

Christian Philosophy?

Is there such a thing as Christian, or Biblical philosophy? Or, is the Scripture opposed to the entire idea of philosophy?

For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (*Colossians 2:1-8*)

It all depends on how someone is defining philosophy.

Philosophy is defined in the following ways:

- 1. Originally, a love, or the love of wisdom and knowledge.*
- 2. A study of the processes governing thought and conduct; theory or investigation of the principles or laws that regulate the universe and underlie all knowledge and reality; included in the study are aesthetics, ethics, logic, metaphysics, etc.*
- 3. The general principles or laws of a field of knowledge, activity, etc.; as, the philosophy of economics.*

4. (a) a particular system of principles for the conduct of life; (b) a treatise covering such a system.
5. A study of human morals, character, and behavior.
6. The mental balance believed to result from this; calmness, composure.

The Scripture is most definitely not opposed to the love of wisdom and knowledge – so long as it is put in its proper perspective

The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. (*Proverbs 1:1-7*)

However, seeking knowledge outside the LORD results in the following situation:

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts,

and creeping things. (*Romans 1:19-23*)

Generally speaking, when people speak of philosophy, they are not referring to the first and original meaning of the word. Rather, they refer to the investigation of the human condition:

1. *How did we get here?*
2. *How should one conduct oneself?*
3. *Why are we here?*
4. *What is the value of life?*

And so on and so forth . . .

Is this Scriptural? Does the LORD approve of investigating these for the purpose of determining a philosophy? Is this, in itself, a philosophy?

For it to be a Scriptural investigation, it is not going to be a very long one, and it is going to have to be accomplished entirely by faith – if it is to be scriptural.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (*Hebrews 11:3*)

This is not going to make it much of a philosophy.

As far as the philosophical discussion of man's condition, the Scripture is quite succinct:

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. (*Psalms 51:5*)

And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. (*Genesis 8:21*)

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. (*Jeremiah 17:9-10*)

What about the end of things?

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (*II Peter 3:3-10*)

Or, they refer to that set of ideas and principles that govern, or make up the Christian ethos, or way of life.

Is there such a thing?

But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life,

purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. (*II Timothy 3:10-11*)

For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. (*Proverbs 6:23-24*)

He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth. (*Proverb 10:17*)

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath. (*Proverb 15:24*)

And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death. (*Jeremiah 21:8*)

Out of the above mention in the Scripture, none of them refer to the investigation of principles and ideals could govern one's life. Rather, the way of life in the Scripture is to follow the commandments of the LORD God.

This does not require investigation. Rather, it requires a willing and obedient heart.

Is there such thing as a "Christian" philosophy?

Just as much as there is such a thing as "Christian" fiction. Both are oxymorons.

Thus, we should understand that, unless someone is expressly speaking of loving the wisdom and knowledge the LORD gives through His word, the Scripture plainly condemns philosophy as a foolish and blind way of seeking to understand one's life.

After all, there's not much philosophy in being obedient to

the commandment.