

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH
Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life from the week ending 06/10/07
What it means to be initiated into the secret of the mystery. Part 63.
The Doctrine of Supergrace. Part 4.

We have begun to look at Phi 4:13, and how this relates to all those who came against the apostle Paul. Phi 4:13 *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."*

We noted Hymenaeus and Alexander in 1Ti 1:19-20, *"keeping doctrine and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their doctrine. Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme."*

In 2Ti 4:10 Paul said, *"for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica;"*

In 2Ti 4:14 Paul said, *"Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds."*

2Co 12:15 *"And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved."* (NKJ)

The higher you go spiritually, the less company you will have. You will discover that the more you love people with impersonal love and honor their privacy, the more they will misinterpret that treatment. So Paul is, in his spiritual life, in no man's land. If you get to this stage, you will become segregated from others as you are becoming integrated with those who have positive volition toward doctrine. Psa 119:63 *"I am a companion of all those who respect Thee, and of those who keep Thy precepts."* As you go forward in the spiritual life you cannot help but have rapport with people who are on the same battlefield with you, and there's a lot of people who will get left behind. Mat 10:34-36, *"Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household."* Well-meaning family members can be your worst enemies. Mat 10:37-39, *"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it."*

There will be many that get lost in the shuffle. They don't go forward. They're negative toward doctrine. You will see many that will sell out for the right price. Judas sold out for thirty pieces of silver; many sell out for far less. Of course it is not only in the monetary realm; it could be fame, a relationship, or many other things. However there are some believers who kept going, never selling out, never compromising. As you go forward in your spiritual life, there will be a time when not only your scale of values about people will change, but you are going to undergo a change of friends. Your scale of values will be formed in no man's land or the spiritual battlefield. It is here that you will lose rapport with certain people, especially with those who have fallen by the wayside and are negative toward doctrine. However, you will pick up rapport with those on the same battlefield. The point is

that Paul loves this congregation because it is made up of those who stuck it out and went all the way.

Now, out on that battlefield in no man's land, there aren't as many as there were at the start. As with any battle, there are people who become casualties along the way. You will discover that the more you do for people, the more they expect from you, and the quicker they'll turn on you. Lucifer was the Messiah's personal angel. Joseph's brothers sold Joseph into slavery. Korah, the cousin of Moses came against Moses. Absalom was the son of David and came against him. Judas was close to the Lord Jesus Christ and we know what happened there. 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 are genuine towards doctrine.

So, we need to get some sort of picture of Paul's spiritual life. There's no one at his stage of spiritual growth or spiritual maturity. This is the principle: The more you grow spiritually, the less company you'll have. Paul is at a place in his spiritual life of no man's land; he learned how to handle that great problem of fear. We also need to learn these important principles regarding fear:

Fear is met and destroyed with courage. This includes the fear of rejection.

When you face your fear, most of the time you will discover that it was not really such a big threat after all. It was just the roaring lion, but with doctrine in your soul you will be able to roar right back.

Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world.

Most of our problems would be totally solved if, instead of fearing to face them, we would make up our minds to walk boldly through them.

Whenever we're afraid it's because we don't know enough, because if we understood enough we would never be afraid. 1Jo 4:4 *"You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world."*

Whenever we fear something, we give that which we fear power over us.

You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.

Courage is resistance to fear; it is mastery of fear; it is NOT absence of fear. This is why Paul said in Phi 1:28 *"Likewise, in no way be intimidated by your enemies which to them [intimidation] is a manifestation of destructive ways, but with reference to you, deliverance, in fact, this [deliverance] is from the source of God."* If you are in no man's land and growing spiritually, you will have opponents and adversaries. There will be people who are manipulated by Satan and the kingdom of darkness who are out to try to stop your momentum. In fact, you will never reach spiritual maturity unless you face a certain amount of undeserved suffering and don't complain about it. So, when you're in no man's land spiritually, you're going to have pressures, and undeserved suffering. This is the suffering that gives you that final thrust to reach God's goal for your life.

As you go forward to spiritual maturity and start getting into no man's land, you will realize that sometimes you have to make sacrifices and suffer seeming losses if you're going to fulfill God's plan. The advance to spiritual maturity or no man's land is a place of great testing, Act 14:22 *"Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."*

You will discover that the worst people you will encounter are certain believers, the con-artists, the unforgiving types, the liars and deceivers. All of us at some time or another are going to bump into a con-artist in life. They are generally people with pleasing personalities, a pleasing appearance, and sometimes they have an attractive way about them.

They may even give the impression of being great believers or great spiritual leaders! Being people-smart is no defense against the con-artists of this life. Neither is spiritual maturity a total defense. David was one of the greatest believers of all time, and in the state of spiritual

maturity he was conned by certain individuals.

The thing to remember is that when you are taken in by a con-artist, you can learn from the experience. For example, remember not to react, not to be bitter, vindictive, implacable, or full of vengeance. This is especially important if you are in a position of leadership, because if you become bitter you will never have the qualities of leadership necessary to fulfill that function. All of us at sometime will fail because it's inevitable that the very thing that makes us strong, honor and integrity, also makes us vulnerable and even sometimes weak. We can easily begin to assume that everyone who is nice, well-mannered, and knows the vocabulary of a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, is honorable and filled with integrity, and that's when things fall apart. Some of you have people in your life that you wouldn't even dream about doing the things to them that they are planning to do to you someday, or they would do it for the right price. Remember what David said in Psa 55:12-14, *"For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, Then I could bear it; Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, Then I could hide myself from him. But it is you, a man my equal, my companion and my familiar friend. We who had sweet fellowship together, walked in the house of God in the throng."*

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you're going to get a certain number of tests in this area. This is especially in the local assembly because it is the place where doctrine is taught. The kingdom of darkness desires to do whatever it can to distract people from the intake of doctrine. Paul said in Gal 2:4 *"But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage."* Notice that there is such a thing as false brethren. David had to deal with three master con-artists during his lifetime, and after the third he finally caught on. The con-artist uses the victim to get to his objective, and to do this he must deceive his victim. The con-artist is a reversionist and in using deceit must hide the evidence to make the lie stick. The greatest con-artists are reversionistic believers under the influence of evil. They know the language and what to say to each person. They know how to be sweet and nice to others and give them the wrong impression. They will ambush you every time they get a chance, and they will be used as the devil's final core from getting you to reach spiritual maturity. This is why you can't get your eyes on people.

So, what is most important is this final push in getting to spiritual maturity, and advancing through the different stages of the Christian way of life, and we do this by Phi 2:16 *"holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain."* This has to do with the intimacy and the nearness of the Lord in the life of the believer who perseveres and picks up their cross daily. The Lord is near from the standpoint of the omnipresence of His essence, which means that He sees and hears everything we do (Isa 41:10 and Heb 4:13). However, the Lord is also near in the amplification of living grace which makes it possible for the believer to reach Supergrace and understand fully the reality of the grace provision given by God. This is a reference to God's total provision for the believer who recognizes his dependency on God and who has continued toward spiritual maturity. This is the fulfillment of such passages as Mat 6:33 *"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."* Or Joh 6:27 *"Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, {even} God, has set His seal."*

The intimacy and the nearness of the Lord, or near grace, makes it possible for the Supergrace believer also to advance to ultra-Supergrace. Here you continue your advance in the spiritual life in spite of the obstacles, hindrances, and restraints that are placed in your path. Here you can have the confidence of such passages as 2Co 13:8 *"For we can do*

nothing against the truth, but only for the truth” and Pro 21:30 *“There is no wisdom and no understanding and no counsel against the Lord.”* Or the popular Rom 8:28 *“And we know that God to those who love God, He works all things together for good,”* Once you believe those passages, you will have a relaxed mental attitude toward everything in life.

So, in Phi 4:5, the whole principle in the phrase *“the Lord is near”* is simply that you went from saving grace to Supergrace by way of living grace. Now that you have grown spiritually you will experience near grace, or greater grace. Living grace was all the provision necessary to get you to crack that maturity barrier. You cracked that maturity barrier because you perceived, metabolized, and applied Bible doctrine daily and had all the provision necessary to do so. You had food, shelter, clothing, transportation. You had the preservation of divine thought in a sacred book, the Canon of scripture. You had a pastor-teacher. You had the academic discipline of a classroom, the local church. All of these things were just a small part of the tremendous provision whereby you could reach Supergrace. On this road you will begin to experience something very unique which cannot be described by human words: An intimacy and a nearness to the Lord. Therefore, you will realize that you have no excuses. You're moving out into no man's land with the next objective of ultra-Supergrace. It is the same grace provision which took you from salvation to Supergrace that will also carry you from Supergrace to ultra-Supergrace. Living grace keeps the believer alive in the devil's world and provides every need and blessing for the advance. The advance is in the realm of spiritual maturity; it is going from Supergrace to ultra-Supergrace and receiving the greater grace of Jam 4:6 *“But He gives a **greater** grace. Therefore it says, ‘God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’”*

So, saving grace is when you believe in Jesus Christ. Living grace takes you all the way through the maturity barrier to Supergrace. It is near grace or greater grace which takes you from Supergrace to the next objective, ultra-Supergrace.

So then, here are some principles regarding near grace: 1) Near grace is a supercharger which performs the same function in no man's land that living grace performed in the advance to spiritual maturity. It keeps you going forward under the most extreme and intensified forms of adversities, trials, difficulties, hardships, afflictions, problems, disasters, sufferings, etc.

2) Near grace recognizes the tremendous opposition which develops in the life of any believer advancing through no man's land between Supergrace and ultra-Supergrace. You will have tribulation. Joh 16:33 *“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”*

3) The increased opposition from the satanic forces of evil calls for the intensified provision of grace; therefore another category of grace is near grace, *“the Lord is near.”* This means that the Lord is at home in your hearts, and there is an intimacy and nearness you have with the Lord. This will occur as Eph 3:17 says, *“When you are rooted and grounded in impersonal unconditional agape love.”* This love must be authentic and without hypocrisy. In Mat 5:44 it is a love that *“loves your enemies, and prays for those who persecute you!”* In Joh 14:15 it is the type of love that motivates the believer to stay with doctrine, *“If you love Me, you will keep My commands.”* In 1Co 13:4 it is the type of love that *is patient, gracious, not jealous; does not brag and is not arrogant.* In 1Pe 4:8 it is the type of love that *covers a multitude of sins.* In 1Jo 2:5 it is the type of love that can only be developed from the intake of doctrine, *“But whoever keeps His doctrine, in that believer the love of God has truly been matured.”* In 1Jo 4:20 it is the type of love that has respect for the Royal Family of God, *If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.* All of these principles are related to the type of love that we must be rooted and grounded in for TLJC to be at home

in our hearts and to have that intimacy and the nearness of the Lord.

4) In near grace, the Lord makes special provision for the Supergrace believer advancing to the next objective where the going gets tough and the Lord's provision is greater than the stiffness of the opposition (1Jo 4:4).

5) When it says in Phi 4:5 *Let your Supergrace mental attitude be known to all men*, this spiritual attitude is to be revealed before all men, the saved as well as the unsaved. Jam 3:13-17, *“Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”*

6) A *Supergrace mental attitude*, manifested by a forbearing spirit or a gentleness which is a part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, runs contrary to the normal attitude of the flesh. Whenever a believer becomes critical, harsh, or demanding, they will drive a wedge between themselves and those around them. This is especially true in regards to their work in the area of evangelism. Tit 3:1-2, *“Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.”*

7) A *Supergrace mental attitude* is manifested by a mild disposition, mental strength under control, and obedience to the Word of God. It springs from the very nature of Christ.

8) The main verb in Phi 4:5 is the Greek word *epieikes*, translated *forbearing spirit*, and it also means mildness, patience, gentleness, moderation, unwillingness to litigate or contend. It means meekness under provocation and readiness to forgive injuries.

So again Phi 4:5 *“Let your supergrace mental attitude be known to all men. The Lord is near.”*