

Biblical-Philosophical Psychology 169-Spiritual virtues 109 (Beatitude #6: Purity of Heart and Love.2)

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
 Natural Theology

Opening: John 8:32; Luke 10:27; John 15:1-5

2 Parts to Bible class:

- (1) 15-20 minutes on spiritual & philosophical foundations required for a Christian worldview.
- (2) 55-60 minutes on virtue and love in 2 Pet. 1:2-11 and 1 Cor. 13.

Spiritual foundations

- The metaphysical structure of man reveals that man's very nature, namely his intellect and will, are made to love & seek Ultimate Truth and Goodness, namely God. This comports with the greatest commandment The mind is to be in control.
- It is with the intellect and will that we love God and everything else. Will is designed to respond to the intellect, which is designed for Truth, right thinking. However, the will is weak due to our fallen nature and can corrupt the intellect for its preferences, sensitive and intellectual. This is our biggest problem to overcome.
- Will is where we do the loving. Failure to love God, the Word of God, and Total Truth will corrupt the intellect. Love for God opens the believer's will up to God.
- Contrary to what is commonly believed, having a good will, Love, for the whole truth is extremely difficult. Yet, such a love is required for gaining prudence (wisdom) and a thriving human and spiritual life.

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

5: Hermeneutics
4: Linguistics
3: Epistemology 32 - Existence 50 - Causation 25
2:Metaphysics 32 - Trans. 50
1: Reality - Logic 32, - Truth 32

**Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview
(Causation-25: Discarding of causes in metaphysics:
From Descartes to Thomas Reid's Common Sense Realism)**

1. Descartes' dismantling of classical metaphysics, by making the mind and its contents the object, standard, and basis for the certitude of truth (rather than the extra-mental world), created the perfect storm for destruction of man's metaphysical heritage and abilities to understand the metaphysical structure of reality, God, creation, government, man, the soul, virtue, love, and language. Can the believer overcome his metaphysical deficiency with a Bible-only philosophy (Baconian-Reidian)?
___ a. Yes
___ b. No

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2. With the destruction of modern man's ability to understand the metaphysical structure of the extra-mental world, man has no way of measuring certain truths about the nature of God, man, virtue, by what is real (extra-mental world). Without a basic understanding of the metaphysical reality will the believer be able to discern whether certain doctrines accord with reality or simply the contents of a teacher's mind? (Taking us back to Descartes.)
- a. Yes
- b. No

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3. To combat the problem of skepticism created by Descartes, Thomas Reid (1710-1796), who also rejected classical metaphysics, constructed the philosophy of Common Sense realism, which he wedded to Francis Bacon's (1561-1626) philosophy of induction. This became the official philosophy of America as it was widely accepted by academia (e.g., Princeton), scientists, Unitarians, deists, evangelicals, and the Bible-church movement. Moreover, Common Sense realism practically became identified with the evangelical point of view. The foundation of Common Sense realism rests on self-evident truth of experience common to all men. Thus, it is essentially
- a. rational
 - b. irrational

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4. To complete the foundation of Common Sense knowledge, Reid recommended the work of Francis Bacon, which was then applied to biblical studies for the “science of interpretation of Scripture,” which included the stated purpose of liberating the mind from all metaphysics and Christianity’s historical development of creeds and doctrine, which is a form of anti-intellectualism.
- a. True
- b. False

Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview
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5. The cultural accommodation to scientism spread throughout Christianity from the Restoration movement (Disciples of Christ, Churches of Christ, and the "Christian" church) to dispensationalists such as Scofield and Chafer, who proudly rejected theological and metaphysical history for the new "scientific" inductive hermeneutics. However, it is now generally recognized that the history of science is not *primarily* about the inductive method (cf., Newton, Einstein, Karl Popper).
- a. True (science is very theory laden)
 - b. False (science only deals with inductive facts that speak for themselves).

Love-2

2 Peter 1:4-11:

1. From virtue to love and *then* on to a rich, eternal future in the Kingdom, at least for the faithful. The intellect knows that death and the hereafter is a part of life, even if the will wants to deny and ignore these realities—note the corrupting influences of the will.
2. The rich entrance is a result of receiving rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ, all of which are related to spiritual virtue and its production, Rom 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:10-4:5; 9:24-27; 1 John 2:28. The bottom line is that each believer is responsible for the natural virtue he develops in his life
3. Virtue”(ἀρετή) refers to excellence according to what something is. It is used of God in the same context, 1 Pet 1:3.

4. Virtue or excellence for a human being would be found in three areas.
 - a. Intellect: right thinking, prudence, correspondence truth. The culmination of intellectual virtue is in proper thinking about ultimate truth of God Himself. IQ is not the issue. A person could have a high IQ and not be prudent.
 - b. Will: right wishing, desiring intrinsic good, and having control over actions. The culmination of virtue in the will is great love for God.
 - c. Affections and passions: right feelings. Right ordered affections are those that respond to truth (right ordered thinking) and love (rightly ordered will). The result is that the whole person loves God. Bad affections/emotions can cause one to reject the True and Good and incline one to vice.

5. Overview of the eight virtues. None of the standard lexicons provide the metaphysical structure of man or of these virtues. Original languages only tell you how people used words. Summary:
 - a. #1: Faith (πίστις) : faith, hope, and love are the most important theological virtues. Faith is possible only by the supernatural enlightenment of the intellect, while hope and love orient the will toward God in a way beyond natural capacities of man. Through faith, hope, and love we share in God's own knowledge of Himself and love with God's own love. They broaden our horizons and make it possible for us to have fellowship with God now and in the next life.

- b. #2: Excellence/virtue (ἀρετή): This is excellence of a human being in the development of the intellect, will, and affections. Good development in these areas are virtues, bad habits are vices. This is very difficult for everyone due to our fallenness, but it is required to move forward in the plan of God. Therefore, the need for grace we received through fellowship with God.

- c. #3: Knowledge (γνώσις): virtue of being able to apprehend and comprehend; prudence. It is by rightly ordered thinking (truth) that we can have rightly order decisions for rightly ordered life in God and the plan of God.

- d. #4: Self-control (ἐγκράτεια): this virtue would be in the ability to keep in check and to control passions that are contrary to reason and God's plan.
- e. #5: Perseverance (ὑπομονή): the virtue that enables the believer to press forward in the Christian life and to God in the face of difficulties and even fears.
- f. #6: Godliness (εὐσέβεια): the virtue of devotion and worship of God in the life. Grasping *Esse-esse* metaphysics really enhances one's capacity

- f. #7: Brotherly affection (φιλαδελφία). To know God leads to affection for fellow believers as one shares in God's affections for believers.
 - g. #8: Love (ἀγάπη). This is the crown of all virtues. This is a love that flows from God Himself as the believer partakes of the nature of God.
6. 1 Pet 2:8-9: note the connection between these virtues and true spiritual productive growth in Bible doctrine.
 7. 1 Pet 2:10: note the significance of these virtues in regard to the JSJC and eternal rewards and eternity.

8. We have three responsibilities.

- a. To God: We are to live and grow in Him by knowledge and love.
- b. To ourselves: to grow in virtues and avoid vices in three areas. Growth in virtue is in the intellect, will, and affections. Failure to grow in virtue leads to weakness and badly ordered thinking, wishing and affections, e.g., anxiety and depression.
- c. To others: we are social beings and as such have obligations from fellow man to government.

1 Corinthians 13:17.

1. The theological virtue of love is the most important spiritual virtue apart from which other virtues are not possible, cf., Gal. 5:22-23. How could any believer do anything for God that would be good if not done out of love, seeing Him as Good? Isn't duty without love what legalism is all about?
2. Rejection of God's mandate to love others results in not being able to love God, 1 John 3:16-18; 4:20; 5:1.

3. The basic metaphysics of love.

- a. What causes love? Ultimately the good. We all love what we consider good. We are all drawn to what we love. It is our appetite for good. This means to love God and fellow believers is going to require seeing them as good and a strong will to pursue that love.
- b. No one ever loves evil except if that evil is considered good.
- c. Love is in the will but it is informed by the intellect. One has to know someone to love them, but love can exceed knowledge.
- d. Love also has a powerful influence on the ability to know the object of love. We cannot know someone unless we love them for it is in love that we transcend ourselves to see life from his viewpoint and good.
- e. Characteristics of love: desire for the beloved's good; desire for union with the beloved appropriate to the office; opposition to everything that opposes the beloved's good. Love always hates what destroys good.

4. Recall the 4 steps to developing virtue:
 - a. Model: Jesus Christ.
 - b. List: e.g., 2 Pet 1:5-11.
 - c. Means: Holy Spirit, Gal. 5:16.
 - d. Habitual living out the virtues so they form our character, Titus 2:11-14.
5. A look at the virtue and love of Christ, the Perfect Model, Matt. 27:27-50; 1 John 3:14-18; Philip 2:1-12. Note the emphasis on God, self, and then others.

6. Love is longsuffering (μακροθυμεῖ), 13:4.

- a. The distinction between longsuffering as a natural virtue and supernatural virtue.
- b. On a natural level, when one loves someone he is able to endure great difficulties and irritations of that person. On a supernatural level, one will endure great difficulty, including martyrdom for the Lord.
- c. The virtue of longsuffering is strength of soul to overcome the difficulties, irritations, and undeserved suffering. It takes strength of soul to control one's affections and emotions and keep one from living in anger, sadness, and bitterness.
- d. Christ is our Model of longsuffering.

7. Love is kind/merciful (χρηστεύεται), 13:4.

- a. This would be an application of the Golden Rule. To be kind to others is merely doing to them what we would like them to do to us.
- b. Mercy is an act of kindness or tenderness.
- c. The vice would be in being mean spirited who takes pleasure in harming or insulting people.
- d. Consider the kindness of Jesus Christ, Matt. 12:15-21; Lk. 7:36-50; John 4:16-24.
- e. Christ was very kind to the weak, but very confrontational with the very powerful who were aggressively opposing and distorting God, His Word, His plan, and *promoting* evil.
- f. The command to follow our Model, Eph. 4:32-5:9; Matt. 5:43-48.

8. Love does not envy (οὐ ζηλοῖ), 13:4.

- a. Envy is coveting and a violation of the tenth commandment.
- b. Envy is the root of theft, slander, and even murder as well as a host of other sins and crimes against others.
- c. Envy and love are incompatible.
- d. Envy and hate go together, cf. Cain, Joseph (Gen 37:3-11), and Jesus Christ (Matt. 27:15-18).
- e. Consider the evil in our politics of envy, where politicians for their own interests stir up strife among people to create class warfare. The poor are set against the rich, employees against employers, women against men. Envy is a breeding ground for strife and even warfare.
- f. Christ was able to love others because He did not make “stuff” an object of love.

9. Love does no brag (οὐ περπερεύεται), 13:4.
- a. The axiom of our pagan culture is to make sure others know about one's assets and talents.
 - b. We see this in the Pharisees in Matt. 23:1-8.
 - c. True love is found in humility, especially humility before God, Job 42:1-6.
 - d. Humility runs counter to our culture
 - e. Consider the humility of our Lord, our Example, Philip. 2:5-11.

10. Love is not arrogant (οὐ φυσιοῦται), 13:4.

- a. We all come into this world with arrogance, it is our greatest flaw. We all think of ourselves more than we ought and God and others less than we should.
- b. True love is found in humility, especially humility before God, Job 42:1-6.
- c. Humility runs counter to our culture
- d. Consider the humility of our Lord, our Example, Philip. 2:5-11.

11. Love does not act unbecomingly (οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ), 13:5.
 - a. A loving person is polite.
 - b. This means that in love we are not pushy, selfish, or coarse in our speech.
 - c. Love never expresses itself in gross language or in coarse speech.
 - d. See 1 Peter. 3:8-9 and note the attending virtues. Also note Paul's politeness in Acts 26:24-29.

12. Love does not seek its own (οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς), 13:5.
 - a. Love is not selfish.
 - b. We all like to do it our own way.
 - c. An example of love not seeking its own in 1 King 3:16-27; Philip. 2:5-11.
 - d. There is nothing wrong with seeking our own. There is everything wrong with only seeking one's own.
 - e. Consider the example of Jesus Christ.

13. Love is not provoked (οὐ παροξύνεται), 13:5.
- a. Anger in itself is not sinful, Eph. 4:26-27.
 - b. Christ manifested anger or wrath in John 2:13-17.
 - c. Anger may be an appropriate manifestation of love when the issue is God and His truth.
 - d. However, an angry or bitter disposition which has ill will and seeks vengeance is not one of love. Sinful anger is anger which has no godly purpose.

14. Love does not think evil (οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν), 13:5.
- a. Love does not assume others have evil motives (projection?)
 - b. Love thinks the best of others.
 - c. Love is not quick to think evil of others.

15. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness (οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ), 13:6.
- a. One cannot love God or others and rejoice in evil because evil opposes God.
 - b. Unrighteousness always leads to hostility to God, Rom. 1:28-32.

16. Love rejoices in the truth (συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ), 13:6.
- a. Note the inseparable link between love and truth.
 - b. God is not only the ground of love but the ground of truth.
 - c. We cannot love God and at the same time not love truth.
 - d. Jesus Christ came to bear witness to Truth, John 18:33-38.
 - e. It was Christ's own commitment to Truth that motivated Him to fulfill all righteousness.
 - f. Christ loved truth because He loved His Father, Who is the Author of all truth.
 - g. Remember, Satan is the Father of lies who does everything he can to distort, twist, or conceal the truth.
 - h. The greatest problem in the human race is suppression of truth, Rom. 1:18-25.

17. Love bears all things (πάντα στέγει), 13:7.

- a. Love endures afflictions and suffering without complaining or whining.
- b. Only in love can one be blessed in persecution, Matt. 5:10-12. In such love God pours out His sanctifying grace on suffering believers.

18. Love believes all things, hopes all things (πάντα πιστεύει, πάντα ἐλπίζει), 13:7.

- a. This refers to all things spoken by God. In love we embrace all that God says.
- b. Note the connection between faith, hope, and love. They are mutually dependent.
- c. Without love for God one is not inclined to believe or hope in God.

19. 'Faith, hope, and love and the greatest is love,' 13:13. A few words on the Greek grammar.
20. Love is the preeminent virtue in the Word of God: 1 Corinthians 13; Luke 10:25-37; John 13:35; Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:14; 1 John 3:10-18; 4:7-21.
21. Since we all love and seek what we love, the issue comes down to the object of love, cf., Jn. 3:19: There is good love and bad love, love for the light of God and love for darkness. Moreover, the only way to remove bad love is to cultivate good love for God. We all seek what we think is good, we just need to make sure it is really the Good.

22. Bad love like good love always sees some beauty in object.

(1) Love for money and things of this world is a bad love because it is a love for the wrong object, 1 Tim 6:10. God is to be the object, not mammon. Love for money not only destroys love for God, it destroys love for people.

(2) Pride is bad love of self, 2 Tim. 3:2. This is loving yourself as a god rather than loving yourself as God loves you. Prideful love of self destroys capacity to love others, as well.

23. True love loves the right object the right way in the right proportion to the right office.

24. By fellowshiping with God, the believer is able partake of God's virtue, the chief of which is God's own love in divine concurrence.