

SELF-AWARENESS IN THE PURSUIT OF TRUTH, BEAUTY, & WISDOM, 9 pgs

Because the concept of “love” had been so watered down and corrupted, Francis Schaeffer often substituted the word *beauty*. My emphasis has been toward the conceptual, doctrinal, theological, philosophical truth, sadly to the neglect of the wisdom and beauty in interpersonal relationships. So this is to encourage you to consciously focus on all three – **truth** being the right way to understand Scripture and reality; **beauty** being that which we bring into the world through the Holy Spirit as we give ourselves to God in obedience to His word; **wisdom** being that attention to the details of how to handle and approach given situations.¹ To say it another way – **truth** focuses on the interpretation of what God says and integrating that knowledge with what is [see [Boundary Conditions](http://pop.eradman.com/) <http://pop.eradman.com/>]; **beauty** refers to the expression of Christ’s character in us as we are transformed into His likeness [spiritual character development]; **wisdom** seeks the big picture and learns to walk according to the principles of life and to be consciously corrected by the reproofs of life. Each of these areas involves correct reasoning and responses to God as the events & circumstances of life unfold. **Getting to Know God and His ways** imbues our lives with meaning, purpose, and significance which drive our motivation to live and accomplish in this world for Him.

Just as there are clear principles governing proper interpretation of Scripture (ie, context governs the interpretation of passages within) and examination of systems (ie, Covenant, dispensational, or biblical theology) purported to be derived from same, so the areas of godly character development and wisdom may be discussed in terms of principles [see [What is a Principle? under Cause & Effect](#)]. Let’s begin by reviewing the Scriptural teaching on pride and humility.

1. Sometimes wisdom looks a lot like common sense, good psychology, or sound reasoning. It always impresses us as resulting from deep understanding [see [tier 3, p.1-2](#) under Beyond David].

BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION

Any cursory review of the scriptural teaching of **pride vs. humility** reveals how God regards [His attitude toward] and responds to [deals with] each. Essentially **pride** is self-exaltation where one thinks more highly of himself than he ought [hence, self-deception] – the self-importance, self-assertion, and self-sufficiency of one who lords it over others. It is expressed in terms such as: a heart that is lifted up, lofty, exalted; haughtiness, a haughty spirit; arrogant, arrogance. He is a smug, self-serving, autonomous person whom God will bring down and humble. In terms of the principles of life [cause and effect], his path leads to destruction (a fall) and humiliation.

Humility is the attitude of those who are aware of their lowly estate – like little children, those who bow down, submit, and become obedient as servants. It can be seen in terms like: brokenness, a broken and contrite heart; poor in spirit; meek or meekness. Such people are blessed [highly favored] for God lifts their head and exalts them.

READ Lk.17:20-18:17

Jesus in answering the Pharisees inquiry about **when the kingdom of God** would come (Lk.17:20) told them that it **would not have a physical presence** as they expected. He went on to instruct His disciples about the future. His suffering, rejection (25), and physical absence (v.22-24) are just men-

tioned. Mostly He spoke of **the coming judgment** and called it the Son of Man's day - when He is revealed (24, 30-31), a swift destruction that overtook people in the midst of normal life as in the time of the flood and of Sodom (26-32). **God has and will rescue His people from His hand of righteous judgment** (34-35). Jesus then tells **two parables**: a widow who persists in entreating an unjust judge until she receives justice to encourage His people who wait for Him to keep on seeking God in faith (18:1-8); **a Pharisee and a tax collector illustrate conditions for acceptance with God** (v.9-14).

The time is either the morning or evening sacrifice at the temple and the scene was something like this: The lamb's throat has been slit and blood pumped out by its still-beating heart at the base of the altar. While the priest was burning incense out of sight in the inner courtyard, the circumcised Jewish men in the outer courtyard stood and offered their prayers. **Pharisees** were highly respected as devout and righteous men of God because of their rigorously disciplined lives, separateness, and uncompromising adherence to tradition. The Pharisee in the parable was used to seeing himself in this exalted light. He doesn't seem to have a clue what the sacrifice is about and approaches God as one pleased with himself expecting that God would be also.

Tax collectors, on the other hand, were seen as traitors to their own people because they collaborated with the despised Roman empire which oppressed the Jewish nation. Amazingly, the tax collector in the parable understands his guilt before God and what the sacrifice represents. His abject address to God is the agonized beating of his chest and refusal even to look up. He prays not God *be merciful to me*, as per most translations, but literally, God *be propitious to me, the sinner* [see key 4F]. In an attitude of genuine contrition, he asks God to accept this sacrifice on his behalf - to cover his sin in satisfaction of His justice. Jesus then goes on to explain that **reception of the kingdom of God requires this humble attitude and simple trust to enter into it** (15-17).

THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST IN US

*Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ ... that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side [united in disposition and purpose] for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation ... For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ **you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake**, engaged in the same conflict [with those who oppose the Gospel] that you saw I had and ... still have.*

*So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by **being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind**. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. **Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others**. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death ... on a cross. Therefore **God has highly exalted him** and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now ... **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life ... **Phil.1:27-2:16**

Work Out Your Own Salvation

In **Phil.2**, Paul encourages a like-mindedness to Christ in **looking to the interests of others** with the same dedication and vigor we have when looking to our own. Christ's **humility and total submission to His Father's will** climaxed in His ignominious death and resulted in His exaltation above every authority. Paul speaks of what such an attitude meant for him in terms of his own humility and suffering (3:3-8) as he poured out his life for these believers (**1:12-26**) and would continue to do so (**2:17**). He speaks of **our obedience** to God as working out our own salvation *with fear and trembling (2:12-13; see 2 Cor.7:15b)*. *With fear and trembling* reminds us of the prophets and other men of God before us that were called to different tasks and carried them out faithfully (**Heb.11**). **So we are tasked to suffer in the midst of the crooked and twisted culture of our day and to shine as lights in the world – to become true children of God by clinging to the word of life**. By doing [and suffering] all things *[without grumbling or arguing (complaining)]* we are to display a different spirit than those people of God in the OT who complained when tested (**Dt.32:5; 1 Cor.10:10**).

We are being conformed to the image of Christ. Through the things we suffer God is working in us that which was in Christ – that **bowing to the Father's will** and working for His good pleasure. It is a push through to the end in which we determine the principles that govern each situation and detail what it means to consider others first. How do I love my wife in each mood and circumstance? How do I teach each of my children as different as they are so as to motivate them and not exasperate or discourage them? Working out my salvation involves the particulars of how I suffer in laying down my life. In other words, this working out requires some thought, very much akin to the law for Israelites in **Dt.6:4-9**, *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart ...*

Just as loving God meant pondering His words as a continual means of understanding and appreciating Him and His ways for the Israelites, so it does for each of us in the working out of our salvation. **Humbling oneself translates into obey** and means to bow, to kneel, to worship God in spirit and truth by doing His will. *In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. Heb.5:7-10*

Psalm 40:6-8	Hebrews 10:1-10
	<i>For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, <u>it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect</u></i>

	<p><u>those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.</u></p>
<p><i>In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.</i></p> <p><i>Then I said, Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.</i></p>	<p><i>Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.</i></p> <p><i>Then I said, Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.</i></p>
	<p><i>When he said above, You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings ... according to the law, then he added, Behold, I have come to do your will . He does away with the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.</i></p>

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, **to present your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to [molded by] this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect, **Rom.12:1-2***

One of the areas I have not done well at is in allowing Scripture to instruct my heart – to judge, reprove, and correct me. I think my failure to take to heart and wrestle with the lessons of God's word is a consequence of my off-balance focus on the intellectual, conceptual, philosophical side of things [On the other hand, a great many Christians seem to be deficient in this area]. Neither have I given enough reflection to the consequences of my words, actions, and attitudes or the reproofs that have pelted me through the reactions of others and through the events and circumstances of my life. **It makes little difference whether such corrective discipline comes directly from God's hand or results from the ordinary operation of principles He ordained in the flow of cause and effect.**

Coming to Christ involves **a change in our perception of reality** so great that it is described as *Once I was blind but now I see*. Being converted is like a spy who is turned to work for the one he formerly spied upon. God makes us new creatures, regenerates us who were once dead to live unto God. Our perceptions, reasoning, knowledge, allegiances, beliefs, all of our world undergoes a dra-

stic rebirth in which *all things become new* [to me because I have changed], and it must necessarily be so because we were born at enmity with God – naturally at odds with Him. **This means that once converted, we begin a new life during which we grow up spiritually** - mature as God's people under His tutelage. That growth takes place during a learning to-know-and-trust-God process of correcting our old ways and dependencies through His methods of instruction, discipline, and reproof just as it did for the saints of old (Abram, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, etc.). **He uses all situations and everyone in our lives to accomplish this.**

In order to train us, God must first break our will. The following Scriptural terms convey different aspects relating to our **learning to bow to His will** as Jesus did: repentance (change of heart); submission (placing yourself under authority); subjection (lining up under); obedience (carrying out orders). I have not done well at this either.

*Then Jesus was **led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil**. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread. But he answered, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. **Mt.4:1-4***

WORKING OUT THE LOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

In **Mt.5-7**, Jesus the new lawgiver describes **the kingdom of God under the New Covenant** He will be making in His blood, and contrasts it with the law of Moses under the Old Covenant.

*You have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment. But I say to you that everyone who is **angry** with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever **insults** his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever **says**, You fool! will be liable to the hell of fire. So [for example] if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. **First be reconciled** [aorist tense, passive voice, imperative mood] to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser [or else] while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison ... **Mt.5:21-26***

This passage emphasizes the seriousness of our treatment of our fellow human beings in attitude, words, and actions. It is implicit in verse **22a** that there is great benefit in getting rid of anger soonest. **The Law of Moses for the nation of Israel had no penalty for anger, bitterness, or hatred, but the Law of the kingdom of heaven under Christ does.** In **v.22b**, the angry heart reveals itself by spewing forth contemptuous and demeaning words. **Verses 23-25** open the possibility of righting the wrong before God steps in to deliver justice as He surely will. **The situation is of such a magnitude that acceptability of your dedication (worship, sacrifice, and service) to God depends upon your setting right this matter between you and another person,** and that you do it right away. You have turned a friend or potential friend into an enemy – the one called brother in **v.22-24** has become your adversary in **v.25**. The situation is dire because you are in jeopardy of being irreversibly caught in the very sequence of consequences you initiated by allowing anger to grow in your heart. That which started as a personal matter has become a legally actionable judicial matter in the kingdom under the government of Jesus. *Come to terms* is reminiscent of justice under the Old Covenant where in lesser offenses the dam-

aged party had a say in the recompense, and could even forgive the debt. Here, if the matter is not timely settled between the parties, the grace period expires. **Punishment is then taken out of their hands and dealt with as if it were a more serious crime where the penalty is prescribed by law** [see **chap.4 But I Say to You**].

Remembrance that *your brother has something against you* refers to your sense that something is wrong between you - the pricking of your conscience.² It's up to you to identify what it is and move to reconcile it ³ [to make peace between two parties at odds with each other, see **p.10 GT #2**]. **Reconciliation moves toward restoration of a broken or strained relationship**. You caused the problem by your insensitive, thoughtless, unkind, or hurtful words or actions, or compounded it by your reaction.⁴ In either case it is up to you to dress the wound you made [take responsibility for corrective steps, see lecture 3 in Identity series by Dick Keyes, *Dealing with Anger*]. To do this, you must confess to the wounded party your offense irrespective of his part. But confession merely confirms your culpability and admits to your sin – it does not reconcile and may even serve as the basis for your accuser to justify his reaction to you. **You must also humble yourself, throwing yourself upon the mercy of your accuser by seeking his forgiveness**. Such an action transfers to offended party the burden of love to forgive you. **The onus now shifts to him** to complete the reconciliation. Let us move on to the role of wisdom and reason at this intersection of truth and life as pertaining to pride and humility in achieving reconciliation.

2. Eph.6 has a discussion on gearing up for spiritual battle. Paul's words to Timothy relate to that discussion. *I ... sent you out to battle for the right armed only with your faith and a clear conscience*. Some, alas, have laid these simple weapons contemptuously aside, and as far as their faith is concerned, have run their ships on the rocks. (**1 Tim.1:18-19**, Phillips) **1 Pt.3:16 raises an instance where a clear conscience is used in our defense and directly affects witnessing [which is the battle as we invade enemy territory with the Gospel]**. *The ultimate aim of the Christian ministry, after all, is to produce the love which springs from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a genuine faith (1 Tim.1:5, Phillips)*. **Reconciliation cannot be accomplished without taking responsibility for past wrongs**. **Every person sincerely desiring to follow Christ must make sure his record is clear with those he is uncomfortable with** – everyone who exhibits coolness or animosity toward him. Be careful, it is a path fraught with pitfalls, not to be embarked upon lightly, but with determined diligence in seeking wisdom in a spirit of humility [see **Beyond David**].

Paul **recognized his ministry as God's work** in reconciling the world to Himself (**2 Cor.5:18-19**) and approached it as an ambassador from the new creation to the old (**v.20a**) in a joint effort with God (**6:1**). **He resolved to put no obstacle in anyone's way so as not to hinder that ministry (6:3)**. Paul speaks of what this entailed in the next few verses, and mentions this is accomplished with the weapons of righteousness in **v.7**. Phillips puts it this way, *Our sole defense, our only weapon, is a life of integrity ...* This cannot mean we never sin against or throw stumbling blocks in front of people. It must mean that when we do and our conscience alerts us, we are to set our hearts on being reconciled with and restored to those offended.

Consider **Mt.7:1-5**. **A spirit that condemns others reflects one's own inability to see himself clearly**. You may be right about them, but you judge yourself along with them because you are in the same

category. There is an equivalent problem in both people. The splinter I see in my neighbor's eye is like a beam I don't notice in mine. Discernment is not only necessary to recognize and remove my splinter, but his as well. The order is paramount. Without a clear conscience yourself, don't think you will be able to discern the insights necessary for helping your children, spouse, friends, etc. with their problems. *He that covers his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy (Prov.28:13).* For anyone desiring to teach others, developing sensitivity and discernment is a matter of training (personal practice, **Heb.5:11-14**).

3. The principle expressed in **Rom.12:18**, *If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all* is understood here.

4. How does the following passage relate to this? *Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, **forgiving each other**, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you (Eph.4:30-32).*

APPROACHING THE PROBLEM WITH WISDOM AND ITS REASONING

Reconciliation is no small matter - an amazing percentage of personal problems (including physical and psychological ailments) cannot be dealt with or effectively counseled without squarely confronting issues raised by one's conscience. An unkind word can overshadow all the good that has preceded it, and no amount of good thereafter can make up for it. The longer one harbors anger, the more it festers in the very center of his being - the more intrusive its destructive influence will insinuate itself into both parties and reach out to infect others as well. Sin in one area of our lives has a ripple effect and results in complications in other areas. Yielding to the temptation either by ignoring the promptings of our conscience or by reacting against people rather than responding to them in love grants Satan a foothold ⁵ in our lives – things just got a lot harder. [see paragraph on the temptation of Cain, **Gen.4:7**, under *Temptation at Bible Studies*]

Where will you turn for counsel? To whom will you go for help? What does the Bible say about applying yourself to the pursuit of wisdom? ⁶ Wisdom working with Scripture, right-thinking, and an understanding of the lessons of life teach us how to proceed. What steps are prudent to take once it is apparent that something is wrong in a relationship? My purpose here is not to lay out all the details of every step, associated reasons, cautions, and related considerations, but to expand your perception of the necessity to discern the direction you should go and why, what approach is wise and why, and what to avoid and why. Would making a list of **their** faults and offenses be helpful? **Yes, offenses often result from both an action or attitude of one party and a reaction by the other. You cannot be prepared to seek their forgiveness until you have first fully forgiven them.**⁷ Are there passages that address this? **Mt.18:21-35; 6:9-15.** Do you know the difference between faults and offenses ⁸ or forgiving and pardoning? Are you aware of what it really means to forgive? If not, you are not ready to proceed.

What about listing **your** faults and offenses? Have you learned to distinguish between *immediate offenses* and *basic offenses*? **They are not always the same.** How will you answer the **rationalizations** your mind will bring up to prevent you from taking action – like, Things have gotten better? **With uncanny regularity, those who purpose to make things right with one they are not getting along with**

will find the situation improving before they ask forgiveness. Often this improvement is God's way of preparing the other person to forgive us – don't mistake it as a reason for not seeking forgiveness. What is the difference between a reason and an excuse? Might your reason be mistaken as an excuse.

How important is it to plan your confession? Which of the following statements spoken in the right attitude reflects **a heart of repentance devoid of all pride**?

I apologize for _____;

I'm sorry that _____;

I realize that I've been wrong in [basic offense], will you forgive me? [and wait for the answer]

I've been wrong, please forgive me;

What about naming shameful details, restitution, involving others in your confession, etc.? Suppose they won't forgive you? Aren't your good intentions enough? I thought reconciliation was urgent - I'll never be ready at this rate! When you truly repent and purpose to make things right, God will give you the time to prepare to do it properly. As you can see, it's not so easy to overcome sin and repair the damage it leaves and there is the real possibility you could make things worse, but by God's grace **substantial healing** is possible. This is what it means to take our faith seriously – to do what is good, right, and just after we mess up.

5. *Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity [chance] to the devil. **Eph.4: 25-27*** The word translated *opportunity* is literally **place** (KJV), referring to a region or ground, like a foothold (NIV) or beachhead on our turf which our enemy can then reinforce, establishing a fortified position (stronghold) as a base of operations within our own territory from which to carry on attacks against us. Although the context is referring to those within the body of Christ, we are extracting the principle for a wider application. [for a theological discussion on this passage see *Commands in Scrip.*]

6. Our study has brought us to the point where the absolute necessity of submitting to God by continually placing ourselves under the counsel and authority of His word should be crystal clear.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

*The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. **Ps.1:1-6***

The underlined terms in the passages below go together and reflect different aspects of the help we need.

¹³Blessed is the one who finds wisdom , and gets understanding,
¹⁴for the **gain from her** is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold.
¹⁵She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her.
¹⁶Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor.
¹⁷Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.
¹⁸She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed.
¹⁹The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens;
²⁰by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew.
²¹My son, do not lose sight of these — keep sound wisdom and discretion,
²²and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck.
²³Then you will walk on your way securely and your foot will not stumble.
²⁴If you lie down, you will not be afraid ... your sleep will be sweet.
²⁵Do not be afraid of sudden terror or of the ruin of the wicked, when it comes,
²⁶for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught. **Prov.3:**
⁵Get wisdom ; get insight ; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth.
⁶Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you.
⁷The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight.
⁸Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her.
⁹She will place on your head a graceful garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful crown. **Prov.4:**

7. How do the following passages relate to this? For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions (**Mt.6:14-15**).

And whenever you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone [remove the offense from yourself], so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions (**Mk. 11:25**).

8. Pick out the appropriate responses to faults and to offenses according to the following passage:

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive ... **Col3:12-13** [see last sentence of footnote 5]