

Motivational & Functional Virtues; 1 Cor 3:12-16: the Two Asyndetons: Divine Good Rewarded, Human Good Burned; Believers minus Doctrine Equals Losers

18. Basic virtues may be generally understood from advance in the divine power system: (1) the consistent use of confession alone to God alone resulting in (2) the filling of the Holy Spirit. Consistent use of the Spirit's power and availing oneself to consistent teaching of the Word of God results in (3) living the faith-rest life: trusting God and His grace and being relaxed in the face of challenges typical of the human experience.
19. From a relaxed mental attitude, the believer can objectively study the Bible and grow in grace. At first he must submit to the enforced humility of strict academic discipline but as he acquires an inventory of biblical principles he develops a hunger and thirst for the Word, exemplified by genuine humility.
20. Along the way these principles, many of which are basic problem-solving devices, develop into spiritual self-esteem. Too often today people have human self-esteem which results in arrogance and self-centeredness. Spiritual self-esteem results from a clear understanding of one's relationship with God.
21. Realization that one's condemnation has been removed by the unconditional love and grace of God results in the development of personal love for God. Personal love for God is what enables the believer to direct unconditional love toward mankind.
22. Personal love for God and unconditional love for mankind are counterpart virtues. Personal love is motivational toward God while unconditional love is functional toward man and circumstances.
23. Motivational virtues are invisible. A believer must be motivated within his own soul to:
 - 1) Worship God, which is primarily accomplished by both learning and keeping His commandments,
 - 2) Have confidence in God's virtue to sustain, uphold, and protect him through dependence upon and application of His Word, and
 - 3) Love God personally because of Who and what He is.
24. Functional virtues are visible.
 - 1) Morality becomes the production of divine good when it occurs under the filling of the Holy Spirit.
 - 2) Confidence in the virtue of God and the veracity of His Word produces courage toward life and circumstances.
 - 3) True courage removes all conflict with others and enables the believer to direct unconditional love toward all – the good, the bad, and the ugly.
25. For the believer, virtue is a characteristic that develops over time. Virtue is built on the foundation of basic morality. The believer is expected to be moral but for morality to have virtue it must be expressed under the filling of the Holy Spirit, otherwise it is human good. People may be impressed with a believer's works but from the divine viewpoint it is wood, hay, and stubble if performed out of fellowship.

1 Corinthians 3:12 - If [1CC] anyone [any believer] builds [through thought, decision, or action] on the foundation [saving faith in Jesus Christ] with gold, silver, precious stones [metals and gems that have intrinsic value resistant to fire: emblematic of divine good performed under the power of the Holy Spirit and His guidance from resident doctrine]; wood, hay, or straw [remnants of flora that have no intrinsic value and quite flammable: emblematic of human good performed under the energy of the flesh and guided by human viewpoint resulting in man's glory],

v. 13 - Each builder's [each individual believer's] work [of whatever category] will be plainly seen [will become evident], for the Day [the evaluation tribunal of Christ following the Rapture of the Church] will make it clear because it will be revealed by fire [the category of works performed]. And the fire will test what kind of work [divine or human good] each has done.

v. 14 - If what someone has built survives [divine good], he will receive a reward [eternal escrow].

v. 15 - If someone's work is burned up [human good], he will suffer loss [of reward]. He himself will be saved [delivered], but only as through fire [a believer has intrinsic value and, like precious metals and gems, endures the trial].

v. 16 - Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you [it is only by means of the filling of the Holy Spirit that virtue is developed and rewards attained]?

I Corinthians 3:12

1. Following the Rapture of the Church very believer will be assembled before the béma of the Supreme Court of Heaven where Jesus Christ will preside as chief justice of an evaluation tribunal.
2. At this tribunal the works of individual believers will be examined for the purpose of determining their profit or loss related to eternal rewards.
3. The procedure for determining these results will be having each person's works tried in a judgmental fire.
4. There are two classifications of works that will be evaluated, each having three categories: (1) rewardable and (2) unrewardable.
5. Each of these classifications are presented by an asyndeton, a literary term taken from the Greek *asundetos*:

Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott. *A Greek English Lexicon*. Revised by Henry Stuart Jones. (New York: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1968), 265:

ἄσύνδετος [*asundetos*], without conjunctions, but not without connexion.

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. 11th ed. (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 2003), 77:

Asyndeton: omission of the conjunctions that ordinarily join co-ordinate words or clauses.

6. In 1 Corinthians 3:12 the two classifications are representative of two kinds of works.
7. The rewardable works are grouped in the asyndeton, "gold, silver, precious stones."

8. The unrewardable works are listed in the asyndeton, “wood, hay, straw.”
9. The rewardable works are classified as divine good and are made up of three categories:

Gold: Pure gold is acquired by refinement and fire is the most accurate process to accomplish this. Details, although esoteric, are provided by:

Gold And Silver Mines.com:

<http://www.goldandsilvermines.com/abtgold.htm>

Fire assay is considered the most reliable method for accurately determining the content of gold, silver, and platinum-group in ores or concentrates. This process involves melting a gold-bearing sample in a clay crucible with a mixture of fluxes (such as silica and borax), lead oxide (called litharge), and a reducing agent (frequently flour). The fluxes lower the melting point of the oxidic materials, allowing them to fuse, and the molten litharge is reduced by the flour to extremely fine drops of lead dispersed throughout the charge. The drops of lead dissolve the gold, silver, and platinum-group metals, then coalesce and gradually descend through the sample to form a metallic layer at the bottom of the crucible. After cooling, the lead "button" is separated from the slag layer and heated under oxidizing conditions to oxidize and eliminate the lead. The shiny metallic bead that is left contains the precious metals. The bead is boiled in nitric acid to dissolve the silver (a process called parting), and the gold residue is weighed. In the jewelry industry, gold content is specified by karat. Pure gold is designated 24 karats.

The believer that moves through the momentum tests – people, system, thought, disaster, prosperity, and evidence – goes through a spiritual assaying in time, a process described by Peter in:

1 Peter 1:7 - The testing of your faith is of much greater value than gold which will be destroyed, though your faith is assayed through fire, it might be found to result in commendation, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ [through momentum testing and at the evaluation tribunal of Christ].

Assaying of gold through a refining fire exemplifies the purity of Christian integrity that emerges from momentum testings that result in steadfastness under pressure.

Silver: This is the metal that signifies redemption through faith in Christ. No matter the intensity of the refining fire at the evaluation tribunal it cannot consume the promise of eternal life possessed by the believer.

Precious stones: During testings, the believer must utilize his inventory of doctrinal ideas to navigate through the storms they impose. These successful applications in both difficulty and prosperity result in divine good production through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and guidance from the Word of God.

The three components of this asyndeton symbolize the believer's production that survives the evaluation fires and illustrates the conveyance of escrow blessings for eternity.

10. On the other hand, the believer that makes little or no advance in his spiritual life will find that when his production is evaluated the fire's flames billow, engulf, and consume his dead works.

11. The three unrewardable components of the next asyndeton were used in the construction of buildings:

Mare, W. Harold. "1 Corinthians." In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelain. (Grand Rapids: Regency, 1976), 10:207:

The frames of ordinary houses and buildings were built of wood; hay or dried-grass, mixed with mud, was used for the walls; and roofs were thatched with straw or stalks. So the kind of life represented by these lesser things will also have to face the test of the pure fire of God's justice and judgment, when it will be consumed.

Wood: The word in the Greek is **ξύλον, xulon**, and refers to wood that makes up the walls of a house. It represents human good works performed in carnality, such as establishment truth and basic morality, but which are not rewardable.

Hay: Used with mud for insulation of the walls of the house, illustrating dead works – one's arrogant efforts to please God while in status quo carnality. The Greek word is **χόρτος, chortos**: it includes lilies of the field, dried grass, or cornstalks. "The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever" (1 Peter 1:24b).

Straw: This word in the Greek is **καλάμη, kalamē** and refers to a mixture of chopped straw and chaff produced in threshing. It speaks of the production of evil: cosmic panaceas which attempt to solve the problems of life apart from the grace of God, doctrine, & divine establishment.

12. These three construction materials do make a house but it is susceptible to fire. Likewise for a spiritual building that one would build in his soul made up of human good, dead works, and evil. These will be ready fodder for the flames at the evaluation tribunal of Christ and symbolize the loss of escrow conveyance for all eternity.

1 Corinthians 3:13

1. The construction materials mentioned in both asyndetons are said in verse 12 to be built on the foundation of faith in Christ, noted in:

1 Corinthians 3:11 - For no foundation can anyone lay, than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

2. The building referred to in the first asyndeton is the construction of an edification complex in the soul, symbolized by gold, silver, and precious stones.
3. The building referred to in the second asyndeton is the construction of a house of fodder although built on the foundation of the Rock, Jesus Christ.
4. The quality of each one's superstructure will become clear that the evaluation tribunal, referred to in context as "the Day."
5. What assays these buildings will be the fires of evaluation which will reveal the classification and quality of each man's work.
6. Except for doctrinal discernment utilized objectively it is generally impossible to discern the quality of a believer's works, for the difference between divine good and human good is often whether or not it is performed through the filling of the Holy Spirit.

7. But all works will be made evident that the evaluation tribunal.

1 Corinthians 3:14

1. In this verse we find that if a believer's superstructure endures the fires of testing, then he will receive a reward, the conveyance of his escrow blessings for eternity.
2. When a believer enters into spiritual maturity during his earthly life he receives the conveyance of his escrow blessings in time.
3. However, as noted in verse 13, it is often impossible to properly evaluate a believer's production from human observation. Consequently, the quality of a person's works must be evaluated by the Lord and not by men.
4. This is most assuredly not a talent that cosmic or even advance believers possess. Therefore, if there was not a manner to confirm the quality of each person's works, there would be howls of protest surrounding the conveyance of eternal escrow blessings to winners while those of losers are retained.
5. The Lord, who evaluates the souls of believers on a daily basis, knows who qualifies for eternal escrow blessing, but we don't. The evaluation tribunal is not convened for Christ to determine who qualifies but for the assembled members of the royal family to have these things certified.
6. Therefore, when in verse 14 winners receive their escrow there can be no arguments when the evaluation for the losers occurs in the next verse and their rewards are retained.

1 Corinthians 3:15

1. Here we find that the building constructed in the loser's soul for all practical purposes is made of sand. When the fires hit his superstructure the wooden walls, the hay of their insulation, and their straw roof are completely consumed leaving only dried mud as a pitiful residue, a feeble expression of establishment morality that is unrewardable.
2. Yet, this person's firm foundation is his faith in Christ. And although his soul's evaluation results in its edifice being destroyed by fire, he himself remains as unscorched by its licking flames as were Hannaniah, Mishael, and Azariah in Nebuchadnezzar's burning fiery furnace. Thus the loser believer does not lose his salvation but his rewards. They were done under the energy of the flesh and do not qualify for the Nike Awards contained in his escrow account.

1 Corinthians 3:16

1. This verse sums up the issue for those of us who are privileged to study this passage.
2. Note that this chapter starts off with Paul chastising the believers at Corinth:

1 Corinthians 3:1 - So, fellow believers, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but instead as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ.

v. 2 - I fed you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready. In fact, you are still not ready,

v. 3 - for you are still influenced by the flesh. For since there is still jealousy and dissension among you, are you not influenced by the flesh and behaving like ordinary people?

3. People who are ordinary are the heathen, the pagan, and cosmic unbelievers of Lucifer's earthly kingdom. The cosmic believer without the power or mentorship of the Holy Spirit always imitates the unbeliever.
4. Thus the good he attempts to do is worthless; so worthless that Isaiah chooses the most repugnant of illustrations to show the divine opinion of all our human good:

Isaiah 64:6 - We are all like one who is unclean, all of our so-called righteous acts are like a menstrual rag in Your sight. We all wither like a leaf; and our sins carry us away like the wind.

5. Therefore, the carnal believers at Corinth and those of us who follow in their footsteps are reminded of the solution to our behavior patterns, character traits, and lifestyles, that motivate us to offer our useless efforts of wood, hay, and straw to the God of the universe:

1 Corinthians 3:16 - Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

6. The issue? Get in fellowship through confession alone to God alone. Take advantage of the two power options: (1) the filling of the Holy Spirit and (2) with resultant spiritual IQ, get in Bible class and resume your grace advance in the plan of God.
7. Utilizing these two power options will, in time, facilitate the three spiritual skills: (1) status quo spirituality, (2) the double-column advance, and (3) the development of biblical problem-solving techniques.
8. From this will emerge the construction of a durable edification complex in the soul that when tested at the evaluation tribunal of Christ will be found comparable to gold, silver, precious stones.
9. Don't be a loser and smoke up the place. It is very thoughtless and shows no reciprocity.
26. Virtue occurs when the believer's thoughts, decisions, and actions have their source from the righteous standards of divine integrity.
27. The antithesis of virtue is arrogance. Virtue includes humility, confidence, and personal integrity whereas arrogance includes conceit, egotism, and hypocrisy.
28. Believers who function inside the divine power system produce virtue while believers who function in carnality produce the false virtue of human good.