

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

John 8:32; Job 42:5-6. Questions? Outline of today's class (1:15) : 10 minute intro on loving God as *the* philosophy of the Christian life; 15 minutes on epistemology; 50 minutes on our continuing study of the spiritual virtues in the Beatitudes where we will review key passages and move into Ecclesiastes.

The key issue in all of life is the continual development of loving God with all of our hearts, souls, minds, and strength (Matt. 22:37-38; Lk. 10:41-42). Apart from this focus, there is no *true* Christian philosophy of the spiritual life. Loving the Bible and Bible doctrine, while a necessary condition for loving God, it is not a sufficient condition. The greatest enemy has always been partial view of truth. Thus, the greatest need is whole truth.

Consider Pharisee Paul who loved the Scriptures & touched the righteousness of the Torah, but had no loving/grace relationship with God, Philip 3

Note our enhanced understanding God and Reality by moving into the 3rd level of understanding, the metaphysical (CF., the name, nature of God, His sovereignty & omnipresence, language, creation. There is no way we could have advanced in this understanding apart from a graduated, progressive study of whole truth, which necessitates PR. Apart from seeking whole truth, believers end up with the cultish Word of Faith methodology (cf., Finis Dake Study Bible), all the while deceiving themselves even as they memorize and use the Bible, but never really understanding or using it in accordance with the biblical *philosophy* on God, creation, man, or the spiritual life.

Stage 3

Stage 3 – Christian metaphysician = life of glory!

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

Holy Spirit

Bible Doctrine



Stage 2

Stage 2 – Christian doctrinal believer = life of doctrine!

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

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.

Hermeneutics
Linguistics
Epistemology 10 -Existence 50
Metaphysics -32 -Trans. 50
Reality –Logic 32, -Truth 32

EPISTEMOLOGY: #10

Foundations of Epistemology and Philosophical Realism

1. Overview of “Epistemology”

- a. From the Greek meaning “science of knowledge.”
- b. Historical problem: “How does the mind move from an understanding of itself and its own operations, to an understanding of things in the world?”
- c. Metaphysics of knowledge: “The act of knowledge and the conditions proper to that act in light of its existence.”
- d. Psychology of knowledge: Investigation of the origin, nature, and the processes of human intellection.
- e. Hence, epistemology is concerned with c+d, the metaphysics of knowledge + the psychology of knowledge.
- f. Epistemology investigates the conditions of the diversity of human knowledge (i.e., the slices of reality: mathematical, scientific, historical) as well as the different *types* of knowledge (acquaintance, competence, propositional, and personal).
- g. Epistemology is difficult, but the rewards are enormous even for those who are able to gain only 5% of the concepts.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #10

Man's knowledge of Reality

- 2. Rene Descartes (1596-1650), the father of modern philosophy and thus the greatest influence on our modern mindset.**
 - a. A brilliant mathematician who had little patience for late scholasticism and their decadent metaphysics. He attempted to adopt the mathematical method for certainty, to gain indubitability, and Archimedean point.
 - b. His skeptical and doubtful epistemology has ruled epistemology for 300+ years, with disastrous effects for Christian understanding of man, creation, God, and reality.
 - c. His abiding pernicious influence is in his philosophy of dualism, his dichotomy between the mind and the body (ghost in the machine), which has no means of connecting what the body and soul knows. This is very pernicious in contemporary Christianity, which sees the the mind/soul and body are two separate things, the former is simply a captain of the ship/body. There is also a pernicious effect in being able to see God as per Romans 1:20.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #10

Man's knowledge of Reality

3. Epistemological options.

- a. #1 - Non-critical metaphysical realism (Aristotelianism, Thomism): reality is evident and indemonstrable. The concern is with how the mind knows things, not the justification of our instruments of knowledge.
- b. #2- Critical idealism (Kant): our thinking about things construct them in some way.
- c. #3 – Subjective idealist (perspectivalists like Nietzsche): a person's thoughts constitute reality, one's perspective of the world constructs the world for him.
- d. #4 – Objective idealism (Hegel, Fichte, Schelling): we have a shared reality that is part of the Mind, the Absolute Mind (not our mind).
- e. #5 - Critical Realist. They think they objects exist objectively apart from us and we know them but, along with the critical philosophers, they think that we must begin with the justification of knowledge. They do not believe we can assume the existence of the world.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #10

Man's knowledge of Reality

4. Only PR (philosophical realism) begins with the self-evident nature of the world.

- a. The charge against PR (non-critical realism of Aristotle and Aquinas) is they assume the reality of the world. However, this is not true. The 3 options on “things existing outside of the mind:”
 - 1) Evident: truth grasped immediately (whole is greater than its part)
 - 2) Proved: validly concluded from prior certain propositions.
 - 3) Assumed/postulated: could be true or false. This is not a conclusion from being evident or proved from a syllogism of propositions.
- b. PR do not “postulate/assume” reality (3), for that would mean that it needs to be proved. Furthermore, reality is not a candidate for demonstration or proof (2). Rather, reality is immediately grasped and evident (1).
- c. If “things exist” is evident, then it is unproven. If it is something that needs to be proved, then there are prior assumptions outside of reality; but if “things exist” is evident, then it is evident and needs no proof.
- c. PR must not be confused with naïve realism, which is unable to give a philosophical account of reality.
- d. We must not forget as philosophers, those things we know as men. We are to do philosophy with everything we know as men and women.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #10

Man's knowledge of Reality

5. The realism of philosophical realism.

- a. Thought experiment: look at your Bible. Three elements: (1) the subject/you, (2) act of knowing, and (3) what is known/Bible. Retain only the act of knowing, without referring to you (1) or the object known (3). Try to think of the known without referring to yourself as the knower or the thing known. This puts you in the position of the critical philosopher who focuses on the act of knowing itself. He insists on beginning philosophy with the naked certitude possessed by a disembodied principle of pure thought understanding only itself and its own laws.
- b. However, the Realist says you are missing key elements, the nature of the knower and the nature of the object known.
- c. In contrast to dualism, the PR stresses the unity of the whole man. The intellect does not know and the senses do not know; the man knows by means of his intellect working with senses.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #10

Man's knowledge of Reality

5. The realism of philosophical realism.

- d. It is only man as a body/soul unity, hylemorphic being, that knows things to exist. He knows things exist by neither demonstrated nor postulated; they are evident.

- e. Man knows what he senses and senses what he knows. By setting aside dualism, we see that man is one complex unity with immaterial aspect, his soul, and a material aspect, his body. However, they are not broken down into separate substances. The soul is the substantial form of the body. So we do not talk about the intellect knowing things or the senses knowing things , but the man knowing things through his senses and intellect. False perceptions can only be corrected only by true perceptions. How do you know they are false? By closer inspection of reality itself! The only way to know if you are deceived is by closer examination, which will include the sense data. The intellect is able to measure senses with standards of reality, e.g., a hologram verses a real plant.

EPISTEMOLOGY: #10

Man's knowledge of Reality

5. The realism of philosophical realism.

- f. Cartesianism tries to find reality of idea in the mind to ground itself. Hence, the problem. They distrust sense data. However, there is no sensation in the abstract: sense data is part of intellection. The very concept of sensation is a concept in the mind. There is no such thing as raw sense data – sense and intellect are not at war with each other, they are the powers of a single knowing subject. Through their mutual interpenetration the intellect sees the universal and singular. My senses give me access to my powerpoints and these words, but my intellect allows me to see the universal and single natures of the words on these slides.
- g. The critical realist must find something more certain than reality, like *rules* of logic. In contrast to the PR orients to the laws of logic in terms of being. Thus logic, for the PR, are inviolable 3 laws of being, or reality itself instead of rules in cognition.

Reviewing and enlarging our understanding of the Vertical-Eternal Perspective

1. Recall our initial look at Jesus's concept of spiritual virtue.

Matthew 6:19 "Stop treasuring up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 "But treasure up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 22 "The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. 23 "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! 24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will **hate the one** and **love the other**, or he will **hold to one** and **despise the other**. You cannot **serve God** and **mammon/materialism**.

- ❖ Consider the darkness that is guaranteed simply by focusing on the temporal-horizontal life. What does that say about much of contemporary Christianity that makes this life the main focus?
- ❖ Is there any wonder why the flat horizontal life is so boring and empty even though we have far more toys than our ancestors.
- ❖ Think of the darkness and damage to the Christian life by viewing Christianity as primarily about solving earthly problems.

2. Recall the warnings about priorities and the need for the eternal vertical perspective.

Matthew 6:31 "Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' 32 "For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 "**But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness**; and all these things shall be added to you. 34 "Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Colossians 3:1 If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 **Set your mind on the things above**, not on the things that are on earth.

Philippians 3:18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, **who set their minds on earthly things**. 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

3. Recall Christ's view of "happiness" in contrast to the world's: He not only disagrees with the world which teaches that riches, lack of pain, fame, and self-satisfaction is the way to great happiness/blessedness, He directly contradicts each standard, point by point, teaching that their opposites actually bring the greatest **μακάριοι**. If anyone else did this they would call him insane.

1. **μακάριοι** are the **poor in spirit**: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. **μακάριοι** are those **who mourn**: for they shall be comforted.
3. **μακάριοι** are the **gentle**: for they shall inherit the earth.
4. **μακάριοι** are **those who hunger and thirst for righteousness**: for they shall be satisfied.
5. **μακάριοι** are the **merciful**: for they shall receive mercy.
6. **μακάριοι** are the **pure in heart**: for they shall see God.
7. **μακάριοι** are the **peacemakers**: for they shall be called sons of God.
8. **μακάριοι** are those **who have been persecuted** for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 **μακάριοι** are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. 12 "Rejoice, and be glad, for **your reward in heaven is great**, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

4. Recall the nature and external source of this righteousness that comes as a result of brokenness of spirit, dissatisfaction with self, and genuine humility.

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#4- μακάριοι are **those who hunger and thirst for righteousness**: for they shall be satisfied.

- #4 is the greatest way to test your spiritual life.
- Cf., Philippians 3:8-10 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;
- Lack of 4th virtue is what marks off our generations from all former generations: where is the passion for righteousness and God? Recall Christ's prescription in Revelation 3: repent and be zealous! Open your eyes, find wealth in God, and live the spiritual life.

ECCLESIASTES- The Vexation of Half-truths about God and Life

1. Consider the vexation of spirit and vanity of vanities of the temporal, horizontal perspective (hedonism, secularism, humanism, pragmatism, materialism) and the half-truths in Ecclesiastes.
 - a. The vanity of “generations after generations,” 1:1-11 (cf. 1 John 2:7)
 - b. The vanity of human knowledge, 1:12-18.
 - c. The vanity of hedonism, 2:1-3.
 - b. The vanity of human achievements, 2:4-8.
 - c. The vanity of fame, 2:9.
 - a. The vanity materialism, 2:12-23.
 - b. The mystery of time, 3:1-15.
 - c. The mystery of injustice and death, 3:16-22.

ECCLESIASTES- The Vexation of Half-truths about God and Life

2. Only after struggling with the vexing vanity of working through all of the issues of life with partial truth perspectives, Solomon discovers the whole truth about life for all, the young and the old, Ecclesiastes. 11:9-12:14.
 - a. Rejoice in life, reflect on God, and remember your Creator, 11:9-12:1.
 - b. The natural/physical evil in this world that awaits all who continue to live, 12:2-8.
 - c. The eternal perspective, 12:7.
 - d. The whole unsuppressed truth about us, God, and reality as such, 12:13-14. The importance of making the most of every opportunity of our short lives.

How the eternal perspective, the whole truth, lights up, blesses, and ennobles our temporal lives

Psalm 16:8 I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. 10 For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. 11 Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fulness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever.

Psalm 23:1 A Psalm of David . The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. 3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me. 5 Thou dost prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; Thou hast anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

How the eternal perspective, the whole truth, lights up, blesses, and ennobles our temporal lives

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; 10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Hebrews 11:16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

How the horizontal, temporal perspective, a perspective that always excludes God, destroys the spiritual life.

2 Timothy 4:10 for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica;

James 4:4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

1 John 5:21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

1 Corinthians 10:6 Now these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved.

2 Peter 2:22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."

More on the 8 Spiritual Virtues

Blessed are those: 1) poor in spirit; 2) mourn; 3) gentle; 4) hunger and thirst for righteousness; 5) **merciful**; 6) pure in heart; 7) peacemakers, 8) the persecuted.

Mercy

Mercy is more than meekness. This is love and care for the needy, especially the needy who are unworthy. To be merciful is a blessing in itself.

- ✓ James 2:13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.
- ✓ Mat 6:15 "But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

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Purity of heart

This is a result of the foregoing virtues. Such purity is progressive, and as it increases so does the vision of God. The heart that sets its eyes on impurity is too carnal and distracted to see the beauty of doctrine, the spiritual life and God.

- ✓ Heb 12:14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.
- ✓ 1Jo 3:3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.
- ✓ Tit 1:15 To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

More on the 8 Spiritual Virtues

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Peacemakers

Peacemakers are those who have gone through the experiences of the foregoing six virtues. The Christian peacemaker seeks to bring peace between men and God, as per reconciliation. He seeks to share the peace and grace he possesses with God to others.

- ✓ 2 Corinthians 5:18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,

More on the 8 Spiritual Virtues

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The persecuted, blessed?

1. What a paradox! Sounds like a contradiction! It is quite obvious that Jesus is not summoning men and women to a nice easy life. He is not offering men worldly honor; rather He is making it clear that they can expect scorn and suffering. Of course, He would be the first to feel the pain of scorn and twisted crown of thorns.
 - ✓ 2 Timothy 3:12 And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
 - ✓ John 15:20 "Remember the word that I said to you, A slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.