

# Biblical-Philosophical Psychology 124-Spiritual virtues 64 (Beatitude #5: Mercy and Forgiveness)

## 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

5: Hermeneutics
4: Linguistics
<b>3: Epistemology 13</b>
Existence 50
2:Metaphysics 32-
Trans. 50
1: Reality
Logic 32, Truth 32

P.R. - 32

John 8:32; Matt. 22:37-39; Job 42:5-6; Acts 20:27. Even though the Bible teaches that Christianity, the church as a whole, is to grow into adulthood (Eph. 4:13), it seems that the modern church is *dead* set on lowering the bar and pleasing man (contra Gal. 1:10). However, this is not what Christ or the Bible teaches. True Christianity has so much more to offer than the world in every way—spiritually, intellectually, psychologically (Psa. 23; Heb. 2:14-15; SOS; Eph. 5:31-32; 2 Cor. 10:5).

Outline of today's class for advancement in total truth, the *whole* council of God (1:15): 10 minutes on main point of the spiritual life: loving of God (this slide); 15 minutes on epistemology (5 points); 50 minutes of Bible doctrine on the nature of mercy and forgiveness.

**The Main point:** love of God, 3 things to consider: **First**, parents in the OT were mandated by God to teach their kids to love God with all of their hearts, souls, and minds (Deut. 6:4-7). **Second**, the ontology of love as evidenced by its first uses in the Bible (Gen. 22:2; 27:4; 29:20, 32; Exod. 20:6); note how love motivates man in all that he does. **Third**, the most severe warnings in the Bible are directed at believers who do not love/treasure God above all else (Matt. 6:24; 1 Cor. 16:22; Jer. 2:5, 11-13, 32; 3:1, 8; 21:8; 23:11, 14). Healthy believers crave the love of Christ, not the love of the world. What is Christ's solution to spiritual maladies of our era? Rv. 3:14-22.

← This chart lists the 5 philosophical sciences required for objectivity in Biblical interpretation as well as for objectivity for reality as such.

### 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.

Stage 3

Holy Spirit  Bible Doctrine

### 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.

Stage 2

Holy Spirit  Bible Doctrine

### 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.

Stage 1

## EPISTEMOLOGY: #13

1. The need for epistemology:
  - a. My interaction with Christians is increasingly convincing me that many believers really do not believe in the Word of God, even the direct and explicit statements of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ about reality.
  - b. It appears that many are just pretending they believe, a kind of believing that they believe. However, upon closer inspection they do not believe God's Word, even when confronted with passages that point to Realism that conflicts with their fideism, reductionism, nominalism, and phenomenalism.
  - c. The fact that many believers are OK with views that do not comport with the Bible or orthodoxy reveals deep philosophical and spiritual problems.
  - d. Epistemology is valuable in delineating rules for valid knowledge, the makeup of the knower, knowing, and known. There is a real need to understand the dynamics of knowledge before one can grasp the difference between believing something and knowing something.

## EPISTEMOLOGY: #13

2. The nature of epistemology.
  - a. Epistemology is all about cognition. Can anyone fail to recognize spontaneously what cognition is? We see, hear, taste, smell, imagine, judge, believe and reason. We are well aware of these activities that keep taking place within us. These activities bring us into contact with things in the world.
  - b. However, what is the nature of this contact? How do things come to exist in our immaterial minds? What is the nature of the immaterial edifice of knowledge. Exactly what is cognition, intellection, knowledge, and faith? How can we know that our minds correspond to the extra-mental world?
  - c. The philosophical inquiry into cognition as such has come to be called epistemology, which word is made up of two words, *episteme* and *logos*.

## EPISTEMOLOGY: #13

3. The history of epistemology begins with viewing the external world as self-evident (cf., law of excluded middle, math), to assuming or attempting to prove the external world.
  - a. Epistemology emerged late in the history of western philosophy due to the influences of Rene Descartes. Before Descartes all inquiries into the nature of the knower, knowledge, and knowledge were subsumed in metaphysics. Rene was the one that brought about a Copernican revolution around the *res cogitans* where the starting point was now the mind (and skepticism) rather than the external world.
  - b. In pre-Cartesian philosophical procedures, things other than thought had been the center around which human thinking functioned. Things has been the primary objects. Thought, as their mental expression, has been secondary. With the Cartesian Copernican revolution, human activity becomes the hub around which all else revolves.
  - c. The Cartesian influence with making the mind the starting point spread agnosticism and skepticism throughout the philosophical world (cf., David Hume, Kant, Locke, idealism, Hegelianism, Christian “faithism”).

## EPISTEMOLOGY: #13

4. By understanding the nature of the knower, knowledge, and the object of knowledge, one is able to evaluate various epistemic claims, a few examples:
  - a. Scientific materialists violate their epistemic rights when they reject metaphysics, given that knowledge itself is metaphysical—knowledge has no *material* substance, like the meaning of these words which would just be a string of letters without meaning. Other violations include assuming naturalism and skepticism to prove naturalism or make any claim about metaphysical realities such as morality, love, justice, and the meaning of human life. A few words about scientific epistemology of Realism as it relates to the quantum world as well as certain fundamentalists' claims.

## EPISTEMOLOGY: #13

- b. The Israelites and Christ's doubting/faithless disciples violated their epistemic rights by denying the miraculous even after eye-witnessing miraculous activities of the Lord repeatedly over many years. Contrast this with the Centurion in

Matthew 8:8 But the centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 "For I, too, am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it." 10 Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled, and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith (πίστιν) with anyone in Israel.

## EPISTEMOLOGY: #13

- c. Christians violate their epistemic responsibilities by saying they believe in Jesus and the Bible, all the while rejecting its foundational and explicit declarations regarding life and death. For Christians to say that God is faithful and in control and then doubt is a violation of epistemic responsibilities. For Christians to shift to naturalism and reductionism is irrational and a violation of any valid epistemic paradigm. No wonder Christianity has less influence than in the past and is in a kosmic, psychologized, materialistic, lukewarm mess.
  
- d. Muslims violate their epistemic responsibilities when they claim the Trinity is irrational.

## EPISTEMOLOGY: #13

- e. Anytime someone just believes or disbelieves (e.g., assumes skepticism) because of feelings, their own personal experiences, or sloppy thinking, they violate their epistemic responsibilities as rational human beings made in the image of God. One cannot assume skepticism and end up in any type of certain knowledge. You can't just say stuff! Reality is self-evident: Not to be postulated or proved. Reality is what it is all about, period!

## EPISTEMOLOGY: #13

5. Epistemology enables us to understand the distinction between believing (πιστεύοντες) and knowing (γινώσκοντες).
- a. It is impossible to know something if it is *not* true. For example, it is impossible for a Muslim to know he is going to Paradise; it is impossible for Christians to know they are saved by their works; it is impossible for Christians to know they are going to lose their salvation; it is impossible for Christians to know that God is going to punish them for their sins in Heaven.
  - b. Faith can be true or false. However, knowledge is always true, which is when the mind conforms to reality. Knowledge can never be false.

## EPISTEMOLOGY: #13

- c. Knowledge needs no further examination, cf., ongoing tests to see if certain foods or smoking causes cancer. As long as there are tests to see if it is true, then it is not true knowledge.
- d. Knowledge admits of no degrees, unlike faith which does admit degrees of confidence. Furthermore, one can suspend faith but never knowledge.
- e. The details on the distinction between believing and knowing is complex, but the bottom line is all about the sense vs. referent, whether the referent is directly accessible to the knower (= knowledge) or comes to the knower through some sort of mediation (faith)—examples . . .
- f. Knowledge is indubitable and belief is not. There is nothing between us and the facts in knowledge. In faith, something stands between us and the direct facts.

## EPISTEMOLOGY: #13

- g. Faith plays an overwhelming part in everyone's daily life. Most of what we know is due to intermediating cognition of others. What is immediately known in Iraq at this very moment is not immediately and directly known by us—we are not there.
- h. Faith is dependence upon the word of another. You are accepting the authority and credibility of another—often all that is required is communication. This kind of faith is at best probable because of error on the part of the communicator/reporter or some other factor.
- i. Science, authority, and faith. There is a great deal of faith in scientific explanations, and scientific authorities are accepted and believed throughout most of society.

## EPISTEMOLOGY: #13

- j. In the Word of God and spiritual matters, faith also refers to mediated knowledge. However, unlike all science and areas of knowledge, the authority behind the Word of God is infallible.
- k. The Word of God is Truth and as such corresponds to reality. Its veracity is unquestionable since it comes from the God of Truth.
- l. The difficulty is not in the objective Word of God; rather it is our understanding of it. This is why we need the 5 areas of philosophical realism, of reality as such.
  - What is – truth
  - What is that which is – metaphysics
  - How do we know that which is – epistemology
  - How do we communicate that which is – linguistics
  - How do we understand that which is – hermeneutics

# Christ's Eightfold Concept of Blessedness

#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.

- ✓ Consider just how impossible it is for an unbeliever to possess these virtues.
- ✓ Understanding the difficulty of these virtues is normal, rejection of them on the part of the believer is pathological.
- ✓ Consider how the rejection of these virtues by our Jeremiah culture affects the believer's spiritual life and the general direction of modern churches.

## Christian virtues of Mercy, Forgiveness, and Love

#5- **μακάριοι** are the **merciful**: for they shall receive mercy.

1. In making distinctions, it is important to note that
  - a. forgiveness is concerned with removal of resentment,
  - b. excusing is based on with mitigating circumstances (e.g., child or someone insane), and
  - c. justification is connected with other moral factors (e.g., self-defense),
2. Excusing or justifying an action is not the same as forgiveness because we may forgive only what is initially proper to resent. However, in b and c above there is no blame to forgive. If a person is not responsible, then there is nothing to forgive.

## Christian virtues of Mercy, Forgiveness, and Love

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3. Forgiveness is also not mercy. To be merciful is to treat a person less harshly than one has a right to treat that person, e.g., rules of chivalry that gives one the right to kill someone under certain circumstances. When one begs for mercy, he begs for something less than one has the right to demand.
4. Forgiveness primarily, but not exclusively, deals with a resentful attitude, which may continue to resurface even after the person is dead. One cannot show mercy to someone who is dead.

## Christian virtues of Mercy, Forgiveness, and Love

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5. Forgiveness is very personal and is primarily concerned with a relationship. Forgiveness is about forswearing resentment toward someone who has wronged you, a change in attitude regarding a personal standing with someone else. I can decide to forgive those who have wronged *me*, but I really do not have the right to forgive Hitler for what he did to the Jews.
6. Forgiveness is not incompatible with desire for justice and equality. I can forgive someone, that is remove the resentment that accompanies the wrongdoing, but still demand that the person repay what he stole. Furthermore, forgiveness is not incompatible with not being able to trust someone. I can forgive someone for embezzlement, and still not trust him with company funds.

## Christian virtues of Mercy, Forgiveness, and Love

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7. The spiritual virtue of divine-like forgiveness requires divine-like love, Matt. 5:43-48; 1 John 3:16-19; 4:20.
  - While it is perfectly natural not to desire to return love for hate, it is not natural or healthy for any believer to reject Christ's directives or not to be moved by the prospect of being like God his heavenly Father.
  - Only love has the power to truly remove resentment. All attempts to remove resentment for personal wrongdoing will be insufficient unless accompanied by love. You will forgive those you love and treasure.
  - For the Christian it is God's love, forgiveness, and mercy that motivates and empowers us to love, forgive, and treat others in mercy. This is why the Christian has far greater opportunities to love, forgive, and be merciful to others.

## Matthew 18:21-35- Forgiven and Unforgiving

1. Matthew 18:21-22. The Christian model for forgiveness is based on God's forgiveness of believers.
  - Matthew 6:12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen .' 14 "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 "But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.
  - Colossians 3:13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.
  - Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

## Matthew 18:21-35- Forgiven and Unforgiving

2. God's illustration on being forgiven and not forgiving: The King and his debtor, Matt. 18:23-27. The analogy is with the immense magnitude of our sins against God, both in the amount and kind (talent = 50-80 pound measure of gold x 10,000). Every sin against God is large. Every sin is rebellion against God and is treasonous.
  - a. Magnitude of our offenses against God, Psalm 32:1-2; 51:1-2.
    - 1 – Transgression (עֲשָׂוֹן).
    - 2 – Sin (חַטָּאָה).
    - 3—Iniquity (עֲוֹן).
  - b. Nature of removal of sin, Psa. 32:1-2.
    - 1—Forgiven (נָשָׂא).
    - 2—Covered (כָּסָה).
    - 3—Not imputed (חָשַׁב).

## Matthew 18:21-35- Forgiven and Unforgiving

3. The unforgiving forgiven, Matthew 18:28-35. Unlike the King, he had no compassion, not even for such a small amount. Aren't we all too often guilty of counting up all of the "pennies" of those petty offenses against us? What does this say about our love and value of our loved ones who offend us?
  - God views lack of forgiving others as a grave sin. Failure to forgive others will translate into a life of discipline and carnality, of being in unforgiven status before God.
  - See 2 Samuel 12:1-24.

## John 13:34-35 – A New Kind of Love

1. Wow! What a tremendous standard! The wishes from dying lips. This is a new object of love, and a new measure of love, and a new kind of love. and a new motive. It is as applicable today as it was then, see 1 John 3:16.
2. The new scope of the new commandment. The divisions between people then was worst than it is today, especially with regard to women. Paul speaks of these divisions. This is truly a new thing in the world. Never anything like this breaking of all bonds and coming together under Him. A community held together by love and not by geography, race, gender, or linguistic affinities. Stronger love than separating tendencies.
3. Every believer is under obligation to recognize his relationship with all other believers. far greater than the superficial differences. The mind with its norms and standards affects the affections and passions, so it is not all about emotions. What we have in common far exceeds our differences.

## James 1:27 – Godly Compassion for those in Need

1. “Religion” (θρησκεία, worship, devotion) is not to be understood as per a religion or creed. It refers to expression of religion. It refers to a worship and a binding relationship with God. Context deals with various forms of self-deception where one listens to Bible doctrine but then does not bridle the tongue or care about those in need.
2. We have two duties in play in a relationship with God: helping others and keeping one pure before God, which is necessary for growth. We need to be concerned about our own spiritual life but never to the neglect of others. How does selfish religion sound? Oxymoron?