

**The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life from the week ending 9/26/04
Knowledge. Gnosis and Epignosis.
Philippians 4:9**

Philippians 4:9 (corrected translation) *These things [doctrinal principles] also you have learned [manthano—learned from a teacher under strict academic discipline] and received [accepted through metabolization of doctrine] and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.*

There is a tremendous difference between having *gnosis* (knowledge) and *epignosis* (wisdom). *Epignosis*, metabolized doctrine, is absolutely essential to our spiritual life and our relationship with God.

1. The will of God for mankind is twofold—(1) for the unbeliever, **salvation**, and (2) for the believer, **metabolized doctrine**. **1Ti 2:3-4** summarizes this will of God in one sentence: “*This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the epignosis knowledge of the truth.*” The Apostle Paul calls himself in **Tit 1:1** “*Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the [epignosis] knowledge of the truth which is according to living the spiritual life.*” He also wrote in **Eph 4:13**, “*Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the epignosis knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.*”
2. The cosmic believer fails to metabolize doctrine, **2Ti 3:2-7**. Therefore he ends up under divine discipline and will eventually die the sin unto death, **1Jo 5:16, Eph 6:2-3**.
3. Only metabolized doctrine can be useful for problem solving, **Eph 1:17**, “*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a **spirit of wisdom** and of revelation in the epignosis knowledge of Him.*” The “spirit of wisdom” refers to the application of metabolized doctrine under the enabling power of the Spirit. God the Holy Spirit gives you the ability to handle your problems through *epignosis* doctrine. Whether in adversity or prosperity, you must solve your problems on the base of inner happiness from *epignosis* doctrine.
4. All genuine fellowship with believers is based on metabolized doctrine and virtue, **Phn 1:6**.
5. Therefore, only metabolized doctrine can fulfill the mandate of *virtue first* in the predesigned plan of God, **Phi 1:9, 2Pe 1:8**.
6. Only metabolized doctrine can fulfill the plan of God, **Col 1:9-11**.
7. If you have only *gnosis* doctrine, there is no basis for blessing. Only metabolized doctrine can provide blessing under the predesigned plan of God, **2Pe 1:2-3, 3:17-18**.
8. You can have a zeal to know God, but if you do not have metabolized doctrine it is useless, **Rom 10:2**.
9. True wealth and prosperity comes from *epignosis* doctrine, **Col 2:2**.

10. The new man can only be renewed and energized through metabolized doctrine, **Col 3:10**.

We all need to understand the difference between *gnosis* and *epignosis* because many believers seem to be very gentle and humble on the outside, but are monsters within. We need to remember what the Lord would say when dealing with someone who was getting in the way of others executing the spiritual life, **Mat 16:23**, “*But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.’*”

Many believers have *gnosis* but no *epignosis*, and they do not realize that they are being led astray and deceived by the kingdom of darkness. While they have a lot of *gnosis*, they have very little *epignosis*, and they destroy friendships and relationships and subtly sow discord. The greatest destroyer of homes is the one who destroys his own, and blames it on everyone else. Over a period of many years, they become so full of *gnosis* without *epignosis* that they destroy everything around them that is destroyable. The Lord called them “ravenous wolves” in **Mat 7:12-20**, but also told us that we will “know them by their fruits.” They are a walking *gnosis* without *epignosis*, divorced from reality, and they only use doctrine as leverage against others. They come to believe they are greater spiritually than others, but the only ones they are deceiving are themselves, as in **Oba 1:3, Pro 16:18**.

Once again, our main passage, **Phi 4:9**, reads, “*These things also you have learned and received **and heard** and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.*” The phrase “and heard” is the Greek conjunction *kai* and the verb *akouo*, meaning to hear and to concentrate. It means to hear and accept the authority of the doctrine being taught, therefore translated, “having heard under discipline”—the true function of the local church. It is in the *constantive aorist* tense, which contemplates the action of the verb in its entirety. It considers every time the believer assembles in the classroom of Bible doctrine and submits to academic discipline of his pastor. In the *active voice*, the believer must make his own volitional decision to submit to the authority of the pastor. The *indicative mood* declares the dogmatic fact that all spiritual growth demands academic discipline and respect for the authority of the communicator, in order for the perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine to function properly.

Spiritual authority resides in the Word of God and in its communicator, the pastor-teacher. His authority is limited to his own sheep, though his sheep need not be under his face-to-face ministry, as with the early church, **Col 2:1**. God has provided an umbrella of divine authority over the mechanics of perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine. The Royal Family honor code demands **authority orientation** in the form of academic discipline when the pastor is teaching. This academic discipline is the authority that the believer imposes upon himself during the teaching of the Word of God, so that others may be free to learn without distraction. The Royal Family honor code recognizes common sense and good manners, thoughtfulness of others, and respect for the Word of God. Inevitably, the issue is the mystery doctrine of the Church-age perceived and metabolized in your soul. This issue demands communication of doctrine from the pastor-teacher and perception by believers. However, the pastor cannot communicate what he does not know, therefore, his life must be devoted to studying and teaching the Word of God. What he teaches should be the result of many agonizing hours of study under the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, **Col**

1:24-29. As Royal Family, we are required to respect and listen to the teaching, at which point we choose whether to metabolize it or not.

This means the pastor's *personality* is not the issue when it comes to authority orientation and the function of the Royal Family honor code. Never permit preoccupation with the pastor's "feet of clay" or his personality to hinder your perception of Bible doctrine. The "feet of clay" syndrome means placing our trust in a self-created illusion. We end up entering into iconoclastic arrogance (putting someone on a pedestal) and therefore victimizing another human being, and this is a major reason for believers quitting on the plan of God. Paul did not try to impress his listeners with polished speeches and the latest philosophy or advanced vocabulary; he was a genius, but he deliberately kept it plain and simple, **1Co 2:1-5**.

The demonstration of the Spirit and of power from a teacher of doctrine is the *accuracy* of the doctrine being taught. Very few believers truly understand the importance of the communication of doctrine, and they focus on the communicators, many of whom never even teach vital doctrines such as the **Filling of the Holy Spirit**, the **Angelic Conflict**, the **Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ**, the **Personal Sense of Destiny**, **Dispensations**, **Election**, **Escrow Blessings**, **Eternal Security**, **Grace**, the **Problem-Solving Devices**, the **Predesigned Plan of God**, the **Mystery Doctrine of the Church-age**, the **Judgment Seat of Christ**, **Justification**, **Metabolized Doctrine**, the **Royal Family Honor Code**, **Spiritual Gifts**, the **Spiritual Life**, etc.

Unrealistic expectation merely interposes frustrations in our life, when those expectations are not met by the other person. This only serves to distract us from Bible doctrine and destroy the true focus of the Christian life, which is **occupation with Christ**, not people! As long as people react to others who do not treat them the way they expect, virtue is impossible. This inevitably leads to eyes on self, eyes on people, and eyes on things, which can only lead to selfishness, jealousy, and covetousness.

Iconoclastic arrogance, or "role model" arrogance, can be a terrible hindrance to hearing the Word of God properly. Society and people in general assign certain customary functions to certain people and activities in life, such as politicians, ministers, husbands, wives, teachers, public servants, military personnel, and the successful and famous. These people are expected to function in a certain way; if they do not, others protest loudly, resulting in double standards. When anyone departs from his assigned "role," he is condemned, rejected, and criticized. Yet those who criticize are also sinning and therefore live by a double standard. Such criticism implies that certain sins are worse than others, when in the eyes of God all sins are the same; we are all sinners who can only be saved by the grace of God, no matter what our sins are (there are seven sins described in **Pro 6:16-19** as worse than others, concerning volitional responsibility and divine discipline). Society in general likes to see everything in its supposed "proper place," and resents any deviation from the assigned thought, action, or personality. This is especially true of legalistic believers in their crusader arrogance and self-righteousness.

Among Christians, role model arrogance produces hypocrisy and legalism, the characteristics of self-righteous arrogance. Role model arrogance ignores the basic doctrine that all believers after salvation continue to have the sin nature and continue to commit personal sins, according to their ignorance of Bible doctrine or the lust pattern of the sin nature.

What is important is that your pastor-teacher emphasizes the mystery doctrine of the Church age and the execution of the predesigned plan of God. Role model arrogance distracts congregations from doctrine by emphasizing the personality of the pastor rather than the message. **It's not the man, it's the message that counts.** With Bible doctrine as top priority in your life, you learn to love God the Father, and you learn the virtue of impersonal love in human relationships. From knowledge of Bible doctrine, you find your perfect role model in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He is our only true role model. The purpose of the pre-designed plan of God for the Church-age is to create invisible heroes, not frustrated, arrogant people with unrealistic expectations. Role model arrogance intensifies problems in four basic steps:

1. An excessive admiration creates an idol out of another person.
2. The idol then shows their feet of clay (does something “wrong”).
3. When the idol does something wrong (real or imagined), there is a reaction on the part of those who created the idol. They become disillusioned.
4. Iconoclastic arrogance seeks to destroy the image the person has created.

They created the idol, and now they no longer admire the idol, so they seek to destroy the idol. Iconoclastic arrogance is divorced from reality in human relationships because of ignorance or rejection of Bible doctrine. Arrogance looks at an ordinary person and fashions him into an ideal of perfection, based on deluded idealism or romantic illusion. The idol of perfection created by this arrogance can be a spiritual image, a personality image, a hero image, a romantic image, or a beautiful image. This is not legitimate admiration, but excessive preoccupation with people.

The arrogant reaction of disillusion inevitably becomes vindictive, implacable, bitter, and vengeful, and is a major cause for apostasy among believers. Disappointment with friends, loved ones, or those in authority over us is normal, but disillusion from idolizing that person is failure on our part. We must take responsibility for our own thoughts, actions, and decisions. The arrogant iconoclast never blames himself for what he has done in creating the idol and then destroying it. In irrationality, he blames everything on the idol through his own fantasizing. Idolizing and then rejecting your own icon means transferring the blame for your own failures to other people.

Three problem-solving devices are necessary to bring the believer back to reality and recover from the devastation to the spiritual life—**personal love for God the Father, occupation with Christ, and impersonal love for all mankind.** When any believer combines unrealistic expectation with role model arrogance, he has established false standards for life and entered into a subtle system of arrogance that prevents cognition of Bible doctrine and the execution of the predesigned plan of God. To receive truth from your right pastor-teacher, you need to beware of the “feet of clay” syndrome and unrealistic expectation (role model arrogance). It is necessary to understand that even the greatest believers fail, which is why we have the failures of great men and women like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Gideon, Samson, and David, recorded in the scriptures.

The authority of the pastor is taught in many passages, such as **Heb 13:7**, *“Remember those who led you [rule over you], who communicate the Word of God to you; considering the result of their way of life; imitate their doctrine.”* You “remember” pastors by attending Bible class, by praying for them, and by understanding that they have an abnormal life. The issue of a pastor’s “way of life” is his dedication and devotion to Bible doctrine, **Heb 13:17.**

The pastor is responsible to the Lord and not to the congregation. Therefore, when he gets out of line, he gets double discipline, **Luk 12:48**, **1Ti 5:17**, **Jam 3:1**. Certain members of the congregation will inevitably become dissatisfied with their pastor, therefore, they will seek to discredit and slander him. **Isa 54:17** is a warning to not tamper with God's communicator: "*No weapon which is formed against you will prosper, and every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and his vindication is from Me,*' decrees the Lord." Our main verb in **Phi 4:9**, *akouo*, says we should never focus on the communicator, but on the communication.

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are given the "job profile" of the pastor so that you can make the right decisions in selecting your pastor.

- In **Eph 4:11-16**, he is to equip the saints for the work of service, and he causes the growth of believers in the body of Christ.
- In **Col 1:23-29**, he is to rejoice in his sufferings for the body of Christ and fully carry out the preaching of the Word of God, namely mystery doctrine, inculcating every believer and teaching every believer in order that he may present every person complete or mature in Christ.
- In **2Ti 2:24-26**, he must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition.
- In **1Ti 3:1-9**, he must be above reproach, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, gentle, uncontentious, and free from the love of money.
- In **Tit 1:6-9**, he is not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

Paul instructs Titus in **Tit 1:4-5**, "*Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint **elders** in every city as I directed you.*" The Greek word for "elder" is *presbuteros* and means the "old man," in the sense of being in the highest authority, the "commanding officer"; it refers to the authority of the pastor. This is why Peter called himself an elder in **1Pe 5:1**, John called himself an elder in **2Jo 1:1**, and in **Acts 20:28**, Paul addresses the "elders" as pastors: "*Be on guard for yourselves and for the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has made you guardians to **shepherd the church of God** which He purchased with his own blood.*"

The point is that the pastor is only answerable to the Lord. He is the head of the local assembly and the one you are responsible to *akouo*—listen and concentrate. There must be order, and in order there must be headship, and this requires assumed responsibility. The pastor is responsible to the Lord for the function of his ministry. The authority of the pastor is established through the faithful teaching of the mystery doctrine, and can only function through the **power of the Holy Spirit** inside the pre-designed plan of God and the **positive volition of the Royal Family of God** directed toward the Bible teaching of the pastor. The pastor's communication demands a hearing, but he cannot force you to accept or reject it.

So in **Phi 4:9**, *These things* [doctrinal principles] *also you have learned* [*manthano*—from a teacher under strict academic discipline] *and received* [or accepted through metabolization of doctrine] *and having heard* [*akouo*—under academic

discipline in an audience]. The members of the church at Philippi not only listened, but they listened and learned. No child of God can truly love Him apart from *akouo*, hearing the Word of God, and the consistent intake of Bible doctrine.

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