

Bible Doctrines (The True-Good-Beautiful)

T/G/B

- Eschatology
- Thanatology
- Ecclesiology
- Israelology
- Dispensationalism
- Doxology
- Hodology
- Soteriology
- Hamartiology
- Natural Law
- Anthropology
- Angelology
- Pneumatology
- Christology
- Paterology
- Trinitarianism
- Cosmology
- Theology Proper
- Bibliology

P.R. - 32

Hermeneutics

Linguistics

Epistemology

Metaphysics -24

Reality –Logic 32,
Truth 32

7/14/2013

John 8:32; 1 Cor. 13:11. Any questions?

1. God's warning: Colossians 2:8 *See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.* The insidious influence of modern philosophy on Christians is astounding. What the priesthood and ambassadorship of all believers really mean.
2. The unique opportunities for believers of FBC for whole truth (PR+SFL+BD). The mystic nature of viewing "doctrine" as just referring to the higher "spiritual life" truths.
3. 'Ehyeh-Metaphysics 24: Esse-metaphysics personally illustrated via JR's farm by examining four ways modern Christians view reality: 1) Scientific/Biblical/Esse-Essence; 2) Paleyan; 3) Kantian; 4) Humean. Either Beings have reality or bundle theory. How could anyone say that God sustains all things without acknowledging the reality of existence as a predicate? Esse-metaphysics is the Skeleton Key for the Bible and all of life.

Stage 3

Stage 2

Stage 1

Stage 3 – Christian metaphysician = life of glory!

- Metaphysical understanding of God.
- Virtuous love for God: Intellective, volitional, emotional love of God. Enduring fellowship.
- Understanding "above all you could ever ask or image" (1 Cor.)

Holy Spirit



Bible Doctrine

Stage 2 – Christian doctrinal believer = life of doctrine!

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

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 the problem of 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 or personal encounter with truth. If it works or feels good , they think it must be true and enough.

Intellect

MIND

Before anyone can really understand human virtue, he must have a robust understanding of human nature.

- ✓ Proverbs 14:8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way, But the folly of fools (לִּצְוִיל) is deceit.
- ✓ John 1:47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"
- ✓ γνώθι σεαυτόν
- ✓ ο ανεξέταστος βίος ου βιωτός ανθρωπω

Volition

WILL

affections
- love/like, hate/dislike

Emotions

11 fundamental emotions

Feelings

6 basic emotions

Towards Good

Love/like
Desire
Delight

Away from Evil

Hate/dislike
Aversion
Sadness

Difficult to attain good

Difficult to remove evil

5 intensive emotions

hope or **despair**
-pleasure
-joy
-peace
-suffering
-misery

fear or **courage**
-pleasure
-joy
-peace

anger

Intellect



Volition

MIND

WILL

✓ There really is an *infinite* difference between man and animals due to man's mind and will. However, emotionally we are like animals.

✓ A word about the Neanderthals and PP. See <http://www.neanderthal.de/en/>, and Zilhao at <http://www.nature.com/news/neanderthal-culture-old-masters-1.12974>

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anger



Virtue and the Will

1. Our greatest need is virtue: intellectual, volitional, and emotional. It is virtue that makes a man truly good and happy.
 - Illustration of the power of virtue *for good* the impotency of vice for good (1 Cor. 10:1-13; 2 Tim. 3:16-4:4).
 - Consider the average believer who does not pursue, as a habit, knowledge of God, but always returns to God in times of stress and difficulty for another of message of trust. Has the problem really been solved? What are some of the effects of a life that only sees God in terms of help?
 - What kind of life is it that is lived in the “desert”? That can’t remain in fellowship for any length of time?

2. All human failures are due to lack of virtue, natural or supernatural. The main culprits are ignorance (mind) or bad choices (will). Both of these involve BD and FHS, but for now I am just dealing with foundations of human nature.
 - While many, including Plato, blame all evil on ignorance, it is the will oftentimes that is the real problem.
 - Many Christians believe that all they need is more doctrine to have virtue, that knowledge to remove ignorance is all that is needed.

3. Are the apostate Christians of the last times, Demas, and the Israelites to be blamed for making fools of themselves and throwing away their lives. Did they know what was good for them? Did they know what would really make them happy? Does modern man understand that happiness is always found in virtue? What if we asked a man on the street.
- Apart from virtue, we will remain trapped with our old evil thinking, wishing, and emoting, constantly having to confess them in a Platonic framework.
 - Let us not be named among those in the doctrinal movement who have been captured by the great sin of pride.

4. Are we responsible for our

- intellectual vices of ignorance? Have we had opportunities to find out more about the nature of God and reality?
- volitional vices of bad choices? Have we had opportunities to do what is right and not do what is sinful? Do we have inner motivation to be morally virtuous, Rom 2:14 and 1 Cor. 6:19?
- emotional vices of fear, anger, lust, jealousy, resentment? Are we responsible to moderate and redirect our feelings?

5. Overview of Intellective virtue

1st act: quidditative knowledge, knowing what something is: the deeper the abstraction the greater the virtue, cf. water bottle, angels, creation, Esse, esse. As far as Bible, moving beyond nominal understanding translates into greater virtue.

2nd act: existential knowledge: essence-existence distinction. The greater the connection with reality, the greater the virtue.

3rd act: reasoning knowledge: the logical connection between propositions. The greater correspondence to reality, the greater the virtue, cf. Rom. 1:20.

6. Overview of volitional and emotional virtue.
7. Virtue in the intellect, volition, and emotion must exist before someone can be said to be a truly virtuous person. This is true on the natural level as well as the spiritual level.

8. Virtue is NEVER just a matter of how much you know (Luke 10:25-27).
- A man can know what loving or honesty or bravery is, but it is not enough that he knows these things. He must actually choose to do and be these things for their own sakes. The believer can know that he should love his wife as Christ loves the church, but just knowing that does not mean that he is virtuous. The wife can know that she should follow the leadership of her husband, and refuse.
 - Intellectual virtue, by itself, does not produce moral virtue.
 - However, it is impossible for a man to have moral virtue without intellectual virtue.

9. Moral and spiritual virtue require all three aspects of man: the mind, the will, and the emotions.

10. Understanding the will.
 - a. It is the will that is constantly bombarded with “values,” from counter judgments of the intellect and passions from the emotions, cf. “I never should have done that . . . If only I had stopped to think . . . If only I did not let my temper get the best of me.”

 - b. Without volitional virtue, real strength, “goods” are constantly in flux as one whim displaces another.

- c. The will. Because of the infinite spiritual nature of the will, there is a sense in which human beings are never satisfied with anything, at least completely.
- No matter what you have, you can always think of something better.
 - This is only possible because man is a being who can form what we might call the notions of an absolute and infinite good. Regardless of whether he realizes it or not.

- d. Free will is better understood as free judgment. Our will has freedom of judgment. In itself it is dominated by restlessness, striving, boredom, and dissatisfaction with what we have. We always want something newer, better, and more fulfilling. Due to the nature of our will, dissatisfaction on some level is inevitable.
- e. It is because our wills, not knowledge, that we are truly free to make judgments. This was true of Satan, the fallen angels, and Adam and Eve: they all had untainted knowledge of God.
- f. It is in our wills that we choose our values and command our actions.

- g. Our wills are free because with their universal power, they are able to make comparisons with different standards of values. We are always caught up in the interplay between free judgment and free choice.
- h. The fact that our wills seek infinite good shows that they are free from particulars. They are capable of recognizing Good.

- i. Because we are free, we are also responsible. Yet how many Christians in this generation earnestly seeking the threefold virtue, to say nothing of actually succeeding. We are all without excuse.

- j. True happiness is only found in the virtuous man, the man with intellectual, volitional, and emotional virtues.

- k. The believer has the option of not only developing natural virtue. Due to BD and the indwelling HS, he has the option of attaining supernatural virtue in the intellect, volition, and emotions. He has the option of attaining not only happiness, but supernatural happiness, 1 Pet. 1:6.
- l. The great spoiler for the believer and the unbeliever is pride, which is primarily located in the will. Pride destroys virtue in the natural as well as supernatural realms.
- m. Pride is the root and supporter of all sins from apathy and ignorance to outright rebellion against God.

The Vice of Pride

1. God fights against the proud, James 4:6.

James 4:6 But He gives a greater (μείζονα) grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed (ἀντιτάσσεται) to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

- God only promotes grace oriented people.
- Pride is the antithesis of grace. The believer who is arrogant is blind to the grace of God.
- God has a perfect grace plan for your life, which cannot be fulfilled apart from His grace.
- Only through grace can any believer thrive.

The Vice of Pride

2. Pride always corrupts the mind regardless of a person's IQ or how much they know. There is no such thing as a wise person, one in touch with Ultimate Reality who is also proud, cf. Rom. 1:18-25; Satan.
 - There are approximately 22 Greek words and 27 Hebrew words for pride. The predominant idea is of "going beyond" reality.
 - Pride includes wrong thinking, wrong volition, and wrong emotions.
 - All failure in the POG is a result of the sin of pride.
 - In pride the person moves into jealousy, bitterness, vindictiveness, revenge, conceit, slander, gossip, and maligning.
 - In pride the person becomes occupied with self and moves into self-admiration, and an exaggerated view of one's abilities.

3. In pride, one turns away from God as the True, Good, and Beautiful, Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:14-17. Pride was the original sin of Satan, “I will be like the Most High.”
- Pride always overflows into motivation, decision making, and into activity of any individual.
 - Pride always blinds one to the True, Good, and Beauty of Whole Truth, Total Truth.
 - Pride always destroys love for the Word of God and truth as such.

4. Pride always leads to spiritual ignorance, heresy, and apostasy (1 Tim. 3:6; 6:3-5, 2 Tim 3:1-7; Js 1:21).
- In pride, a person is unteachable.
 - Pride destroys ability to see God as Truly Good.
 - Pride destroys capacity for life, love, and happiness.
 - In pride, a person cuts himself off from the salubrious ministry of the Holy Spirit, which will affect his attitude to truth and all of life, Gal. 5:16-23. Thus, he cannot stay in fellowship with God.

5. The warning against pride in a context of Mammonism, 1 Tim 6:17-19; James 4:13-17.

- The problem with wealth is that it comes with the temptation to think that one is better than others because of wealth or positions of power.
- This would include one's personal abilities, looks, or achievements.
- The proper attitude is "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me," 1 Cor 15:10.
- The bottom line is to be happy with the grace God has given you and use all of the opportunities and potentials He has awarded you. The issue is what potential you activate.

6. The virtuous person is the person who has developed the intellectual, volitional, and emotional distaste for pride. This can only come through BD and God's grace.

Proverbs 8:13 "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way, And the perverted mouth, I hate.

7. Other passages on the perniciousness of pride: Dt. 8:3, 11-18; Psa. 10:2-11; 25:8-9; 49:11; 73:6-9; Prov. 3:33-35; 6:16; 8:11, 13; 11:2; 13:10; 15:5, 10-12; 16:2, 18; 23:29; Mark 7:21; Lk. 14:11; Rom. 1:18-25; 3:27; 12:3; 1 Cor. 1:26-31; 10:12; 15:10; 2 Cor 12:7-10; James 3:14-16; 1 Pet. 5:5.

The Relationship between Virtue, Goodness, and Happiness

1. Understanding the relationship between virtue and happiness is critical to one's view of God, the plan of God, and progressive sanctification—indeed, one's whole philosophy of life.
2. The modern dominant view is that virtue/goodness is related to duty and responsibility and that these are separate from happiness (Kant). Under this view, one ought to orient to duty and what is right just because it is right, without any regard to personal happiness.

3. In this legalistic (Kantian) view, man is supposed to pursue duty instead of happiness. In other words, man is to be virtuous in duty instead of following the path of happiness, which most of the world follows.
 - A distinction needs to be made between happiness and some “pleasures” of this world.
 - Also the deception of happiness is seen that even a miser thinks he is happy as he clutches another penny.

4. The dichotomous view that virtue/goodness is separate from true happiness is the source of much misery, legalism, and evil throughout Christianity. This is not the view of the Bible (cf., from the Garden of Eden to the Beatific Vision, from Genesis to Revelation, cf., Gen 3; 12:1-3; Jn. 15:11; 17:13; 1 Jn. 1:1-4; 2 Jn. 1:12; Rev. 21:1-7). True happiness is always found in the Good.

5. How can any Christian thrive in the CWL if deep down he thinks that the plan of God is something that one *must* be faithful and dutiful to in contrast to the place of true happiness?
 - The believer must understand that God and good are co-extensive with true happiness.

6. How can any believer advance in God when he sees it as burden or duty instead of movement in the direction of his greatest happiness?
- How can anyone ever love God when He is viewed as boring, difficult, or cruel—a real Killjoy, that one must keep a distance from?
 - How can someone live under the pressure and stress in being torn between his personal happiness and what is right before God?
 - How can that kind of life ever be satisfying?
 - How can a person count sufferings in terms of all or pure joy with a mere dutiful attitude (James 1:2-4; Philip. 4:4; 2 Cor. 12:7-10).

7. How can any believer really advance in moral virtue as long as he believes that morality stands in opposition to his greatest happiness and enjoyment?
8. How can any person not be filled with joy and enthusiasm upon the discovery that his greatest good, ultimate virtue, true meaning of life, and supernatural happiness is found in God? Consider Saul vs. Apostle Paul.

9. While all men desire happiness—"Man wishes to be happy, and only wishes to be happy, and cannot wish not to be so" (Pascal). most end up bringing much misery on themselves (cf. Sophocles, Montaigne, Lucretius, Solon, Faust, Augustine).
- Why is this the case? How many have gotten what they really thought would make them happy, only to be unfulfilled, bored, and disappointed over and over again?
 - Can we ever find complete and immutable happiness in phase 2?
 - What about habitual happiness, in the now?
 - Is not this evidence of man's fallenness?

10. Virtue (natural and supernatural) is required for any happiness because only virtue can regulate man's intellectual, volitive, and emotive natures, which is always requisite to obtain goodness, which is always co-extensive with virtue.

11. Only Christianity offers Ultimate Good and therefore the Ultimate Happiness in time and in eternity. In eternity, in the divine presence and glory, all the natural desires of the human spirit are simultaneously satisfied—the intellect's search for truth, the will's yearning for good, and emotions enjoyment of the good will be totally and immutably fulfilled.

The 2 Levels of Virtue

1. There are two levels of virtue (settled dispositions toward Good).
 - a. **Natural virtue**, Rom. 2:14-15; Acts 10:1-2, 22; 11:14. Natural virtue is the development of intellectual, volitive, and emotive virtue to good. It is honorable, but it is always relative in scope and goal.
 - 1) Intellectual virtue according to rational nature. The virtuous person lives according to reason, understanding good and evil. He habitually lives according to the laws of DE.
 - 2) Volitive virtue. Virtuous motives would include good intentions. A good will. Willing to die for loved ones and country. Desires to be honest and respectable. This is moral virtue. This is dependent upon the intellect, but they work together.
 - 3) Emotional virtue. Good feelings about the good as per the morality and the laws of D.E., family. Maturing emotional nature. Mature and moral emotional feelings.

b. Supernatural virtue, Rom. 15:13; 2 Cor. 3:18; 10:5; Gal. 5:16, 22-23; Philip. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:3; 6-9; 1 Jn. 3:14; 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

- 1) Intellectual virtue, excellence in knowing the good (the will of God), Rom. 12:2; Heb. 13:21. Intellectual vice is foolishness, 2 Pet. 2:20-23; 1 Cor 3:1-3.
- 2) Volitive virtue, excellence in choosing the good, Philip 2:13. For volitive vice, see 1 Thess. 5:19 (resisting the HS)
- 3) Emotional virtue, excellence in enjoying the good. For emotional vices that grieve the HS, see Eph 4:30-31; Gal. 5:22-23.

2. It is important to understand the relationship between the natural and supernatural virtues in order to avoid superstitious or mechanical forms Christianity, and the tendency of some to use grace to destroy nature.
- ✓ Grace does not suppress nature.
 - ✓ Theology does not suppress philosophy.
 - ✓ Supernatural virtues are not separate from natural virtues. Rather with regeneration they are a perfecting of human nature in the image of Jesus Christ.
 - ✓ One cannot live in vice and expect to cultivate supernatural virtues in intellect, will, or desires by mere mechanics.

3. The believer gains supernatural-theological virtues at the point of salvation, 1 Pet. 1:3. He gains a living hope which means that for the first time in his life he has gained intellectual, volitional, and emotional virtue. His thinking changes, his will changes, and his emotions change immediately by the grace of God.

4. These supernatural virtues cannot be acquired by any natural means. They come from God and are truly supernatural. They enable the believer to endure all things with a transcendent love for and inexpressible joy in God, 1 Pet. 1:6-8.

5. With supernatural virtue gained at salvation, the believer moves instantly into wisdom, a right way of thinking. This is not something that is cultivated. He receives supernatural wisdom regarding the reality of God and the things of God.
 - ✓ While he does not gain new reasoning skills, the reasoning that is there is enable to see God and the things of God. For the first time in his life, he is able to penetrate into God.
 - ✓ In an instant, he moves further than any unbeliever who has spent a lifetime developing natural theology in understanding God. The believer, for the first time, takes a giant step toward Truth and thus Reality.

6. The supernatural wisdom the new believer gains at salvation moves his will and emotions for the first time to the true Good. This is a complete metamorphosis as the believer is moved by the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love in God.
- ✓ He is moved to trust God, to be devoted to His will, and to enjoy Him. He, for the first time, is moved with regard to his whole being to God.
 - ✓ He gains the has a supernatural virtue of devotion to God. He gains transcendent desires and emotions.

7. However, it is possible for the believer who begins with supernaturally acquired virtue to lose those virtues, which means loss of love for God.
 - ✓ Loss of intellectual virtue, 2 Peter 2:20-22.
 - ✓ Loss of volitional virtue, 1 Tim. 6:9-10, 17; James 4:17; Matt. 6; 1 John 2:15-16;
 - ✓ Loss of emotional virtue, Philip 3:19; Rom. 16:18.
8. With the loss of virtue comes loss of happiness which is sublimated by frantic searches for happiness.

9. It is impossible for a person without virtue to see what is truly good. Only the Christian with the right classical understanding really believes that that good is coextensive and coterminous with happiness. The good constitutes happiness.

10. God is committed to our good and therefore to our happiness, Rom. 8:28-30; 5:1-5.

11. The supernatural virtues cannot operate in an immoral context that lacks basic virtue. A person who does not have moral virtues is going to have great difficulty in staying in fellowship and walking with the Lord through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

- ✓ Consider the impossibility of cultivating supernatural *intellective* virtues in an immoral context (e.g., indulging in wrong, anti-intellectual, and foolish thinking; rejection of critical thinking skills).
- ✓ Consider the impossibility of cultivating supernatural *appetitive* virtues in an immoral context (choosing, indulging and activating wrong desires).
- ✓ Consider the impossibility of cultivating supernatural *emotional* virtues in an immoral context (indulging in wrong emotions; failure to mature emotions).

12. A believer without moral virtue is going to have a great deal more difficulty trusting God, hoping in God, and loving God. His thoughts and feelings for good will be on evil as a good instead of God as a good (cf. David and Bathsheba). He may confess regularly, but he still has the wrong desires that make it very difficult to stay in fellowship with God.

13. Again, the three theological virtues for the Christian are faith, hope, and love. These all translate to having the right attitude to God, the right hope in God, and the right love for God. The virtuous intellect and will always bear on the operation of the right emotions toward God as vividly illustrated in the Psalms of David (e.g., love, joy, peace) and in the life of Jesus and the Apostle Paul (Philip. 3).

14. The spiritually virtuous person is one who is committed to an intellectual, appetitive, and emotive life of faith in God, hope in God, and loving God and his neighbor (all of those around him). These virtues become his dispositions and character rather than mere isolated acts. Furthermore, he really believes these are his goods that contain true happiness.

15. Only the virtuous person has the ability to see God and all of the Word of God as true, good, and beautiful. Negative volition picks and chooses and is always looking for a quick fix or a slogan to deal with deep and abiding issues. There cannot be any moral virtue without development of intellectual virtue. There can be no emotional virtue apart from intellectual and desiderative virtue.

16. To be morally weak translates into being spiritually weak due to lack of virtue in the intellect, will, and emotions. There is serious problem among many Bible believers with a Platonic type of Christianity. They continue to think wrong, desire wrong things, and emotionally be attracted to wrong things. Confession of sin alone is not going to magically give them supernatural virtue on top of vice.

17. Testing and continued suffering for sin and evil are designed to inculcate more virtue: loving what is right and hating what is evil (David, James 1:2-4). Testing is always designed to give the believer the right thinking, the right desires, and the right emotions, cf. 1 Pet. 1:6-9.

18. Unless the believer grows in virtue, he will be a spiritual failure. Unless the appetites change, he will find God and Christianity unappealing and boring instead of exciting and the source of ultimate happiness. Duty is not enough, one must see Christianity as the TGB above all else.

19. The virtuous person sees, lives for, and enjoys the Good—what is truly True, Good, and Beautiful. He has developed capacity and thus enthusiasm for the Ultimate Good. He truly sees God, Bible doctrine, the spiritual life, the plan of God as coextensive with + Happiness. He has a healthy mind, desires, and emotions which continue to grow throughout his life.