

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 10/12/08
Spiritual mechanics must be parlayed into spiritual dynamics. Part 2.
The Doctrine of the Joints and Ligaments.

Let no one keep on declaring you ineligible [of your prize is implied by the Greek verb katabrabeuo] by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, (Col 2:18)

This passage says that you become ineligible for your reward for glorifying God by succumbing to the attack of religion. In our day this is done through rituals like program spirituality, and obsession with doctrinal information. The term self-abasement refers to false humility, and the fact that most people are impressed by outward appearance, tone of voice, language, or what they, or someone else, may give up, especially if it causes them pain or inconvenience. False humility is not a Christian virtue, it is an attack of religion.

There is a second system of religion besides rituals, program spirituality, or statistical obsession in Col 2:18 that we need to beware of: That is the worship of angels. "Worshipping of angels" actually means religious worship, and it involves the worship of the teachings, or the doctrines of demons (fallen angels).

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons. (1Ti 4:1)

It is possible for born again believers to get involved with the worship, or the doctrines of the fallen angels without even knowing it. Notice the phrase in Col 2:18, **taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind**, this refers to dreams, visions, hallucinations. This attack of religion is based upon two principles: First, Satan attacks the authority of the Bible, he says that what you dream, see in a trance, see when you get ecstatic, or experience, is just as real, or more real than what the Bible says. This is an attack upon the authority of the Word of God. Second, it emphasizes feeling and ecstatic experiences as having merit, and that how you feel as being more important than what the Bible says. This results in **"being inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,"**

The phrase "inflation without cause" is a present passive participle of the Greek word "phusioo" which means to be inflated with pride or arrogance. Literally it means being inflated or puffed up with arrogance. The passive voice indicates the subject, and the reversionistic believer receives the action of the verb through one of these attacks of religion.

Notice in the next verse the problem this type of believer has, and why they are not having a personal relationship with the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, through the written word, Bible doctrine. I want you to really pay attention to this because Satan is a genius at taking truth and distorting it. That's why the solution to these attacks are given in verse 19 which mentions two individuals: One is the Lord Jesus Christ, and occupation with Him, the other is a divinely appointed officer in the local assembly called the "joints and ligaments." **And not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God (Col 2:19).** The present active participle of "krateo" is the word used for "holding" and it means to seize, apprehend, to be occupied with someone, or something. The term "the Head" is the accusative singular noun "kephale" which refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, and His absolute sovereignty over His body, the Church. It is not only used for the head, but it is used for superiority, for the chief, or the principle one to whom all are subordinate. When a believer is occupied with the Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, that believer will reveal it by living a life manifested by fruit from the daily function of perception, metabolism, and application toward doctrine. The

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concept of Christ as the head of the Church is found in such passages as Eph 1:22-23; Eph 5:23; Eph 2:16; Eph 4:4-5; Col 1:18; Col 1:24.

It is only through Bible doctrine that we have capacity to love Jesus Christ. **Thus says the Lord, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he *understands and knows Me*, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things, declares the Lord" (Jer 9:23-24).** With doctrine as the working object of faith, the believer has maximum response causing him to be designated "philos Theos," a "lover of God." Not just a lover of God's word, Bible doctrine, but God Himself.

Let's note some principles.

1. When a believer is occupied with the Head, his life is based upon the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ. **If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (Col 3:1-2)**
2. Occupation with the Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the standard operating procedure for the Christian life, and it demands that we take in doctrine and become occupied with the person of Christ. **"Be concentrating on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our doctrine, who because of the exhibited happiness, He endured the Cross and disregarded [by the use of the problem solving devices] the shame [imputation of our sins], and He sat down at the right hand of God" (Heb 12:2).**
3. Occupation with Christ is illustrated by the doctrine of right-man, right-woman (Eph 5:25-32; 1Co 11:7).
4. Occupation with the Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, is manifested by the function of perception, metabolization, and application toward doctrine, and the believer responding to the love of Jesus Christ. **Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves (Jam 1:21-22).**
5. Occupation with the Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, includes total dependence on grace provision leading especially to this function in the supergrace life. **"Delight yourself in the Lord; And He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, and He will do it. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light And your judgment as the noonday (Psa 37:4-5),**
6. Occupation with Christ is related to both stability and inner happiness. **"I have set the Lord continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely Psa 16:8-9).**
7. Occupation with Christ is the basis for blessing in suffering. While reversionism intensifies suffering, occupation with Christ minimizes suffering. **And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong (2Co 12:9-10).**
8. Occupation with Christ is based on the believer's entrance into the supergrace life (Heb 3:1-6).

The second half of this verse deals with God means of protecting you from religion, rituals, program spirituality, or even obsession with knowledge, **and not holding fast to the head or occupied with Christ], from whom the entire body [the church], being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God (Col 2:19).**

We live in a world that is deceived, and that deception is revealed by men who are told that have to lay down their life, and study until they are exhausted. **For this reason, we [pastors] work hard to the point of exhaustion, and we hang in there tough [keep on contending], because we have confidence in the living God, Who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers (1Ti 4:10).** These men are responsible to reveal the deception of this world system

which is designed to take you away from the real reason you have been created and why you are here.

The phrase the **“joints and ligaments”** is an interesting phrase, remember that the Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the body, He is not the joints or the ligaments. We will see that the joints refers to the pastor-teacher, and the ligaments refers to the unity which results from doctrinal communication. What supplies and holds together the body of Christ? We have the phrase "by the joints" which is the preposition "dia" plus the definite article "toon" plus the noun "hafoon" translated joints. Next we have a conjunction "kai" translated "and" then “ligaments” which is the noun "sundesmoon." The joints refer to the ministry of the pastor-teacher who is used to communicate to the body. The word for ligaments is used in the N.T. as a bond which holds things together. Therefore the unity that must exist in the body of Christ as the Lord Jesus Christ communicates to certain parts of the body through the pastor-teacher, is based upon the communication of doctrine. The communication of Bible doctrine from whoever is your right pastor teacher will pull together all kinds of personalities, nationalities, both male and female.

Let me explain why the “joints and ligaments” has to refer to a particular gift in the body of Christ, and why it is the pastor teacher. The phrase "the body of Christ" is used to designate all Church-age believers in their relationship with Jesus Christ. It speaks of literal members of the royal family using the physical body as the analogy. **For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another (Rom 12:4-5).**

The joints and the ligaments has to refer to certain members of the body who provide nourishment and unity. Therefore, joints and ligaments refer to the pastor-teacher who communicates the doctrine which provides nourishment, proper function and unity in the body of Christ. If the apostles and prophets were still around then it would also refer to them, but it cannot refer to the evangelist because he provides gospel information for those outside of the body.

So, the joints and the ligaments refer to certain members of the body of Christ who have the specific function of supplying motion, coordination, strength, and body action. Again, the joints refers to the point of contact that the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the body, uses to communicate with His own body and therefore the teaching ministry of the pastor-teacher. Ligaments is used in the N.T. as a bond which holds things together, and therefore the unity that must exist in the body of Christ as the Lord Jesus Christ communicates to parts of the body through the communication of doctrine.

The Doctrine of the Joints and Ligaments.

Point 1. The joint analogy to the pastor-teacher.

In the physical body, all members (parts) of the body are linked by joints or ligaments. Joints are those parts of the body where bones or elements of a skeleton join. Joints permit motion and coordination of the human body. Ligaments are tissue used to connect joint extremities and can also be tough tissue used to support an organ of the body. In 1Co 12 different parts of the body represent different spiritual gifts in the royal family of God. When the body of Christ is mentioned as His Church spiritual gifts are often mentioned in the same passages.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1Co 12:4-7)

Notice that there are different effects in the body, but it's the same God who works all things in all persons. **For even as the [physical] body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. (1Co 12:12)**

But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as he desired. (1Co 12:18)

Joints and ligaments provide motion, coordination, strength, and body action. At the moment of salvation, one of the forty things we receive is a spiritual gift. Different parts of the body represent the variety of differences among believers from the standpoint of spiritual gifts, growth, progress, function, and personality. Just as there are differences in joints of the body, so there are differences among pastor-teachers. The spiritual gift is given to many different types of personalities. Men with the gift of evangelism have personalities designed to attract, and hold the attention of unbelievers so they might understand the issue of the gospel. However, the word "joint" does not apply to

the evangelist, but only to the pastor-teacher, the one who communicates doctrine for the body's spiritual growth. Just like the joints in your physical body have to function everyday, the pastor-teacher has to communicate doctrine everyday. His responsibility is to inculcate his congregation with Bible doctrine, which is an entirely different type of ministry than evangelism.

Pastors have different types of personalities. However, the casting director is God the Holy Spirit. **But one and the same spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills (1Co 12:11).** The spiritual gift is given, however every pastor must have preparation and persistence. He must teach line upon line, precept upon precept. Pastors who teach doctrine have a variety of personalities, vocations, attitudes, activities, and functions in life. All the members of the royal family of God are analogous to the "Body of Christ," all linked together by the doctrinal teaching of the pastor. The emphasis of this doctrinal teaching must focus on the mystery doctrine of the Church-age, found in the epistles. The pastor's function must not be related to his personality, but to the content of his message. The less the message content, the more the emotional preaching and nonsense. You can receive limited blessing from reading the Bible for yourself, but you can never learn how to execute the PPOG from that method.

Point 2. Joints Are the Basis for Exercise and Building Strength in the Body.

First, without joints, the human body would degenerate and deteriorate. Likewise, without the faithful function of pastor-teachers, the body of Christ or royal family of God would lack spiritual growth and retrogress from lack of spiritual food, vitality, and power. This is the reason why believers get involved with asceticism, religion, legalism, and emotionalism. They do not stay occupied with the Head of the body, and they reject the joints and ligaments that the Lord supplies for spiritual growth.

Secondly, muscle is constructed from consistent exercise, which involves the use of the joints. Repetitious beneficial exercise involves the consistent function of the joints which is analogous to the faithful and consistent teaching of Bible doctrine by your right pastor-teacher.

But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; (1Ti 4:7)

The organization of your time, the setting up of your priorities is very important. Godliness is simply a lifestyle for the "spiritual" believer. It requires self-discipline and organization to execute the PPOG even if you have Bible doctrine as your number 1 priority. There are many times when you do not want to come to Bible class. Many legitimate and even illegitimate reasons are given. However, it takes a lot of self-discipline to get here. Then once you get here it takes more self-discipline to listen, especially if it's not your favorite subject. **For bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, it holds promise for this life and the life to come (1Ti 4:8).** There is profit in physical exercise but it's only for a short time. You have to be consistent for exercise to be profitable. Godliness, or living the spiritual life, is the result of consistency in the perception of doctrine. Your consistency is very important because the doctrine you learn today is going to carry you for a short time. That's another reason why doctrines have to be repeated and are repeated in certain books of the Bible.

The word discipline means to drive on or something performed or practiced in order to develop skill. Anyone can exercise even in the spiritual realm, but for a person to stick with it consistently takes character. Exercise for the Royal family in the congregation of the local church means:

- 1) self-discipline
- 2) assembling together
- 3) concentrating on the teaching
- 4) good-manners
- 5) silence.
- 6) not commenting
- 7) not disturbing
- 8) not moving-around
- 9) objectivity
- 10) persistence in spite of distraction.

So, exercise in the spiritual realm is used in the Bible to reveal how we grow spiritually!

For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the righteous word, for he is a babe. But solid food [solid doctrine] is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. (Heb 5:13-14)

Point 3. Joints provide body action.

By analogy, every function and action in life must be motivated by thought energy, the divine viewpoint printed on the neurons of the brain in the form of metabolized doctrine. Two categories of doctrine cause you to grow spiritually: 1) Epignosis is the metabolized doctrine that goes into your right lobe. 2) Sophia is the metabolized doctrine on the launching pad of your right lobe being applied to experience in life. You can only receive those two categories of doctrine through the function of perception and metabolization of doctrine from the pastor-teacher who communicates the Word of God accurately.