

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 08/27/06

What it means to be initiated into the secret of the mystery. Part 40.

The proper mental attitude to take advantage of your equal privilege and equal opportunity.

We have noted the importance of our mental attitude, and how mental attitude sins hinder the believer from taking advantage of the equal privilege and equal opportunity that God has given in order to execute the spiritual life. We noted in Deu 28:1-14 the many blessings that come from positive volition toward doctrine. Then we have a list of curses in Deu 28:16-27 for those who reject God's word or Bible doctrine. The result of rejecting or ignoring the intake of doctrine is given in Deu 28:28 *The Lord will afflict you with [shigaon] madness and with blindness [blackout of the soul] and with confusion of heart [split personality].* Deu 28:34 says to those believers who are negative, *And you shall be driven mad [shigaon] by the sight of what you see.*

The Hebrew noun *shigaon* was originally used by Moses to describe the Exodus generation. The verb *shaga* means to be insane, to be psychotic. The noun and verb are used to describe what happened to Israel when they went negative toward doctrine. The Jews rejected the teaching of Moses just like many individuals reject the teaching of their pastor today. It didn't matter how good the teaching was because they were too wrapped up in the details of life. The Lord said in Mat 13:22, *"they hear the word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."* Worry and illusions about getting more and wanting everything under the sun strangle what was heard, and nothing comes of it. Mat 6:24 says, *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."* Luk 12:15, *"Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not {even} when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."* Life is not defined by what you have, even when you have a lot. The apostle Paul said in 2Ti 2:4, *No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.* 1Jo 2:15 says, *Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

So adversity put great pressure on the Jews, but instead of applying the problem solving devices, they allowed the adversity to become stress in their souls. The inside pressure of stress in the soul and the function of the sin nature combined to destroy the spiritual life of these believers in the face of the greatest Bible teaching that existed in the O.T.

Shigaon or a deceived mental attitude took over the lives of these Jewish believers, and Moses observed this and warned future generations of Israel, Deu 28:28 *The Lord will afflict you with [shigaon] madness and with blindness [blackout of the soul] and with confusion of heart [split personality].* Deu 28:34, *And you shall be driven mad by the sight of what you see.* The Lord permitted the outside pressure of adversity for their spiritual growth, but without Bible doctrine, they took that adversity and converted it into stress in the soul, driving themselves insane. We also saw that many believers withdraw from doctrine when the doctrine gets difficult, Joh 6:66, *As a result of this many of his disciples withdrew, and were not walking with him anymore.* This is why you

need to be very careful with the kind of people you hang around. Remember 1Co 15:33, *Do not be deceived: bad company corrupts good morals.* Psa 1:1, *How blessed [happy] is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked [or those influenced by evil].* Pro 13:20, *He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.* Become wise by walking with the wise or hang out with fools and watch your life fall to pieces.

So, the problem among many believers is simply that there is no longer any spiritual motivation in life, and they do not take advantage of their equal privilege and equal opportunity. This means that people do not enjoy what they are doing, be it their job, business, social life, married life, or even their so-called spiritual life. In the spiritual realm, proper motivation comes from Bible doctrine. God's laws of prosperity require us to trust in Him instead of trusting in riches. The world's way is to trust in material assets and continually accumulate more of them, and the more of these assets we accumulate, the harder it is for us to enter into God's kingdom. It is foolish to think that the world's prosperity satisfies; the more we get the more we want. Ecc 5:10, *He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance {with its} income. This too is vanity.*

What gives us proper motivation in the Christian life is doctrine resident in the soul, Psa 40:8, *"I delight to do Thy will, O my God; your doctrine is within my heart."*

We are told that it is the motives that the Lord weighs in Pro 16:2, *All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the Lord **weighs the motives.*** 1Co 4:5, *Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, {but wait} until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of {men's} hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.* The apostle Paul even tells us that if we do something great, but with the wrong motives, it is absolutely useless in 1Co 15:32, *He said, "If from **human motives** I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me?"* We are even warned about pastors or men in the position of pastors who do not have the gift; Paul says in Phi 1:17, *The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from **pure motives**, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.* One can be a teacher of the Bible and have wrong motives! Even our prayers can be hindered because of the wrong motivation in Jam 4:3, *You ask and do not receive, because you ask with **wrong motives**, so that you may spend {it} on your pleasures.* The apostle also tells us how the message of grace motivated him in 1Co 15:10, *"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I **labored even more** than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me."*

This is why he said in Tit 2:11, *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men.* Notice that salvation is brought to all men through common grace! And then notice what grace does, Tit 2:12, *instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.* It is grace that motivates us and instructs us!

In 2Co 5:14, personal love for TLJC motivates us as well, *For the love for Christ **motivates us**, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;*

We are even told that no matter what we do, we had better be motivated from a willing heart or a desire to do so. In Phm 1:14, Paul said to Philemon after asking him to forgive Onesimus, *"But without **your consent** I did not want to do anything, that your goodness should not be as it were by compulsion, but of your **own free will.**"*

Today there are many people who find themselves without proper motivation, and as a substitute for motivation they accept some form of human stimulation. They look for some form of self-gratification to take up the slack for no motivation in life. A person who loves

his job, enjoys what he is doing, always has a better social life because motivation from one area flows into motivation in other areas.

All of us have to have interests which serve as motivation in life. God wants us to enjoy life. Ecc 9:9 says, *Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your passing life which [woman] He [God] has given to you under the sun [in this life]; for this is your reward in life, and [enjoy life] in your work in which you have labored under the sun.* When people enjoy what they're doing in life, they are going to have a wonderful spiritual life, and they are going to have that great character trait of contentment which is the basis for all happiness.

We live in a time when there is dissatisfaction in the souls of people. People are unhappy, constantly complaining, miserable, critical, judgmental, scared about the present and even more fearful of the future. This is because they have no motivation and no progressive changes, no enthusiasm, no vision in their life. Pro 29:18, *Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, But happy is he who keeps Your law [in the N.T., doctrine].*

Our subject of motivation calls for a strong foundation based on knowledge. This is far more important than natural motivation; it is spiritual motivation, something all of us should have. Our subject of motivation calls for something much higher than the normal enthusiasms of life. This spiritual enthusiasm is something that will carry you in time of disaster as you take advantage of your equal privileges and equal opportunities. It is the word of God and occupation with TLJC that motivates and sustains the believer in time of disaster. As believers in TLJC, there has to be something that carries us which is far greater than anything we have enjoyed in life! That's what 2Pe 1:10 says, *Therefore, brethren, be motivated even more to make certain about His calling and election;*

The execution of your equal privilege and equal opportunity comes from making your calling and election a spiritual reality, and in order to do that you need to make sure that you do not allow anything to take you away from the PPOG. When we talk about *shigaon* and the mental disorder that believers fall into we need to note how the Jews in the O.T. entered into idolatry. By the way, the word idolatry actually has two meanings that are important to note: 1) The worship of a physical object or objects as God. 2) Inordinate attachment or extreme devotion to something or someone. This second meaning, of course, would be more applicable in our day and age.

Let's note what the Scriptures have to say concerning idolatry. The commandments of the Lord are against idolatry; they are related to the fact that Israel was appointed as a client nation to God, Exo 19:4-6. The first commandment prohibits mental idolatry, and the second commandment prohibits overt idolatry, Exo 20:1-6, *Then God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate me."* Idolatry was also specifically forbidden in Exo 20:23; Deu 5:7; 6:14; 7:16, 8:19. Idolatry is also analogous to spiritual adultery. Idolatry is an attack on category one love or love for God, Jer 3:8-10; Eze 16:23-43; 23:24-30; Rev 17:1-5.

So, if you want to make your calling and election a spiritual reality, you need to make sure that you do not allow anything to take you away from the PPOG. When TLJC went to the cross on our behalf that act was the underlying foundation of equal privilege, equal opportunity for the human race. He took out all the obstacles related to our status, race, IQ, and created a level playing field for everyone; now the human must decide which way to choose. The analogy to the Pastor-teacher is that in his assignment to believers his job is to disseminate Bible doctrine, and the believer must decide whether to perceive, metabolize,

and apply or not. The pastor teacher is responsible in his gift to point out and potentially remove obstacles that impact believers from the execution of their equal privilege and equal opportunity. If a local assembly is subject to gossip, jealousy, conspiracy, etc., the "equal privilege, equal opportunity" is in jeopardy; the mature believer in the assembly may be able to deal with it, while the new spiritually immature believer is at risk because he is now in a place where the playing field is unlevelled. The inability of a pastor to deal with these issues in a congregation contributes to de-emphasis of the work on the cross. Remember that there are three ways in which believers reject Bible doctrine: 1) Refusing to hear the teaching of the word of God on a consistent basis, which is sin, called sinning willfully in Heb 10:23-27, *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near. For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.* 2) Hearing the teaching of Bible doctrine but refusing to metabolize it; hence, the failure to convert gnosis [knowledge in the Greek] into epignosis [wisdom in the Greek]. Heb 4:2 *For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.* 3) Metabolizing doctrine so that it exists in the soul but refusing to apply it when necessary. Jam 1:22-25 *But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.*

When the believer continues under one or more of these three conditions, he has rejected Bible doctrine and two things happen: **First**, there is the accumulation of scar tissue formed in the soul. This means that soon doctrine you have learned is forgotten or set aside, so that when stress and adversity occurs, you fall flat on your face. **Secondly**, withdrawal occurs resulting in the accumulation of trash or garbage in the soul. This is when the soul becomes filled with blackness or the blackout of the soul. When a believer has too much garbage or trash in the soul and maximum scar tissue of the soul, that believer is extremely vulnerable to the function of his old sin nature, and he enters into a state of confusion. This state of confusion comes from the *cosmos diabolicus* [the devil's world system], so that the thinking of the believer involved cannot be distinguished from the thinking of the human viewpoint of the unbeliever. Such believers add the emotional complex of sins plus the arrogance complex of sins to their state of confusion.

The Bible teaches that we have three basic enemies Satan will use to continually hinder us: the world, the flesh, and the devil. **The world** attacks us through people and presents to us temptations on every side to try to discourage us from following the plan of God and frustrate our pursuit of seeking the things above and setting our mind on those things (Col 3:1). **The flesh** also strives and fights against us for gratification and in Gal 5:17 *The flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.* Remember that the old sin nature is always present with us and is always ready to betray us into the hands of our enemies and to bring us into subjection to its lusts and desires.

If we overcome the world and the flesh, we will get personal attention from **Satan and the kingdom of darkness** which will try to destroy our fellowship with God (Eph 6:12).

Satan of course is very subtle and powerful in his opposition and all other enemies together are nothing in comparison with him. Satan has many schemes and nothing short of omniscience can guard us against them, and nothing but omnipotence can enable us to have victory over him. Therefore, not only do we overcome Satan because of the doctrine applied by means of our testimony, but we also overcome all of our enemies. Application of Bible doctrine is the only way to handle people. When believers have too much garbage in the soul and maximum scar tissue of the soul, there is nothing you can do to satisfy them. From the emotional complex of sins, such a believer may become irrational and confused. From the arrogance complex of sins, such a believer becomes bitter, implacable, jealous, vindictive, and self-righteous. There is nothing you can do to please them. However, implacable believers must still be treated in grace. You cannot argue with an irrational person. So, beware that you do not lose your own integrity or spiritual strength in interacting with such persons. Do not let people with mental attitude and verbal sins drag you down with them. Do not let them hinder your equal privilege and equal opportunity.