

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH
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The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
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During our conferences we have been studying the seven different churches or types of believers found in the book of Revelation and we are now on the church of Sardis or the Sardis type of believers. Rev 3:1-3, *“And to the messengers, [future pastors in the church of Sardis] write, he who has the seven spirits, [a reference to God the Holy Spirit as the power systems of the PPOG] and the seven stars [orthodox pastors], communicates these things. I have known your works or accomplishments, namely that you have a reputation that you are alive, [or allegedly living the spiritual life] but you are dead [believers living inside the cosmic system]. Be constantly alert, and strengthen the things that remain [the remnant], which were about to die; for I have not found your accomplishments [or production] completed in the sight of My God. Recall to mind therefore what you have received [application of doctrine] and heard [perception of doctrine]; and guard it [by living in the PPOG], and change your mind. If therefore you will not wake up, I will come like a thief [to punish] suddenly, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you.”*

In verses 4-6, we have the uniform of glory, which accompanies the decoration of the order of the morning star. Rev 3:4-6, *“But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white; for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”* There are two uniforms in verse 4, the **uniform of honor**, worn by the mature believer today, and the **uniform of glory**, which is a translucent light worn over the resurrection body of believers who receive the highest decoration at the judgment seat of Christ, the order of the morning star. The uniform of honor refers to the Royal Family of God; therefore we need to note The Royal Family Honor Code (RFHC).

Point 1. Definition and Description.

The RFHC is a system of spiritual integrity mandated by God, and revealed in the mystery doctrine of the Church-age. It relates to personal integrity on the part of believers in relationships with others. The RFHC is an extension of impersonal love for all believers; the believer, who through the Spirit and inculcation of doctrine, understands and develops the honor code in his life, will have Spiritual Self Esteem (SSE) and a personal sense of destiny. Gossip, maligning and slandering against anyone is a violation of the RFHC, Tit 3:2, *“speak evil of no man, do not be argumentative, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.”* As a part of the RFHC the believer needs to understand that he is born again, this time into an aristocracy. The Church-age is the dispensation of the Royal Family of God; therefore we must have Royal Function. Jesus Christ is the basis for that honor code, and He is the prototype of putting on the uniform of honor. The RFHC has an honor and integrity produced by the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, and by perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine (B.D.).

Point 2. Application of B. D. & the RFHC begins at Spiritual Self Esteem.

The application of B.D. under pressure, in the angelic conflict and in spiritual warfare, requires at least the attainment and function of Spiritual Self Esteem (SSE). It is also the basis of operations for our relationship with other people, and with its attainment, the believer learns enough B. D. to make an application to experiences in life. Lack of human self-esteem can only be resolved by the attainment of SSE (1Co 15:10). In SSE your confidence is based on doctrine

learned; you are now free from legalistic bullying, people dependence, distractions, flattery and counseling dependence. SSE is the declaration of independence of your royal priesthood, and solves the problems of inadequacy, peer pressure, role model arrogance, all the subtleties of arrogance, and fear. You now solve once unsolvable problems and pressures of life. You now address problems or failures by using the problem-solving devices to make corrections and keep moving forward with occupation with Christ.

Point 3. Violations of the RFHC.

Pro 6:16-19 lists the seven worst sins as far as God is concerned: 1) Haughty eyes [arrogance]. 2) A lying tongue. 3) Hands that shed innocent blood [murder]. 4) A right lobe that devises evil plans [conspiracy, rejection of authority, revolution, civil disobedience]. 5) Feet that run rapidly to evil [troublemakers]. 6) A false witness who utters lies [slander, gossip, maligning, perjury]. 7) One who spreads strife among the brethren.

Without the function of the RFHC and the PPOG, the believer cannot be distinguished from the unbeliever experientially. Rom 14:4 notes that sins of the tongue are in violation of the RFHC, *Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand.* The believer is only authorized to judge himself under the rebound technique of 1Jo 1:9. By leaving judgment and revenge in the hands of the Lord, the believer is executing the RFHC. Verbal sins are a violation of the RFHC, and result in triple compound discipline, Mat 7:1-2, *"Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you."* First, you are disciplined for your verbal sins, secondly, your mental attitude sins which motivated the verbal sin, thirdly, the sins which you name in judgment or slander. So any discipline which might have gone to the other party, even if guilty, is transferred to you.

The RFHC provides the necessary privacy and spiritual freedom inside the PPOG, so that the believer in each stage of spiritual growth can continue the execution of the PPOG without outside interference. There are additional duties assigned to the strong believer, Rom 15:1, *Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.* The maximum function of impersonal love fulfills the strong believer's honor code.

There are four laws of Christian behavior: 1) The law of liberty. Biblically the believer has a right to do certain things which are not sinful, and will not tempt the strong believer to sin. 2) The law of love. 3) The law of expediency. This is especially directed toward the unbeliever. There are times when the unbeliever will superimpose certain standards on the believer, and expect him to comply with those standards because he is a Christian. Every believer is a minister of reconciliation and must refrain from doing things, not because they are wrong, but because they prevent some unbeliever from seeing the true issue of salvation. 4) The law of supreme sacrifice. This is directed toward God and relates to several of the problem-solving devices of the PPOG. It generally applies to mature believers to forsake normal living and legitimate functions in life in order to serve the Lord in some special way (Paul functioned under this law in 1Co 9:1-15).

Point 4. The RFHC is related to the laws of Divine Establishment and Impersonal Love.

Rom 13:8-10, Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.

Morality is not the Christian way of life; the execution of the PPOG and the function of the RFHC go beyond morality. Christianity uses the morality of divine establishment as a base, but it exceeds morality in the function of the honor code. The Christian way of life is a supernatural way of life and requires a supernatural means of execution, accomplished by the filling of the Holy Spirit. A believer who operates in the RFHC, and puts on the uniform of

honor, will honor the laws of establishment, have patriotism and respect for authority, including military service. The RFHC keeps you on a far greater level, so that you do not stoop to where people can change you. You cannot change those who are antagonistic toward you, but they can change you by you lowering yourself to their level. You cannot change evil, but evil can change you. You cannot change doctrine, but doctrine can change you.

Point 5. The Principle of Freedom and the RFHC.

You must have a freedom, an independence from Satan, in the function of your volition in order to survive in Satan's world. The purpose of man's creation is to resolve the angelic conflict, and this cannot occur without the function of freedom. Freedom is composed of four categories which are interrelated and interdependent: 1) Freedom itself is the status of volition, or the uncaused cause of human function. 2) Privacy is the environment for the function of freedom. 3) Property is what is legitimately acquired or possessed by the individual. 4) As a part of freedom, authority is power delegated by God to command, to train, to prepare for life, to employ, to act as an agent for a principle like a nation or a city.

All authority is delegated by God, and all divine institutions have a stated system of authority designed to guarantee and protect freedom. Spiritual freedom is an extension of establishment freedom, in that all four classifications are involved in the honor code. Spiritual freedom only exists in the PPOG, and only functions under the power of the Holy Spirit and the perception of Bible doctrine, Joh 8:32, "*you shall know the doctrine and the doctrine shall make you free.*"

The filling of the Spirit plus learning Bible doctrine equals knowing the mind of Christ, and therefore the truth which sets us free. A believer can function without temporal freedom, but he cannot execute the PPOG without spiritual freedom. Any believer has the right to assemble without his personal life or business being an issue, without being maligned, gossiped about, or the subject of criticism. Spiritual privacy is an inherent part of the royal priesthood, 1Pe 2:9, *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 2Th 3:11-12, For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.*

Point 6. The Procedure and Policy of the RFHC and Putting on the Uniform of Honor.

Rom 12:17-21, *Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."*

The RFHC demands grace orientation and warns against the believer having vindication, implacability, hatred, arrogance, or bitterness toward others. The RFHC demands that we never stoop to the level of evil, or be overcome by evil. The RFHC demands the high standards of grace orientation.

Point 7. The RFHC Deals with the Principle of Reciprocation or Mutual Support.

Rom 15:26-27, *for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased or decided with pleasure to make a special offering for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. Yes, they were pleased or have decided with pleasure to do so. And they are indebted or obligated to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the spiritual things, they [the Gentiles] are indebted or obligated to minister to them in material things.*

Churches have benefited spiritually from doctrine and are now motivated by that doctrine to give to the destitute Jews in Jerusalem who have been persecuted because of doctrine. As God has prospered them financially, they sought to share their prosperity with those who had been the

source of their prosperity. It's the same thing taught in Gal 6:1-6. The sharing of spiritual prosperity in doctrine motivates the sharing of material prosperity in money. This makes giving an honor code function with emphasis on motivation from doctrine in the soul. Christian giving is a matter of true worship of God. The Bible also teaches that the Pastor-teacher exchanges spiritual blessing to the congregation for material blessing from the congregation. The congregation provides the financial contribution as they are spiritually blessed by the Pastor's teaching.

Point 8. The Plan of God as it Relates to the RFHC.

God has a plan for the unbeliever because it is God who gives each one of us life, 1Ti 2:4, *He desires all men to be saved.* 2Pe 3:9, *He is not willing that any should perish but for all to come to repentance.* God creates soul life in each of us, and imputes it to our human soul at birth where we are also given the imputation of Adam's original sin, which condemned us, setting up the first potential, **salvation**. God imputes Adam's original sin so that with this instant condemnation we also have an instant potential for salvation, even if death occurs before the age of accountability. This first potential sets up the plan of God for the entire human race, **salvation**. Adam's sin was imputed to us and all our sins were imputed to Christ, so we have the imputation of human life + the imputation of Adam's original sin = the potential for salvation for all members of the human race + the appropriate doctrine (Gospel) = the absolute confidence that faith in Christ results in perfect righteousness and eternal life.

Once the salvation issue is settled we move on to the PPOG for believers, which introduces the RFHC. Our first potential was for salvation; now that we are saved we have the potential to reach spiritual maturity. This potential can only become a reality if we operate under the principles of the RFHC, and with appropriate doctrine. This is the second hope or opportunity in life: persisting in the intake of doctrine, you will eventually reach spiritual maturity and receive the greatest blessings that life can offer. This brings us to third phase of God's plan. The imputation of eternal life at salvation + the imputation of blessings in time at spiritual maturity = the third potential in God's plan, **rewards** given to the resurrection body at the judgment seat of Christ. With the appropriate doctrine, and then undeserved suffering, you have reached the final potential which is the confidence that by continuing in maturity you will receive eternal blessings and rewards which glorify God forever.

Point 9. Hope as a Motivation and Momentum in the RFHC.

The Christian way of life is total dependence on the integrity of God. This dependence on the integrity of God is called hope. The RFHC gains its momentum from the various stages of hope in the PPOG. In the first hope (hope 1) the believer has confidence that once he exercises faith in Christ, he receives perfect righteousness and eternal life. In the second hope (hope 2) the believer has confidence that by persistent metabolization and application of doctrine, he will reach maturity and receive fantastic blessings in time. In the third hope (hope 3) the believer has the confidence that by continuing in maturity he will receive eternal blessings and rewards which glorify God forever. Therefore, hope is the confident expectation of blessing at certain stages in God's plan. Hope relates our thinking to the integrity of God, and is a reminder that the integrity of God appointed Jesus Christ as the object of our hope and the custodian of our blessings. You are not living the Christian way of life unless you have a confidence about the future.

Point 10. The Doctrine of the RFHC and the Principle of Production.

This is the distinction between the believer's priesthood and ambassadorship. The Bible teaches that every believer is a priest (1Pe 2:5,9; Rev 1:6, 5:10). As a royal priest, you advance through persistent perception of doctrine and passing the different momentum tests which God brings in. The Bible also teaches that every believer is an ambassador (Eph 6:20, 2Co 5:20, Phm 9). As a royal ambassador, the believer produces spiritually as a result of spiritual growth and the filling of the Holy Spirit. When you put on the uniform of honor, you recognize that production is not the means of spiritual growth, but the result. The RFHC excludes all forms of illegitimate or legitimate Christian production or *works* as the means of blessing. Neither morality, talent,

personality change, asceticism, sacrificial giving, devotional worship or working in a church will elicit blessing from God. Blessing from God originates from doctrine in the soul producing capacity for life, which in turn triggers the imputation of divine blessing to perfect righteousness. Works are the result of the advance, but never the means of advance.

Point 11. The RFHC Demands Avoidance of Self-pity.

To become occupied with self and filled with self-pity is one of the greatest distractions and weaknesses in life. Rom 12:9-10, *Your love must be non-hypocritical. Despise what is evil, adhere to the good. With reference to your brotherly love, [impersonal love of the honor code] be devoted to each other. With reference to your honor, [the honor code] esteem others more highly than yourself.* Since impersonal love depends on doctrinal norms and standards in the conscience, it excludes self-pity on the part of the subject. Putting on the uniform of honor demands that every believer in time of trouble or tragedy finds his blessing, encouragement, and strength in the doctrine in his soul. Advertising your troubles is not a part of the honor code. The RFHC demands the function of aristocracy in the spiritual life, not self-pity.

Point 12. The Thrust of the Honor Code Demands Authority Orientation for Continued Momentum in the Christian Way of Life.

Authority is a creation of God, and involves a person willing to take responsibility for the lives of others. Authority demands moral courage as well as honesty, integrity, and fairness to all. The RFHC demands that we have spiritual authority, just as we have authority in the government, and in all areas of life. Your attitude toward authority is an index of your character, and you must learn to live under authority, especially in the spiritual realm. The only issue between you and your Pastor is: are you learning doctrine from him or not. His personality is not the issue, but he must have total assertion of authority. You can't read the Bible on your own and become an expert. This is why God gave gifts unto men called the Pastor-teacher, so that you could be equipped for the Royal Family (Eph 4:11-15). Everyone has assigned to them a right Pastor; likewise a Pastor is assigned to a right congregation (Acts 20:28, 1Pe 5:3). God has delegated the spiritual gift of Pastor-teacher for the communication of doctrine.

Point 13. Maximum Function of putting on the uniform of honor is to give one's life for another in the Royal Family.

(Rom 16:3-4; Joh 15:12-13; 1Jo 3:16).

This is the peak of the law of supreme sacrifice. There are two basic concepts in giving your life for the uniform of honor: 1) Occupation with someone you love, such as TLJC, right man / right woman, or friends. 2) In the case of impersonal love, where you do it because of who you are and the integrity in you. Both concepts apply under the honor code. 1Jo 3:16, *We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

Joh 15:13, *“Greater love has no man than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”*