

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 07/23/06
What it means to be initiated into the secret of the mystery. Part 36.
No excuses for not living in predestination.

In Luk 14:16-27 we learned the lesson that winners make goals, while losers make excuses. It is only through consistent residence in the PPOG under the power of the Holy Spirit and momentum from metabolized doctrine, that the believer is able to understand and establish the right priorities for the execution of the PPOG. This includes having the right motivation and the right scale of values. The prophet Jeremiah warned the children of Israel in Jer 49:20 and Jer 50:45 to, *Therefore hear the "plan" of the Lord!* However, just like in the days of Jeremiah when believers had developed hardness of the heart, so it is today that believers have the same attitude. Jer 18:12, *We are going to follow our own plans, and each one will act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart.* Luk 14:27 says, *"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."* The Greek word for *disciple* is *mathetes* meaning a learner, pupil, student, or technical one. By implication, the existence of a *mathetes* or a disciple signifies that there is a teacher. You cannot be a disciple without having a teacher, and you will never develop the right priorities needed to be successful in the PPOG until you find a teacher to instruct you.

Priority number one must always be doctrine, and that results in the greatest of all priorities: occupation with the person of Christ. Our priorities need to line up with God's priorities; in God's authority, doctrine must be first. In God's plan, His commands and directions are first. In God's purpose, Christ is first. In God's policy, grace is first. In God's objective, proper motivation and energy is first, and in God's system, virtue is first.

These priorities come from learning that the relationship with God must precede any relationship with mankind, and divine power must have priority over human power. Christianity emphasizes that there must be right experience with God before there can be right experience with people. Wrong experience with God results in wrong experience with people. Therefore, your number one priority demands that you have a right relationship with God. As an expression of your God-emphasis over people-emphasis, divine power must take precedence over people power. When the priority battle is lost, the believer becomes a cosmic Christian, functioning under human power which is no substitute for divine power. This is why we have different commands to walk in the PPOG throughout the N. T.: Rom 5:20-6:4, *And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.* Another command to walk in the PPOG under

the power of God is found in 2Co 5:7, *For we walk by means of faith* [doctrine in the PPOG]. In Gal 5:16, *Walk by the Spirit* [in the PPOG], *and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh*. In Gal 6:14-16, *But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And those who will walk by this rule, [the precise correct procedure in the PPOG] prosperity and mercy be upon them*. In Eph 2:10, *For we are His workmanship* [the creation of the new spiritual species], *created in Christ Jesus for the purpose of divine good works, which God prepared beforehand, [in the PPOG under predestination] that we should walk in them*. In Phi 3:17, *Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern [the PPOG] you have in us*. In 1Th 4:1, *You received from us instruction [doctrine concerning the PPOG] as to how you ought to walk and please God*. In 2Jo 1:4, *I was very happy to find some of your children walking in truth [the PPOG], just as we have received commandment to do from the Father*. In 3Jo 1:4, *I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth [the PPOG]*. In all of these verses walking a certain way is mentioned, and you should be concerned with what that certain way is.

The moment you believed in TLJC, God did at least forty things for you; some were done by God the Father, some by the Son, and some by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, as a believer, you have a choice as you begin the Christian life, choosing your own plans, dreams, and desires, or you can choose the plan of God which is a life “*beyond all that we ask or think*.” The wisdom of God has provided something far greater than any of our desires. To choose the plan of God results in a life beyond your dreams and imaginations; to choose your own plan is actually blasphemy. We imply, by choosing our own plan, that we have a better plan than God's plan for us, and that we can do more for ourselves to make us happy than God can. The believer rejects the plan of God when he rejects Bible doctrine. Therefore, the believer accepts the plan of God when he makes Bible doctrine the #1 priority in life, and continues the perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine. The believer who chooses his own plan inevitably becomes a loser, not losing salvation, but losing escrow blessings for time and for the eternal state. 2Jo 1:8-9, *Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what momentum we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. Anyone who goes too far [out of bounds] and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, does not have God [fellowship with God]; the one who abides in the doctrine, he has fellowship with both the Father and the Son*. The warning is that if you lose your momentum, get out of and stay out of fellowship, grieve and quench the Holy Spirit, then you are going to lose those fantastic escrow blessings. When you are out of bounds, you are grieving or quenching the Holy Spirit; when you rebound, you get back on the playing field.

The Christian loser is defined as the Church-age believer in Jesus Christ who, through negative volition toward Bible doctrine, has failed to execute the PPOG, and therefore does not fulfill God's plan for his life after salvation. The Christian loser fails to use the power options (the filling of the Spirit and metabolization of doctrine) that have been made available and has wrong priorities and spends his life in the cosmic system. The loser has a right pastor, but because of cosmic involvement, never sees him, or visits occasionally. In many cases, the loser believer finds his right pastor, but rejects him, or finds his right pastor and accepts him until he is distracted. Rejection of one's right pastor

is tantamount to rejection of the mystery doctrine of the Church-age. The loser continues to receive logistical grace support and blessing and has equal privilege and equal opportunity to execute the PPOG with all believers who become winners. However, instead of becoming an invisible hero, the loser is bored, dissatisfied, preoccupied with self, arrogant, frustrated, distracted, unstable, and unable to utilize the ten problem-solving devices. Therefore, the loser provides cursing by association which has adverse historical repercussions in the client nation.

Nomenclature for Christian losers is as follows: 1) The carnal believer (Rom 8:7; 1Co 3:1-3. 2) Prisoner to the law of sin (Rom 7:23). 3) A wretched believer (Rom 7:24). 4) Grieving the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30). 5) Quenching the Spirit (1Th 5:19). 6) The enemy of the cross (Phi 3:18). 7) The enemy of God (Jam 4:4). 8) The flawed believer (Jam 1:23-24). 9) The psycho believer or one who is double-minded (Jam 4:8).

The characteristics of the Christian loser are: Described in Gal 5:4 as *“drifting off course from grace.”* Described in Heb 12:15 as *“coming short of the grace of God.”* Described as *“the tormented soul”* of 2Pe 2:7-8. Described as *“the Lukewarm believer”* of Rev 3:15-16. Described as *“the shipwrecked believer”* of 1Ti 1:19. Described as *“being under the body of death”* in Rom 7:24-25. This is all because he has chosen his own plan and his own life instead of the PPOG. This is the meaning behind such passages as Mat 10:34-37, *“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. 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.”* The Greek word for *worthy* is *axios* which denotes a life-style worthy of God. Mat 10:38-39, *“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.”*

In Mat 16:24 we have a similar passage concerning choosing God's plan over man's plan, *Then Jesus said to His disciples [His students-pupils], “If anyone wishes to come after Me [follow the PPOG], let Him deny Himself, and take up His cross,[God's plan] and follow Me.”* The Greek word for *deny* is *aparnesasthō*, which means to deny, to disown, to repudiate, to reject utterly. It is a command to deny, disown, repudiate, or reject the desires of the old sin nature, which is anti-God. Gal 5:17 says, *For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit.* In Mat 16:25-27, *“For whoever wishes to save His life [do things His way] shall lose it; but whoever loses His life for My sake [or follows God's plan for their life] shall find it. For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world [becomes wealthy and successful according to the world's standard], and forfeits his soul [the fantastic blessings God had for him in time and for the eternal state]? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels [Rapture of the Church]; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds.”* This passage is not a salvation passage; rather it is directed toward believers after salvation. In verse 24, TLJC is talking to *His disciples*; you can't be a disciple unless you're a believer. In verse 26 TLJC is talking about profit, not salvation by works. In verse 27, TLJC comes back *in the glory of His Father with His angels*. That is not a reference to end of the Millennial reign when the unbelievers will be recompensed, but it is a reference to the *Bema seat judgment*, for

believers only. That's why the end of Mat 16:27 we read *and then He will recompense every man according to his deeds.*

Mar 8:34-38 is another warning concerning the blasphemy of choosing our own plans and dreams and desires instead of the PPOG, *And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words [doctrines] in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."* The word *ashamed* refers to the state of the believer at the Bema seat judgment who is a loser when TLJC comes back (1Jo 2:28). This is the believer who has chosen either to reject, be casual, or be haphazard regarding doctrine, to take it in only when he feels like it, or when he's in serious trouble and looking for a one-shot solution to bail him out. Therefore, the believer who chooses God's plan is a winner, for *God is able to do infinitely more than all we ask or imagine.*

The PPOG then points to three different phases of the Christian life: Phase 1 = Christ being formed in your body. Phase 2 = Christ at home in your heart. Phase 3 = Christ being glorified in your body. In each stage of spiritual growth there is an **experience** of the PPOG. In Gal 4:19 the PPOG is related to the first stage of spiritual growth, Spiritual Self Esteem (S.S.E.), *My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you.* This is a reference to the believers in Galatia who were still in spiritual childhood or immature because they were involved with legalism. The phrase *until Christ is formed in you* is a reference to S.S.E., which is the first stage of spiritual growth; it speaks of Christ being formed in the soul of the believer. Phase 2 = Christ at home in your hearts. In Eph 3:14-16, *For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, From whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, or give you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man!* This means that you might become strong or grow up by means of His power, the power that God makes available to you in the PPOG. Eph 3:17, *So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith [doctrine]; and that you, being rooted and grounded in virtue-love.* The phrase *so that* is called a result clause, and the result is that *Christ may be at home in your hearts.* This is a very important phrase because we live in an apostate generation of believers telling everyone that they must ask Jesus into their heart for salvation, and there is not one verse in the entire Bible that says to do that. Here is a verse which is directed toward believers that actually says that Christ may not be dwelling or at home in their hearts! The phrase *to dwell* is the Greek verb *katoikesai*, which means to dwell, live, to be at home. This is the functioning of spiritual independence and the maximum use of virtue love as a motivating factor in the believer's life. Christ will be at home in your hearts *when you are rooted and grounded in agape love*; this is a love that is authentic and without hypocrisy.

In Mat 5:44, it is a love that loves your enemies, and prays for those who persecute you. In Luk 6:27, it is the type of love that loves your enemies, and tells you to do good to those who hate 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 1Co 13:5, it is the type of love that does not act improper, is never selfish, is not resentful, and does not think evil. In 1Co 13:6, it is the type of love that does not gloat over other men's sins, but rather rejoices with doctrine. In 1Co 13:7, it is the type of love that overlooks faults, believes the best, hopes all things, and endures all things. In Phi 1:9, it is the type of love that is according to knowledge of doctrine. 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.* In 1Jo 5:2, it is the type of love that motivates love for doctrine, *By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His doctrines.* In 2Jo 1:6, *And this is virtue-love that we walk according to His doctrines. This is the command, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it [PPOG].* 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!

Finally, the PPOG is related to spiritual maturity in Phi 1:20-21, *According to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness or confidence, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

So far then, we have seen the importance of understanding predestination, the preciseness, the procedure, the power, the perfection, the priorities, the purpose, and the policy of the plan. In Phi 3 starting with verse 4, we see the apostle Paul who as an unbeliever celebrity was possessed with his own plan for his life and therefore a false personal sense of destiny. Phi 3:4-6, *Although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day [a sign of the origin of the Jewish race], of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews [an idiom meaning an outstanding Jew]; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.* The Greek noun *zelon*, for zeal, connotes religious activism which is the function of the arrogant skills. More damage and violence has been committed by religion than anything else in the world, and Paul, known as Saul of Tarsus, was the greatest activist of his day before he became a believer. The sad thing today is that the majority of born-again believers are involved with religious activism because they have rejected the PPOG. Paul was the greatest activist of his day before he became a believer. He had what Rom 10:2 calls *a zeal for God, but not in accordance with epignosis knowledge [metabolized doctrine].* Paul states in Phi 3:6, *as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.* Paul was a very moral person, but living morally is not the Christian way of life. Any form of religious activism which is genuine comes from a system of morality, and morality is not spirituality. Morality is adherence to a moral system which produces a human righteousness, but the Christian way of life is a supernatural way of life executed by the Holy Spirit. There is a great difference between the virtue produced by God the Holy Spirit and the morality produced by the law. The pre-salvation apostle Paul, who was known as Saul of Tarsus, was the epitome of religious morality and legalism.

Paul murdered many Christians, yet he became the greatest Church-age believer, 1Ti 1:13, *Even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief.* In Gal 1:13, *For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it.* In Act 8:3, *But Saul {began} ravaging the church, forcing himself into house after house; and dragging off men and **women**, he would put them in prison.*

Paul was a celebrity in the field of religion and morality, but above all he was a celebrity in religious activism. This is why the divine viewpoint of Paul's pre-salvation activism and his religious zeal classifies Paul in the infallible word of God as the worst sinner who ever lived. 1Ti 1:15, *It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom [world] I am foremost of all.* We evaluate sin on the basis of what shocks us, and what shocks one person may not shock another. However, in the word of God, the worst of all sins are the motivational sins related to arrogance. This is what destroys believers and motivates religious activism as well as Christian activism. The first of the arrogant skills is self-justification: whatever you do you must justify it. So, it starts with self-justification, and self-justification leads to self-deception, which eventuates in self-absorption; with Paul it reached a peak as Saul of Tarsus!

Phi 3:7, *But whatever things were gain to me,* The Greek word for *gain* is *kerde*, referring to his great success standards from Judaism which he attained as a young man. Being a success before salvation has one very bad problem: When a person believes in Jesus Christ and carries over all of those success standards, they are handicapped in ever fulfilling the PPOG because they want to use human power and human dynamics, the very thing that made them successful. A believer with past successes has a very difficult time dropping them and executing the PPOG. There's no place for human dynamics and human power in the spiritual life; the spiritual life is divine power. There's nothing wrong with success, but when success turns you away from the priorities of the spiritual life, you're in trouble and you will never get out, and, you're a loser even though you're successful! No matter what you've achieved or what approbation you have received! Paul made the break because of one word, in which he established priorities, and he became the greatest believer in all of the Church-age. Phi 3:7-8, *But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of [or because of Christ]. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but **rubbish** in order that I may gain Christ.*

The apostle Paul reached spiritual maturity and wrote half of the New Testament, but he would not have done it had he inserted one ounce of human ability, of which he had so much. Once ounce of human power or human dynamics would have wiped out the whole thing, and we would have never heard of Saul of Tarsus!

The Greek word for *rubbish* is the noun *skubala*; it is a *hapox legomena*, which means that it occurs only once in the N. T. This one word points out how Paul was able to tell us how his priorities changed. The word *skubala* is used as a metaphor, an application of a word or a phrase to an object or a concept it does not literally denote, in order to suggest a comparison with another object or concept. In this case we will see that the apostle Paul is equating all of his past accomplishments as a celebrity with *dung* or

excrement. It is this one-word metaphor that opens up the whole realm of volition and values in your spiritual life. So, the word *skubala* means dung or human excrement; in fact, the King James version translates it correctly as *dung*. This word has become an embarrassment to countless born again believers involved in legalism or asceticism.

This one word describes a dramatic change of priorities in the greatest believer of all time. The basis of this dramatic change is that he could identify all of his previous fantastic successes as skubala, dung, or human excrement! So this word shouldn't be translated rubbish, refuse, or scraps on the table; it should be translated dung, or excrement!