

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life for week ending 02/29/04.
No Man's Land. Philippians 4:8

Our corrected translation of **Phi 4:5-7** reads: *“Let your supergrace mental attitude be known to all men. The Lord is near. Stop worrying about anything, but in every circumstance through prayer and through supplication for personal needs after thanksgivings let your requests or petitions be revealed to the God. In fact, that spiritual peace and prosperity from the source of the God, which surpasses or rises above and beyond all comprehension, shall garrison your hearts [right lobe of the soul], also your motivation or minds in Christ Jesus.”* In our study of the book of *Philippians*, we are now on **Phi 4:8**, *“Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.”* In verses 8–13, we see the advance to the *ultra-supergrace* life.

Ultra-supergrace is the most advanced stage of spiritual maturity in time, history, and the angelic conflict. In ultra-supergrace, the believer receives maximum opposition from the satanic forces of evil, and this is the **highest decoration** he can receive from God. We have examples of this in the winner believers of Smyrna, **Rev 2:9-10**, and Pergamum, **Rev 2:13**. In both these churches, some believers stayed with the plan of God and went forward, while others, in the same congregation under the same teaching, did not. Unfortunately, this is where divisions can take place.

Examples of believers who reached ultra-supergrace include:

1. Moses reached ultra-supergrace and received persecution from his nation and family (unbelievers and believers) and demons.
2. Jeremiah reached ultra-supergrace and received maximum pressure during the fifth cycle of discipline in Judah.
3. Paul reached ultra-supergrace and received maximum opposition from satanic forces, **Act 19:15**.
4. God's testimony concerning David is found in **Act 13:22**, *“I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My will.”*

Ultra-supergrace is the sphere of the angelic conflict between the unfairness of the devil's world and the total fairness of God to mature believers. These believers are placed under maximum testing and pressure, which is allowed by God and administered by Satan, 2Ti 2:10, 3:11-12.

The blessings of supergrace are intensified and protected by God even under the most intense pressure, persecution, and attack from Satan. Supergrace is the beginning stage of suffering for blessing and victory in the angelic conflict. Beyond supergrace is an even higher plain, where the mature believer has all the blessings of supergrace, but he is completely surrounded by suffering, pressure, and adversity, which only intensify these blessings. The conflict is between the unfairness of the devil's world and the total fairness of God, 2Ti 2:10-14, *“For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those*

who are chosen [the elect], that they also may obtain [acquire] the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory [escrow blessings in the eternal state]. It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we endure [in suffering for blessing], we shall rule with Him [as mature believers]. If we deny Him [in time, by rejecting the predesigned plan of God], He will deny us [rewards, escrow blessings]. If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers.”

Moses and Paul are two illustrations of ultra-supergrace. Both reached ultra-supergrace, in which their lives were enshrouded with continual pressure and suffering. During this time of tremendous pressure, they had great blessings from the Lord, **2Ti 3:8-11**, “*And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men [reversionistic believers and unbelievers of Paul’s time] also oppose the truth [Bible doctrine], men of depraved mind [corrupted mentality], rejected as regards the faith. But they will not make further progress; for their folly [lack of sense] will be obvious to all, as also that of those two came to be. But you followed my teaching [doctrine], conduct [self-discipline], purpose [teaching and building up the body of Christ], faith [faithfulness], patience [steadfastness], love, perseverance [endurance], persecutions, and sufferings [the shroud wrapped around the ultra-supergrace believer], such as happened to me at Antioch [pressure from legalism], at Iconium [a conspiracy to stone him], and at Lystra [he was actually stoned to death, and God brought him back from the dead]; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord delivered me!*” His perseverance was the ability to undergo opposition and criticism without giving up, or giving in to cowardice or self-pity. This is the highest honor that God can give to a believer in time; it is the highest dignity ever bestowed on human being.

Beyond supergrace is ultra-supergrace, a higher plain where there is a demonstration of the maximum power in grace, **Eph 1:18-20**; it is also described as pursuing grace, **Psa 23:5c-6**, **Eph 1:3-6**. The blessings of ultra-supergrace are beyond human imagination, **Eph 3:20-21**. In ultra-supergrace, the believer receives maximum opposition from the satanic forces of evil, which are accompanied by the highest decoration the believer can receive from God, indicating great future blessings in eternity.

In **Phi 4**, Paul is in supergrace and approaching the final objective of ultra-supergrace; in verse 8, he introduces the principle of *capacity for life*, which is necessary for this spiritual advance. Believers who lack capacity for life are boring and no fun to be around; they are too intense and full of legalism. It was people like this who mocked our Lord and Savior in **Mat 27:39**, “*And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads.*” They think they are serving God, **Joh 16:2**; they often call themselves “grace Christians,” yet they couldn’t be more legalistic.

“No Man’s Land,” as we have noted in the past, is what the mature believer must cross between supergrace and ultra-supergrace, and it will determine how strong the doctrine in his soul really is. It is the great test of motivation and mental attitude, as well as capacity for life. No Man’s Land is where you will face many opponents and adversaries, people manipulated by the kingdom of darkness to stop your momentum. Many will speak evil of you, your pastor, your church, etc, and it is actually a sign that you are on the right path, **Luk 6:22**, **Mat 5:11**, “*Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me.*”

Consider it a compliment when evil people are dedicated to destroying you or your local assembly.

When you enter this spiritual No Man's Land, you will experience all manner of pressures and undeserved suffering. You will have to make sacrifices and suffer apparent losses to ultimately fulfill God's plan. You may even start looking back and thinking how better off you were before! The most dangerous stage of the spiritual life is in No Man's Land.

You will come under the most vicious satanic attacks, where even your friends and your loved ones are affected. There will be confusion in your life, which no one else understands. You will be attacked spiritually, physically, or mentally, as Job was, and you will be tempted to get distracted from your calling. This is where you have finally gotten Satan's attention, and you are ambushed by demonic attacks.

No Man's Land is a dangerous place to be, however, this danger will be a positive experience in the plan of God, as alluded to in **Phi 2:12**, "*So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, be accomplishing your own preservation **in danger**.*" You become more and more isolated as you advance deeper into no man's land. In this isolation you begin to leave behind friends, family members, and acquaintances because you discover that you have nothing in common with them. You become integrated with those who have positive volition toward doctrine. As you go forward in the spiritual life, you cannot help but develop rapport with those who are on the same battlefield with you.

There are many people who may get left behind—a mother, father, sister, brother, wife, husband, son, daughter, girlfriend, or boyfriend—and get lost in the shuffle. They did not go forward but you kept going, and therefore there will come a time in your life when your scale of values concerning people will change, and you undergo the greatest change of friends you could imagine. In maintaining your spiritual momentum, you will inevitably lose rapport with certain people, especially those who have fallen by the wayside and are negative toward doctrine. However, you will gain rapport with those fighting the battle alongside you. As on any battlefield, there are people who become casualties along the way, and the battlefield of No Man's Land thins out the ranks and reveals the difference between those who have a pseudo positive volition and those who have a genuine positive volition toward doctrine. It is a shame that many of God's people are not curious at all about why they are here; so many believers lead lives of boredom and indifference, which kill the spiritual life; they are only concerned with overt appearances and avoiding adversity, **Gal 6:12-13**.

First on the agenda of **Phi 4:8** is capacity for life, which manifests itself in many areas. It begins with capacity for appreciating God, i.e., occupation with Christ, maximum *Category 1 love*. This is the basis for developing capacity for *Category 2 love*, toward one's mate, and *Category 3 love*, toward one's friends. Sadly, many believers will never have any true friendships in life because they do not have capacity for love, which only comes from doctrine resident in the soul. Bible doctrine builds capacity for who and what God is, as well as for what He provides in the spiritual realm. This includes capacity for happiness and, by way of contrast, capacity for adversity. This verse brings out the various facets of capacity for life, which are all necessary for crossing No Man's Land.

“*Finally, brethren...*” **Phi 4:8** begins with the definite article *to* with the adverb *loipon* (translated “finally”), meaning “from now on,” “in the future,” or “therefore.” Here we must look back at the previous seven verses:

- Now that you understand the importance of standing firm and advancing, and not retreating (verse 1).
- Now that you understand the importance of having the same viewpoint and thinking objectively by means of the Lord (verse 2).
- Now that you understand the importance of having perfect happiness by means of the Lord at all times (verse 4).
- Now that you understand the importance of letting your supergrace mental attitude be known to all men (verse 5).
- Now that you understand the importance of not worrying about anything (verse 6).
- Now that you understand that the spiritual peace and prosperity from God, which surpasses and rises above and beyond all comprehension, shall garrison your hearts and also your motivation (verse 7).

“Now that you understand the importance of all of these principles” is the meaning of the phrase *to loipon*, translated “finally” or “from now on.” This is the introduction to **Phi 4:8**.

The next word, translated “brethren,” is the vocative plural noun *adelphoi*, which serves as a reminder to those who are making the spiritual advance that they are members of the **Royal Family of God**. It emphasizes the fact that, in this dispensation, the baptism of the Holy Spirit enters all believers into union with Christ, making them Royal Family of God forever. The baptism of the Holy Spirit did not occur until Christ was resurrected, ascended, and seated at the right hand of God the Father, who said, “*Sit down at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.*” This verified the authenticity of the work of Christ on the Cross, as well as revealing a new form of royalty for the Lord Jesus Christ. He is **divine royalty** because He is God; He is called the Son of God, and His Royal Family is God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He is also **Jewish royalty** as the Son of David. Now that He seated at the right hand of the father, He has attained a third royalty—His **battlefield royalty**. His title is “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

Since there was not yet a Royal Family to accompany our Lord’s third royal title, the Jewish age was brought to a screeching halt, and the Church-age began. The purpose for the Church-age is simple—to call out (*ekklesia*) a Royal Family for the battlefield royalty of Jesus Christ; we are the kings and lords that He is King and Lord over. Therefore, because the Church-age is so unique, it began with the baptism of the Holy Spirit whereby the believer is entered into union with Christ. Being in union with Christ, Church-age believers share all that Christ is and has, for the Head and the body are united in one spiritual entity. We share:

- His life, which is eternal life, **1Jo 5:11-12**.
- His righteousness, **2Co 5:21**.
- His election, an “escrow” election, **Eph 1:3-4**.
- His destiny, called “predestination,” **Eph 1:5-6**.
- His sonship, **Gal 3:26**. He is the Son of God; we are “sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”
- His heirship. We are joint-heirs with the Son of God, **Rom 8:16-17**.
- His priesthood. We are a royal priesthood, **1Pe 2:5,9**.

- His adoption. We are adopted into the Royal Family of God, **Eph 1:5**.
- His Kingship. We are a Royal Family of kings, **1Co 4:8**.

We have eternal security; we can never lose our union with Christ whether we are winners or losers. How can a believer say life is boring and empty?!

The term “brethren” is very significant in the New Testament. As all great doctrinal principles, it has been distorted, abused, and misused by Satan and the kingdom of darkness, and today, many emotional, self-righteous individuals are calling each other “brother this” and “sister that.” In reality, “brethren” designates the uniqueness of the dispensation of the Church-age. It reminds you that your life, no matter how dull it may seem at times, or how difficult it gets, has very clear meaning, purpose, and definition.

“*From now on, brethren [members of the Royal Family of God], whatever is...*” “Whatever” is the pronoun *hosa*, which indicates the many different aspects of capacity for life for the Royal Family. This is followed by the *present active indicative* form of the verb *eimi*, translated “is,” and then six adjectives that describe supergrace capacity for life, and are needed to cross into No Man’s Land between supergrace and ultra-supergrace: “...*whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.*”

The first of these six principles is the word “true.” This is the *predicate nominative neuter singular* adjective *alethe*, which refers to the doctrines, principles, and policies of God as preserved in His Word and transferred to our souls in the perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine. All capacity for life first comes from doctrine resident in the soul of the believer. The truth we have in our souls is the result of all the times we have taken in Bible doctrine by perceiving it in the left lobe (mind) and then believing it the right lobe (*kardia*).

Bible doctrine enters the left lobe as *gnosis*, something you know, but knowing is not enough; it must be transferred to the right lobe where it becomes *epignosis*, something you *understand*. You may know something, but still fail to understand it, and you cannot apply and use it until you understand it. The mature believer lives in truth and builds a capacity for life because he not only knows and understands the truth, but he can also *apply* the truth to his life. Truth is a passion and one cannot merely learn it—one must *possess* it. You must, as Paul says, “*Let your mind dwell on these things.*” And the first one he mentions is truth.

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