρῶσις ἀφανίζει καὶ ὅπου κλέπται οὐ διορύσσουσιν οὐδὲ κλέπτουσιν· 21 ὅπου γάρ ἐστιν ὁ θησαυρός σου, ἐκεῖ ἔσται καὶ ἡ καρδιά σου.

1. Note the two kinds of *rewards* in context in Matt. 6:16-18: human approbation vs. divine approbation (cf. Gal. 1:10). Rewards are always connected with virtue. Consider the connections between spiritual virtue and rewards in the following passages.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or φαῦλον.

MATTHEW 6:19-21

1 Corinthians 9:24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

25 And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things (πάντα ἐγκρατεύεται). They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; 27 but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified [from receiving rewards due to lack of spiritual virtue]

2 Timothy 2:4 No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. 5 And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules (νομίμως).

MATTHEW 6:19-21

2 Timothy 4:8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness (δικαιοσύνης στέφανος), which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

James 1:12 Blessed (Μακάριος) is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him (ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν).

MATTHEW 6:19-21

1 Peter 5:2-4 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory (τῆς δόξης στέφανον).

2 John 1:8 Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.

MATTHEW 6:19-21

Revelation 2:7 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.'

Revelation 2:17 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.'

Revelation 2:26 'And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations;

MATTHEW 6:19-21

Revelation 3:4 'But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white; for they are worthy. 5 'He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.

Revelation 3:12 'He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

MATTHEW 6:19-21

Revelation 3:21 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Revelation 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

Revelation 22:12 "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

MATTHEW 6:19-21

2. Although there are dozens of cosmic “isms,” the overarching philosophical environment in America that destroys spiritual lives in secularism. It has saturated our culture and many churches.
3. It is secularism that feeds the other “isms,” like humanism, scientism, reductionism, existentialism, positivism, pragmatism, hedonism, pluralism, relativism. These are all philosophical perspectives that are very hostile to the gospel, to Bible doctrine, and the spiritual life. None of these “isms” could exist apart from secularism.

MATTHEW 6:19-21

4. Understanding secularism.

- ✓ The term “secular” is not a bad concept in and of itself.
- ✓ It is important to make a distinction between two terms that refer to this earth: the Latin *saeculum* (time, age) and *mundus* (space).
- ✓ The problem is when *ism* is added to secular, for by doing so all of reality, all of life, every human activity is understood in light of and judged by the value or the norm of this present *age*.

MATTHEW 6:19-21

5. Secularism is diametrically in conflict with and extremely hostile to Christianity:
- The Bible is always concerned with long range considerations.
 - The Bible teaches us that we were created for eternity.
 - The heart of the New Testament message is that Christ has come to give us life, a life that wells up into eternal life.
 - The God of the Bible is Transcendent. He stands outside of the restrictions of this space and time of the world.
 - All judgments that God makes, all things that He does, are done from the perspective of the eternal.
 - The admonishment and rebuke Christ brings is that man is only thinking short term, they are only thinking of the now and only the now, instead of the future consequences of their behavior, the long term.

MATTHEW 6:19-21

5. Secularism is diametrically in conflict with and extremely hostile to Christianity.
- Jesus comes from above, He descends from the eternal realm, and He calls the Christian to live his life in light of eternity, and that his values are to be measured by transcendent
 - Only Christ gives eternal significance. There are none in secularism.
 - What a message we need to hear: right now has eternal significance.
 - We are pressed upon by every side from society, which says right now counts for right now because there is no eternity, there is no eternal perspective, there are no absolutes, no abiding principles by which human life is to be judged, “you only go around once,” “you better get it now for there is no tomorrow.” All reality is restricted to the now by our culture, even in much of Christianity (prosperity movement).

MATTHEW 6:19-21

5. Secularism is diametrically in conflict with and extremely hostile to Christianity.
 - Consider the stark contrast between, “Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow you die” with “treasure up heavenly treasures in heaven.”
 - Consider the stark contrast between thinking in short term goals verses thinking in terms of eternity with long range implications.
 - Consider the uselessness of believing in Christ or salvation if there are no eternal dimensions; if secularism is true.
 - Consider the difference this all makes in how we invest our lives.

MATTHEW 6:19-21

5. Your life, not your earthly goods, is your investment with God forever. Every day we have the opportunity to make investments in the eternal realm. Every day we are tempted to do something for the now instead of eternity. This is the great conflict that has eternal ramifications.

6. Do we live for the present or for eternity? What is our core orientation? Every action has a consequence on our character and forever. We are eternal beings headed for eternal significance.

Jesus Concept of Happiness, Treasures, and Rewards (Matt. 5:3-12)

1. The different attitudes to happiness/blessedness between ancient culture (Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, Jesus) and modern paganistic culture (Freud to present) are due to materialism and subjectivism. If happiness is a subjective state that depends on the body/senses, then it cannot be lasting or true blessedness.
2. The importance of understanding the subjective and objective elements of happiness and treasures to orient to the objective over the subjective elements and thus be able to maintain the objective state of happiness while enjoying the subjective states.
3. What does our subjective, materialistic world value? What would be on a list of things that would make people happy?

4. Christ's list. The 8 things that Christ said brings the most blessedness.

#1, Matt. 5:3: Blessed (Μακάριοι) are the poor in spirit.

- This is in contrast to attitude that blessings are in riches (Lk 6:20) and honor, i.e., “pride.”
- In poverty of spirit, man bows before God in humility and opens himself up to receive the grace of God.
- The poor of spirit are not weak; they are exactly the opposite. One has to be very strong to be detached from the world's values.
- Those who are poor in spirit are those who are not enslaved by the world's goods.
- The greatest demonstration of the power of those who are poor in spirit is in accepting the will God in all circumstances, thanking God for all things because of understanding of one's own poverty before God.
- Christ's poverty achieved our true riches, 2 Cor. 8:9.
- Lack of poverty of spirit = arrogance, James 4:6.
- This is the source and root of all of the other spiritual virtues that follow.

#2, Blessed are those who mourn (πενθοῦντες) for they shall be comforted.

- This is a result of the former, i.e. understanding one's true poverty before God and His Greatness, Isa. 6; Luke 5:8.
- This is the only mourning that is ever blessed and it is compatible with the highest joy, from the inner to outward.
- Christ did not come to remove all suffering; He came to transform its meaning.
- Consider the blessed state of a person who is mourning in recognition of their evil in contrast to a former state of "pleasure" in evil.
- This comfort begins now only to be completed in the future with Him.

#3, Blessed are the gentle (πραεῖς).

- This attitude begins with God and then moves to others.
- Those who are in poor in spirit and recognize their own unworthiness before God accept His will with humility.
- They are blessed because they do not seek human honor.
- They are OK with not being known, with being anonymous.
- Consider the meekness of Christ in contrast to the Pharisees as well as the Herods and Pilates and Machiavelli's of the world.
- These believers are very strong, they are not wimps or dishrags or hippies.
- The meek are those who do not harm. Do not seek to trample over others for self aggrandizement.
- The meek recognize that the best things in life are found in the spiritual things and not the physical things—in wisdom, and truth, and God rather than in human power or fame or money.
- The spiritually meek are always happy.

#4, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) will be satisfied [here and in the next life].

- Substantive use of the present active ptc for hungering and thirsting.
- This strikes at the root of self-sufficiency. Failure to have hunger and thirst for righteousness means that you are self-satisfied in yourself. Recall what Jesus said to Laodecians.
- This is in stark contrast to spiritual self-complacency, Laodecianism.
- Failure to have hunger and thirst is failure to desire a sanctity that we must have lest we cultivate indifference in our lives.
- This is found in every winner believer in the OT and the NT. They all had a passion for holiness, a hunger and thirst for righteousness.
- This is often dismissed as fanatics, but this is what the Lord commands: to love God infinitely, to put Him above all things.
- Those who do not have a passion for great things only increase their passions for smaller things— a form of demonic power, an insanity to focus and worry about small things while ignoring eternal life.
- It is the seeking and hungering that makes all of the difference: Seek and you shall find!

#5, Blessed are the merciful (ἐλεήμονες).

- Mercy brings peace. God started the mercy with us.
- Would it be safe for you to pray the Lord's Model Prayer? Would you feel comfortable praying for God to forgive you as you are forgiving others?

#6, Blessed are the pure in heart (καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ) for they shall see God.

- This refers to all purity of heart in all issues of life.
- Sex is our society's new god. Almost everything is sacrificed (self, love, faithfulness, marriage, family) and destroyed for this god of pleasure.
- Purity of heart is blessed because anything that is natural is blessed when it is in its purest condition.
- Adam and Eve enjoyed sex far more before the Fall than after.
- Sex is blessed when pure, in the context of love and intimacy rather than reduced to animalistic lust. When reduced to physical pleasure then love is more about the pleasure than it is about loving the person—let alone respect for his or her soul and its good.
- Impure desires are not just confined to sex. They are involved in millions of things human beings are involved with false motives.
- This blessing is experienced in this life and perfected in the next.
- Consider how many believers, because they do not have a pure desire for Truth as such, have become blind to the greatness of God and reality.

#7, Blessed are the peacemakers (εἰρηνοποιοί) for they shall be called the sons of God.

- The peacemakers are not pacifists.
- Happiness and blessedness is not found in pacifism; rather it is found in peace.
- These believers make peace with God, self, and neighbors.
- We can never be at peace with ourselves unless and until we are at peace with God first and foremost.
- There can be no peacemaking apart from victory in spiritual warfare.
- This is not making peace with the world, the flesh, and the devil.
- The only way to have this peace is by winning the war against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

#8, Blessed are those who have been persecuted for righteousness and because of Jesus Christ.

- This blessing is not just in pain and suffering but real persecution—a suffering that is imposed by rejection and hatred.
- Doesn't everyone want to be loved and accepted?
- We are to love our enemies. However, they are still our enemies. In other words, we do not love them by denying that certain people are enemies of Christ and Christianity.
- Persecution is not blessed in itself. It becomes blessed if it is because of righteousness sake, for the sake of God.
- This is being persecuted for being what God wants you to be, to be godlike. Such persecution is testimony that you are a child of God, thus blessed. It is a sign that you are a member of His kingdom.
- This righteousness is real and it is from the LJC and Bible doctrine.

Philippians 4:4-13 – More on Spiritual Value of and Virtue for faith/hope/love

- ❖ Philip. 4:4-13. Note the emphases on natural and spiritual virtue.
- ❖ Philip 4:4, “rejoice in the Lord, again I say rejoice.” It is a spiritual virtue to be able to rejoice in the Lord always. The Lord is the one area of our lives that cannot be affected by the circumstances of life.
- ❖ 4:5, “Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near”
“Forbearance” refers to contentment in life and generosity with others. It is evidenced of having a gracious attitude toward others, especially their faults and failures, even in light of any injustices. This requires total trust in God’s Providence. The Lord being near is spatial; this is living in the presence of God.

- ❖ Philip 4:6. “Be anxious for nothing.” Is this not what Jesus taught in Matthew 6? The importance of prayer as a means of developing an open and intimate relationship with God in 2nd person.

1 Thess. 5:17, “*pray without ceasing.*”

Jude 1:20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the [power of] Holy Spirit;

- ❖ Anxiety indicates lack of trust in God’s wisdom, sovereignty, and power. Note the extend of God’s concurrence: “in everything.” God is in absolute control.
- ❖ You turn the corner when you stop asking God “Why?” to realizing God is asking you “why” = “why are you here? What is the purpose of your life?”

- ❖ Philip 4:7. Supernatural virtue cannot be attained unless God imparts it into the believer. This peace cannot be gained by mental or psychological mechanics. This is transcendent.
- ❖ Philip 4:8-13. Discussion of the nature and development of spiritual virtue.

David's faith/hope/love in God's loving concurrence.

- Psalm 23. Note God's loving concurrence in all of David's life. Note the hope it brings in the valley of the shadow of death. It is not what is the solution to the problems of life, but Who!
- Psalm 32. God's loving concurrence in divine discipline.
- Psalm 51. God's loving concurrence in divine discipline.
- Psalm 139. God's intimate loving concurrence with David from the moment of conception.

Habakkuk's faith/hope/love in God's loving concurrence, Habakkuk 1:2-6; 12-13; 2:1-3; 3:16-19.

- ✓ Note the change of attitude on the part of Habakkuk once He understood the concurrence of God.
- ✓ It was trust in the providence/concurrence of God that caused him to rejoice, even in the face of personal "tragedy."

The Apostle Paul's faith/hope/love in God's loving concurrence.

- Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together (πάντα συνεργεῖ) for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
 - ✓ Irresistible logic, teaches that nothing ultimately bad can happen to you, if you love God.
 - ✓ In fact everything that happens to you is for good, if you love God.
 - ✓ God is the primary cause of everything that happens and has the power in His providence to make every single thing that happens to us for our good.
 - ✓ Do you believe this? Do you believe the Bible?
 - ✓ Concurrence really is the antidote to all fear.
 - ✓ Chance really is incompatible with the nature of God.
 - ✓ We believe our own belief in the God of the Bible and Jesus Christ when we believe that anything can happen by chance.
 - ✓ Characteristics of love who truly love God in contrast to the mass of carnal Christians with their cycles of carnality and reversionism.

Supernatural virtues

MIND



WILL

Romans 12: Spiritual Virtues

VIRTUE Intellective love
Sense love

1. Verses 1-2: Supernatural dedication to God.
2. Verses 3-8: Supernatural humility.
3. Verses 9-21: Supernatural love.



Mental states,
Affections
&
Passions

“Emotions” is a
Cartesian and
Darwinian
concept.

Romans 12:1-2

➤ Virtues 1-4: The Supernatural Virtues associated with dedication to God.

- 1) **Present** (παραστήσαι) your bodies to God.
- 2) **Stop being conformed** (μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε) to this age.
- 3) **Be transformed** (μεταμορφοῦσθε) by the renewing of the mind.
- 4) **Discern** (δοκιμάζειν) the good, enjoyable, and perfect will of God.

Romans 12

➤ **Virtues 5-7: Supernatural virtue of humility. This follows dedication to God.**

5) Don't think too highly of yourself.

6) Have sober judgment about yourself (in relation to others).

7) Serve others with your spiritual gift.

Pride as a vice should never be confused with what is known as “taking pride” in accomplishments. There is a valid and healthy esteem that one can “take pride in” with regard to accomplishments, friends, family, and even country.

Galatians 6:4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another.

➤ Virtues 8-37: Spiritual love (follow humility)

8) Supernatural love: Romans 12:9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

- 9) Abhorring evil,
- 10) Clinging to good,
- 11) Devoted to one another
- 12) Preferring one another,
- 13) Not lagging in diligence,
- 14) Fervent in Spirit,
- 15) Serving the Lord,
- 16) Rejoicing in hope
- 17) Persevering in tribulation
- 18) Devoted to prayer

**THESE VIRTUES ALL DEAL WITH SPIRITUAL LOVE –
THE GREATEST CHRISTIAN VIRTUE.**

**ILLUSTRATIONS OF HOW LOVE CHANGES THE
DIRECTION OF A PERSON'S THOUGHTS AND ACTS.**

-
- 19) Contributing to the needs of the saints
 - 20) Practicing hospitality
 - 21) Bless our persecutors
 - 22) Don't curse our persecutors
 - 23) Rejoice with those who rejoice
 - 24) Weeping with those who weep
 - 25) Being like-minded
 - 26) Not being haughty,
 - 27) Associating with lowly,
 - 28) Not being wise in self-estimation
 - 29) Not repaying evil for evil
 - 30) Respecting what is right before all men
 - 31) As far as possible, being at peace with all men
 - 32) Never taking revenge
 - 33) Trusting God to right the wrong
 - 34) Feeding others (providing goods to enemies)
 - 35) Giving drink to others (returning good to enemies)
 - 36) Not being overcome by evil
 - 37) Overcoming all evil.

Spiritual virtue: supernatural love illustrated

Moral love

#9: hating evil (moral love) (Ἀποστύγοῦντες τὸ πονηρόν), 9. True Christian love hates evil. Unless there is hatred for evil, there is no true love of what is good. One cannot love God and love evil simultaneously. People love what they think is their good.

Love for true good

#10: clinging to the good [goodness of love] (κολλώμενοι τῷ ἀγαθῷ), 9.
True Christian love loves true good. Our love will necessarily show itself in our determination to hold fast to the good. What is your good?

Special love for the royal family of God

#11: devotion to fellow believers in brotherly love [special love]
(φιλόστοργοιτῆ **φιλαδελφία** 10. Christian love naturally manifests its in love for fellow believers (1 John 3:14; Gal. 6:10).

Preferential love and honor for fellow believers

#12: in honor preferring fellow believers (προηγούμενοι τῇ τιμῇ), 10 [preference in love]. True Christian love honors fellow believers. This is an expression of love in humility—“leading the way” in honor fellow believers.

Faithfulness of love

#13: not indolent, not lagging behind in diligence (τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί), 11 [faithfulness in love]. True Christian love is not lazy or indolent about the things of God. Sloth is perhaps the most deadly sin today.

Earnestness of love

#14: being fervent in spirit (τῷ πνεύματι **ζέοντες**), 11 [earnestness of love]. True Christian love is always fervent. Christ predicted that the love of many would grow cold in the last times, Matt. 24:12. Our lives are to ones of fervency regarding God and the things of God.

Principles on spiritual indolence/sloth

1. God's grave warnings regarding spiritual sloth.
 - Don't drift, Heb. 2:1-4
 - Don't wander, Heb. 3:12-13
 - Don't be dull or apathetic about God's Word, Heb. 5:11-6:8
 - Don't shrink back, Heb. 10:26-31.
 - Listen! 12:25-29.

Principles on spiritual indolence/sloth

2. Spiritual sloth is the most prevalent sin in our age. It is the sin that so clearly distinguishes modern Western society from all previous societies too.

Principles on spiritual indolence/sloth

3. Characteristics of *spiritual* sloth.

- Spiritual sloth refuses to exert the will toward the Good.
- It is a sin against love of God. It robs a person for their appetite, interest, and enjoyment in God. The person stops pursuing God. There is a general indifference and dismissive attitude to God.
- Spiritual sloth should not be confused with general laziness. Generally, people who are spiritually slothful are frantically busy with their Martha-like world—cf., the frantic activism in our government.
- It is the most prevalent sin in modern society. We live in the first generation that does not know *who it is or why it is*.

Principles on spiritual indolence/sloth

3. Characteristics of *spiritual* sloth.

- It is a sin of omission, not commission. There is little to no active seeking of God or His will in prayer or in the Word. It is *lack* of seeking God and hungering for righteousness.
- A cold sin, a sin of indifference that is described as making Christ want to vomit. Lack of devotion and love for God.
- Boredom with life and God. They have all kinds of entertainment gadgets but their souls are empty of the beauty of life and God.
- Stops man from seeking God, thus finding Him.
- Causes the light to be darkness and the salt to lose its saltiness. It tends to be amoral instead of immoral.

Principles on spiritual indolence/sloth

3. Characteristics of *spiritual* sloth.

- No desire for spiritual and heavenly tasks or rewards. The idea that they could lose *eternal* rewards means nothing to them.
- The only antidote is hungering for God and His righteousness, Matt. 6.

Genuineness of love illustrated in Romans 12

#15: serving the Lord (τῷ κυρίῳ **δουλεύοντες**), 11. True Christian love serves the Lord, the CCL. The genuineness of love. How can anyone say they really love the Lord if they are not serving Him? What kind of love is that? John 14:151; Colossians.

The joy of love

#16: rejoicing in hope (τῇ ἐλπίδι **χαίροντες**), 12. True Christian love is filled with the joy of hope: the power of love for God in the presence of suffering and tribulation. What kind of love does not rejoice in the Lord and His hope? Joy and delight always follow love.

The endurance of love

#17: persevering in tribulation (τῇ θλίψει **ὑπομένοντες**), 12. True Christian love will not give up during the trials of life. The endurance of love: only with true love for God and the things of God is this possible.

Consider Abraham's perseverance in testing.

The devotion of love

#18: devoted to prayer (τῇ προσευχῇ **προσκατεροῦντες**), 12. True Christian love spends time with God in prayer.

The unselfishness of love

#19: contributing to the needs of the saints (ταῖς χρείαις τῶν ἁγίων **κοινωνοῦντες**), 13. True Christian love is unselfish. See James 1:26-27.

The large-heartedness of love

#20: practicing hospitality (τὴν φιλοξενίαν **διώκοντες**), 13. True Christian love is large-hearted.

Virtue: Love that blesses persecutors.

#21: bless them which persecute you (εὐλογεῖτε). True Christian love loves enemies. This is straight from the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5:10-11.

#22: do not curse (μὴ καταρᾶσθε). True Christian love does not curse enemies. Loving our enemies instead of running them down.

Virtue: love that empathizes

#23: rejoice with those who rejoice (χαίρειν μετὰ χαιρόντων). True Christian love is happy for others; it is not envious. Love is always glad when others are blessed. Love is never envious.

#24: weep with those who weep (κλαίειν μετὰ κλαιόντων). True Christian love is compassionate.

Spiritual Virtue: a love that seeks common ground

#25: be of the same mind toward one another (τὸ αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονοῦντες). True Christian love seeks to find points of agreement.

Spiritual virtue: spurning pride and arrogance.

#26: do not be haughty (μὴ τὰ ὑψηλὰ φρονοῦντες). True Christian love is not interested in pre-eminence.

#27-associate with the lowly (ταπεινοῖς συναπαγόμενοι). True Christian love cares for those of lower states, those others do not care about.

Spiritual virtue: love that avoids conceit

#28: "Do not be wise in your own estimation" (μὴ γίνεσθε φρόνιμοι παρ' ἑαυτοῖς.) which is connected to following clauses in verse 17-19. True Christian love avoids occupation with self-importance.

Spiritual virtue: love that refuses to take revenge

#29: never pay back evil (μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες). True Christian love does not desire revenge.

Spiritual virtue: love that respects the true, good, and beautiful

#30: respect what is right/beautiful in the sight of all men (προνοούμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων). True Christian love loves the true, good, and beautiful.

Spiritual virtue: a love that seeks peace

#31: living at peace with all men (μετὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων εἰρηνεύοντες). True Christian love always seeks peace.

#32: never take revenge (μὴ ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδικοῦντες). True Christian love is not vengeful.