

# Biblical-Philosophical Psychology 98—Spiritual virtues 38 (The Vertical Life vs. the Horizontal Life)

## Bible Doctrines (The True-Good-Beautiful)

### T/G/B

Eschatology  
 Thanatology  
 Ecclesiology  
 Israelology  
 Dispensationalism  
 Doxology  
 Hodology  
 Soteriology  
 Hamartiology  
 Natural Law  
 Anthropology  
 Angelology  
 Pneumatology  
 Christology  
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Hermeneutics

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 Existence 28

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 Trans. 50

Reality—Logic 32,  
 Truth 32

3/12/2014

Opening passages: John 8:32; 1 Tim. 3:15; Matt. 22:37-40; Job 42:5; Matt. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 4:16-18; 1 Tim. 6:10; Ecc. 2:1-11; Num. 6:23-24.

These passages emphasize the importance and blessings of the transcendent vertical spiritual life in contrast to the dangers of the horizontal transient life, the latter which lacks eternal reference point for meaning, purpose, and value.

The transcendent spiritual life is a supernatural life that is only possible by God infusing in the believer supernatural virtues. All the believer can do is seek these virtues and put himself in a position to receive them from God by fellowship and BD.

All problems we face must be handled on the transcendent level. Earthly solutions are never true or lasting solutions. Consider the need to orient to the transcendence of God's sovereignty and love/goodness.

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-28**

**The importance of orientation to these 6 views for biblical and scientific understanding of reality as such.**

1. Physicalism: Impossible on scientific, rational, or moral grounds.
2. Agnosticism: Intellectually dishonest.
3. Deism: Implausible on scientific and biblical grounds.
4. Conservationism: Implausible on metaphysical grounds.
5. Concurrentism: Comports with reality, science and the Bible.
6. Occasionalism: Implausible on scientific and biblical grounds (no natures, no causation in creation, no free will. Problem is that it posits an “all or nothing” approach. It is the other extreme of conservationism.

## EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-28

We will be moving towards providing a model for understanding how concurrentism works, how God and 2<sup>nd</sup> causes cooperate.

1. God is not only transcendent *over* but also immanent *in* all creation.
2. God creates the existence of all things, conserves the existence of all things, and acts in the causal operations of all creation.
3. God's involvement (providence) is deep and intimate: there is nothing that goes on in the universe in which God is not, in some way directly and immediately, involved in.

## EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-28

4. However, how are we to understand God's deep involvement in all that exists? It is easy, by process of elimination, to understand that God must give all things existence and this must extend to their activities. But how does this work? What is the *precise* relationship that obtains between God's providence and secondary, creaturely causation?
  - a. We have seen that conservationism (CON) is simply too weak to account for God causal activity in nature.
  - b. We have also seen, on the other end of the spectrum, that occasionalism (OCC) is untenable.
  - c. Both CON and OCC run into trouble because they conceive of God and creature as *univocal* causes.

## **EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-28**

5. The bottom line is that creaturely activity, though not causally sufficient, is necessary for its effects.
  
6. Concurrentism (CUR) claims, contrary to CON, that God is immediately, causally involved in every event in the ordinary course of nature, and contrary to OCC, that creatures are causally involved in natural events.

## **EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-28**

7. In other words, for any natural effect to obtain, both God and creature must make a genuine causal contribution to the effect. They act jointly.
  - a. Creatures would have no power to act on their own without God's concurrence.
  - b. God's finite effects through finite creation requires finite creation.
  - c. Hence, both God and creatures, have different causal powers.
  - d. God contributes to the ordinary course of nature only as a universal or general cause who cooperates with or concurs with secondary causes.

## EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-28

8. Understanding God's cooperative activity.
  - a. The cooperative activity is not like a man who pushes his stalled car out of traffic.
  - b. The cooperative activity is not like two people pushing the stalled car. God does not enter alongside or behind in a division of labor.
  - c. The cooperative activity is not like using another car to push the stalled car. God's cooperation is not instrumental.
  - d. The cooperative activity is not part God and part creature.
  - e. Rather, each participant is said to be an immediate and total cause of both action involved, and the effect produced.
  - f. The following classes will be devoted to explaining the nature and providing a model of for concurrent acts.

**MATTHEW 6:19-21**

**The Eternal Vertical Life vs. the Transient Horizontal Life**



*Don't store up treasures here on earth. Store treasures in heaven.*

**Mat6;19-20**

## **MATTHEW 6:19-21**

Matthew 6:19 “Stop treasuring up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and corrosion destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 "But treasure up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor corrosion destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

1. The emphasis in the passage is on the vertical, heavenly, transcendental life in contrast to the horizontal, earthly, transient, flat life. Christ’s emphasis is not only how certain physical treasures in heaven are safer than on earth.

## MATTHEW 6:19-21

2. What secularism creates. Let's consider how these philosophies of kosmos diabolicus capture and destroy men, both believers and unbelievers. How these anti-vertical, anti-eternal perspectives destroy human dignity. The vertical view beyond rewards to an eternal standard of values.
  - a. Existentialism (Kierkegaard, Sartre, Camus, Nietzsche, Hemmingway)
    - We and our children have been soaked with this philosophy.
    - "Existence precedes essence;" anti-metaphysical, anti-philosophical; no longer any universals or transcendent values; all is subjective.
    - Removal of ladder from earth to God—begins and ends with particular existence. All life is flattened out to the horizontal.
    - Cf., art (Picasso), literature (Hemmingway), and the cinema (They Shoot Horses Don't They)—no longer any stories with heroes and transcendent meaning (like Rocky I).
    - Everyone is free to do his own thing.
    - What existentialism in the church looks like (irrationality, lack of objectivity, subjective introspection, rejection of metaphysics and philosophy).

## MATTHEW 6:19-21

### b. Humanism.

- Distinction between humanism and humanitarianism.
- Protagoras, *Homo mensura*.
- Man and not God is the center of value and focus.
- Naturalistic presuppositions: Rejection of miracles; Bible is viewed as a product of primitive man's view of the world (Job 38; Matthew 5-6); rejection of the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ.
- Rejection of teaching of "pie in the sky" or hope in the next life for the suffering.
- Leads to statism, cf. communism.
- All values and rights are from man, not God (from abortion "rights" to values regarding right and wrong in society).
- What humanism looks like in the church (social gospel, deism, view of the Bible as product of primitive man).

## MATTHEW 6:19-21

- c. Pragmatism (William James, FDR, John Kennedy)
- All about what “works.” This philosophy is original to U.S. and pervades the American spirit. However, the problem is that it is short term (cf., SS and Obama-Care) and creates more intractable problems later.
  - The distinction between pragmatism as a test for truth versus a theory of truth.
  - Problems: no correspondence truth, lack of virtue, short term orientation, expedient (Pilate), subjective (cf., drugs and alcohol), no access to eternal values.
  - What pragmatism looks like in the church (“I believe in this religion because it works for me”; “I like this doctrine because it works for me;” truth is determined by what “works” for a person); no need for theology or philosophy; very skeptical about ability to come to Ultimate Truth). Drugs and alcohol also works, in the short term.
  - Every person lives out their theoretical views, whether they can state them or not.

## MATTHEW 6:19-21

- d. Hedonism. When the transcendent is removed all ultimate bases for truth and meaning are destroyed.
- Music and culture (e.g., from "how can it be wrong, if it feels so good?" to Madonna, Miley Cyrus, and now Beyonce).
  - Source of rise of alcoholism, drugs, pot-heads, and depression among the young and old.
  - The hedonistic paradox.
  - The increase in orientation to feelings has brought about the rise of secular psychology.
  - New sexual ethics.
  - Hedonism calls Christ a fool for willingly embracing pain.
  - What hedonism looks like in the church (anti-nomianism, prosperity gospel, emotions/feeling-based as per "how do you *feel* about this?" feelings determine attitude toward a local church, inability to stay in fellowship with God, inability to really learn theological concepts in the Word of God).

## MATTHEW 6:19-21

3. Secularism and all of the other horizontal philosophies are diametrically in conflict with and extremely hostile to Christianity precisely because they cut themselves off from the transcendental realm.
  - 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 the Transcendent
  - What is the need for salvation, if all value and meaning is tied to this temporal realm?
  - We are pressed upon by every side from society which is very geared to horizontal thinking (e.g., '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

- Consider the stark contrast between, “Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow you die” with “treasure up heavenly treasures in heaven.”

1 Corinthians 15:19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

- 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**

4. Your life, not your earthly goods, is your investment with God and it is 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.
  
5. 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.
- 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 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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
- 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.

**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.**

## 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.