

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
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Hermeneutics

Linguistics

Epistemology 9
Existence 29

Metaphysics -32
Trans. 50

Reality –Logic 32,
Truth 32

3/15/2014

Opening passages with a few comments: Matt. 22:37-40; Job 42:5; John 8:32; Acts 20:27-32 ; 2 Tim. 3:16-4:4; 3:1-4.

There are a thousand ways the modern mindset inoculates itself against God, the whole truth of the Word of God, Jesus Christ, and the SL, a thousand ways to become lovers of ___ rather than lovers of God (cf., lukewarmism, naturalism, reductionism, rationalism, functionalism, existentialism, hedonism, pragmatism, materialism). These mindsets are in stark contrast to the believer in Romans 8:28.

C.S. Lewis was very prophetic in his warnings about the destruction of human-ity. My biggest concern as pastor-teacher is the destruction of true Christian-ity by believers.

The 1st part of class covers the transcendence of God in creation as per concurrence. The 2nd part of class deals with the consequences of removing the vertical perspective, that Ladder to God.

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-29

Existence and Concurrentism – We should be able to complete this philosophical understanding just in time for the passages on God making flowers grow.

1. All contingent be-ings only exist because they borrow be-ing from God, who is the First Cause, the sole Necessary Being. Being is His Essence.
2. For any natural effect to obtain, both God and creature must make a genuine causal contribution to the effect. Contrary to CON (conservationism), contingent creatures can in no way be independent in acting. Contrary to OCC (occasionalism), creatures do have causal powers that are different from the causal power of Necessary Being.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-29

Existence and Concurrentism

3. God contributes to the ordinary cause of nature as general cause who cooperates with or concurs with secondary causes.

God's cooperatively activity

- is NOT like God is pushing things along (like pushing a stalled car)—without God contingent beings are totally impotent.
- is NOT like God is helping something else (like help from another to push the stalled car) because God and creature are not partial causes of the effect.
- is NOT like God using an extrinsic instrument (using another car to push the stalled car) for God does not use instruments to produce the effects.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-29

Existence and Concurrentism

4. God and creature are the immediate and total cause of both the action involved and the effect produced (CUR).
5. When God immediately and continuously effects creatures, He must also effect their products and acts as well. The being and production of being cannot be separated. Therefore, God must contribute to the effects and acts of creatures.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-29

Existence and Concurrentism

6. Just because God is the efficient *extrinsic* cause of all activity (*esse* with its productions) does not mean that there is no causal activity in beings as per the nonsense of OCC
7. In concurrentism creatures/beings can be genuine causes—i.e. have true and efficacious active causal powers—while at the same time maintain that there is an essential aspect of species of causal activity that creatures cannot aspire to, such that they must employ those powers in cooperation, conjunction, or union with God's strong providential, primary activity.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-29

Existence and Concurrentism

8. More on the necessity for God to concur with creatures.

- ✓ Being or existence is the proper effect of God alone. Only God can cause existence or *esse* of any particular thing.
- ✓ The existence of every thing is God's effect, so that whatever brings a thing into existence, does so in so far as by God's power. Everything that operates does so by God's power of giving existence.
- ✓ Creatures do not have the power to create their own existences. God is the efficient cause.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-29

Existence and Concurrentism

- ✓ The First Cause necessarily extends throughout all 2nd causes. Each thing that God creates is such that it cannot exist at any moment without God's immediate and per se causal influx.
- ✓ If the cause depends on God for its *esse*, then the effect will, too, since both are beings-through-participation. Both the existence as well as all that the existence is involved is dependent.
- ✓ Neither the being nor the effects of the being can do anything without God's concurrence. This means that if a creature could have production on its own, then it could have existence on its own as well.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-29

Existence and Concurrentism

9. It is God who moves secondary agents from potentiality to actuality in each instance of causality. In order to do this, the secondary agent must have some active causal powers that are in potential to some given activity.
10. Whatever is moved, is moved by another (not just physical things). In other words a thing cannot move itself from potentiality to actuality in the same respect.
 - a. A thing moves insofar as it is reduced from potentiality to act.
 - b. Nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality except by something in a state of actuality.
 - c. It is not possible to be actual and potential in the same respect.
 - d. Thus. it is not possible to be mover and moved in the same respect.
 - e. Therefore, whatever is moved is moved by another.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #9, Grasp of Existence-29

Existence and Concurrentism

11. God, being the first mover, wholly immovable—i.e. being pure act Himself—is required to get the operation of the secondary agent going, and hence to sustain it throughout the causal event.
12. In other words, the ability to act without assistance or cooperation from another agent is proper to God alone. When creatures act or operate, they do so only with God's immediate causal assistance.



*Your eye is a lamp that provides light for your body.
When your eye is good, your whole body is filled with light.
But when your eye is bad, your whole body is filled
with darkness. And if the light you think you have is
actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!*

Matthew 6:22-23

MATTHEW 6:19-23

The Destruction of Human-ity and Christian-ity

Matthew 6:19 Μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαυρούς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅπου σὴς καὶ βρῶσις ἀφανίζει καὶ ὅπου κλέπται διορύσσουσιν καὶ κλέπτουσιν·

20 θησαυρίζετε δὲ ὑμῖν θησαυρούς ἐν οὐρανῶ, ὅπου οὔτε σὴς οὔτε βρῶσις ἀφανίζει καὶ ὅπου κλέπται οὐ διορύσσουσιν οὐδὲ κλέπτουσιν·

21 ὅπου γάρ ἐστιν ὁ θησαυρός σου, ἐκεῖ ἔσται καὶ ἡ καρδία σου.

22 Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν ὁ ὀφθαλμός. ἐὰν οὖν ᾦ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου **ἀπλοῦς**, ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινὸν ἔσται·

23 ἐὰν δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου **πονηρὸς** ᾦ, ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινὸν ἔσται. εἰ οὖν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν σοὶ σκότος ἐστίν, τὸ σκότος πόσον.

MATTHEW 6:19-23

The Destruction of Human-ity and Christian-ity

1. You focus (“eye”) is everything. All one has to do to move into great evil and darkness is to make the horizontal life the main focus, make it preeminent over the vertical.
2. To make the horizontal, the secular, the main issue in life is embrace the philosophy of secularism and the darkness of its various philosophies (hedonism, pragmatism, humanism, existentialism, reductionism, scientism).

MATTHEW 6:19-23

The Destruction of Human-ity and Christian-ity

3. The darkness that exists today is due to the systematic dismantling of the vertical vision, that Ladder to Heaven. It is unprecedented and very troubling. Consider the darkness.
 - Destruction of the uniqueness of man (Abolition of Man, Brave New World) and what it would take to reverse the trend.
 - Destruction of the uniqueness of authentic, biblical Christianity, and what it would take to reverse the trend. Many Christians live in the dark categories of unbelievers because they share the same philosophy.
 - Destruction of understanding man.
 - Destruction of objective values will destroy society as we know it.
 - Destruction of natural law now exceeds anything in paganism.

MATTHEW 6:19-23

The Destruction of Human-ity and Christian-ity

4. The darkness of secularISM [horizontal perspective] flattens man and reality and it spawns a number of philosophies that systematically destroy the uniqueness of man and the true nature of Christianity. To reduce man to these dark philosophies is to destroy man's nobility.

Existentialism

Humanism

Positivism

Pragmatism

Hedonism

Pluralism

Relativism

Scientism

MATTHEW 6:19-23

The Destruction of Human-ity and Christian-ity

5. These flat, reductionistic philosophies silently and systematically work beneath the surface remolding a man's "ways of thinking." Once they take root they are extremely difficult to remove, cf., deism vs. concurrence. Bombs can only destroy bodies, it is philosophies that destroy souls.

6. These modernistic philosophies, with all of their dogma on the subjectivity of values, will certainly lead to the damnation of many souls and will end our species as we know it. Consider the disastrous results in education, public schools, family, sex, abortion, and the modern church. Consider the distance from McGuffey Readers to Dewey and then from Dewey to the Brave New World.

MATTHEW 6:19-23

The Destruction of Human-ity and Christian-ity

7. Consider the disaster of self-help gurus of modernity, pop psychologists, and their human ladders to “I am OK, You are OK.”
 - Pop psychology is our most popular tower of Babel both inside and outside of the church. Self-help books of psychology outnumber all other books, in all other sciences combined in the bookstores.
 - Even in the church, more people, including the clergy, look to psychology rather than theology and see Jesus as the Mr. Rogers and the church as Mr. Rogers’ neighborhood.
 - However, all of these human success ladders will never take you to objective meaning and value.
 - Only God knows you. Only God can save you. Only God can sanctify you. Only God can give you your heart’s desire.

MATTHEW 6:19-23

The Destruction of Human-ity and Christian-ity

8. The poison of subjectivism must be addressed and the only way to get it out of our system is Bible doctrine in the context of Philosophical Realism. Apart from God and Bible doctrine there are no transcendent values. Apart from philosophical realism, there is no objectivity to guard the objective biblical values. You cannot be biblical without philosophical realism.

MATTHEW 6:19-21

9. The darkness of an **Existentialism**. (Sartre, Camus, Kierkegaard). Note that Christ's warnings in Matthew is for His believers, the disciples.
- Characteristics: *Being and Nothingness*, horizontal, non-transcendent, existence is more important than essence, everyone is free to create their own "natures"; anti-metaphysical; anti-philosophical, subjective, nihilistic. Consider how disbelief in narrative effects views of the incarnation.
 - Effects in society (nihilistic movies, art, literature, cf., two Madonna's).
 - Effects in Christianity (irrationalism, mysticism, subjectivity, fideism, focus on existence rather than nature).
 - Effects among *some* "doctrinal" believers (rejection of metaphysics and philosophy, rejection of logic, nominalistic, personal existence and feelings more important than the eternal perspective, functional view of BD rather than a growing whole truth view of reality).

MATTHEW 6:19-21

10. The darkness of **Humanism**.

- Characteristics: man, not God, is the center of value; naturalism, all values and rights are from man, not God.
- Effects on society: positive law, abortion, gay lifestyle, approval of sodomy, banning of the Bible, statism, communism.
- Effects in Christianity: social gospel, deism, naturalistic view of the Bible.
- Effects among *some* “doctrinal” believers: I have a right to do x, y, or z because the state says I have that right; I am the center of the Plan of God; I determine what is best for me.

MATTHEW 6:19-21

11. The darkness of **Pragmatism** (William James, FDR, John Kennedy)

- Characteristics: it is all about the short-term of what works now.
- Effects on society: dismantling of correspondence truth, lack of virtue, subjective, no eternal values, skeptical about absolute truth.
- Effects on Christianity: short-term orientation, emphasis on which religion works for them, no need for philosophy or theology, very skeptical about Ultimate Truth.
- Effects on *some* “doctrinal” believers: very works oriented and performance oriented; doctrine for pragmatic purposes (FRT only).

MATTHEW 6:19-21

12. The darkness of **Hedonism**.

- Characteristics: sensate, feeling-oriented, rejection of traditional moral values, destruction of virtue.
- Effects on society: drugs, alcohol, break up of the family, depression, destruction of the uniqueness of man, new sexual ethics.
- Effects on Christianity: antinomian, prosperity gospel, emotions/feeling-based,
- Effects on *some* doctrinal believers: inability to stay in fellowship, lack of faithfulness in support of fellow believers, inability to learn abstract theological and philosophical concepts, self-victimization, remain an infant spiritually, narcissistic, antinomian.

MATTHEW 6:19-21

13. The darkness of **scientism** and technology.

- Characteristics of “technologism”: the new summum bonum; enables us to be like gods; illustration of the technology by pairing the following: Christianity, Science, magic, technology.
- Effects of “technologism” on society: conquering nature has resulted in nature conquering man (TV, entertainment, etc, mind molders molding the minds of millions of minds of people, creating horizontal people like themselves—men without chests, no reference to Transcendent Realm, no Ladder. This all leads to inoculation against Christ.
- Effects of “technologism” on Christianity. Lack of capacity to think and concentrate, dumb down Christian with only slogans and cliches to live by. Loss of local church. Loss of authentic Christianity.
- Effects of “technologism” on *some* doctrinal believers. Loss of Christian spirit of family of believers; Lone Ranger Christianity. Loss of authentic Christianity. Loss of local church attendance.

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 (δικαιοσύνην) 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 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

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

VIRTUE Intellective love
Sense 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) (Ἀποστουγῶντες 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.