

Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The TREE OF LIFE is a weekly teaching Summary. The Tree of Life for the week ending 01-14-01.

Our corrected translation of **Phi 3:13-18** now reads, “*Brethren [members of the Royal Family of God], I evaluate myself as not yet having attained the objective [ultra-supergrace, or the ultimate objective in time, living in resurrection life]; but one thing I concentrate upon: constantly forgetting the things that lie behind and pursuing vigorously to what lies ahead, I keep on pressing on toward the objective for the purpose of the reward belonging to the upward call of God [the Father], by means of Christ Jesus. Therefore, as many as are spiritually mature, let us have this attitude; in fact, if in anything you have a different attitude, the God will also reveal that to you. However, the status to which we have attained [the spiritual growth attained through our discipline in perception, metabolization, and application of doctrine] let us keep marching [or advancing] in. Brethren [Royal Family], be co-imitators of me, and be having respect for the same ones, who constantly walk according to the pattern you have in us. For many keep walking, concerning whom I have warned you many times, and now continue to affirm, even weeping, the enemies of the Cross of Christ.*”

We have begun our study of **Phi 3:19**, “*Whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.*” **Characteristics of reversionism** (falling away from God) are given in in this short verse, which deals with the future of the “enemy of the Cross.” First, the reversionistic believer enters eternity through maximum divine discipline. It is essential to understand that the word translated “end” is a reference to dying. It is the Greek noun “*telos*,” which means termination, end, ultimate result, outcome, or conclusion. Here, it is the termination of physical life (“*whose termination of life is destruction*”).

Remember that Paul is weeping as he thinks of believers he loves becoming the enemies of God. In verse 19 he uses the word “*apoleia*” (translated “destruction”), meaning that which causes waste, or a destruction experienced by an individual; here it refers to the *sin unto death*. The sin unto death is the ultimate fate in time for the born-again believer who is the enemy of the cross. This brings us to the **Doctrine of the Sin unto Death**, the eulogy of the reversionist, who dies in ignorance, after learning nothing, resisting doctrine and the plan of God, and leading a miserable life. The believer who dies the sin unto death misses the blessings of God for living in resurrection life in time, and the blessings beyond ultra-supergrace for eternity.

1Jo 5:14-16 *And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a **sin leading to death**; I do not say that he should make request for this.*

We are not to pray for a believer dying the sin “leading to” [or terminating in] death because he is under the judgment of the *Supreme Court of Heaven*. Everything has

already been done from the **righteousness** of God (which condemned his failure), the **justice** of God (which judged his failure), and the **love** of God (which provided the solution as expressed in **grace**), and the believer under the sin unto death has rejected all three. This “sin” is simply constant refusal execute the spiritual life of the Church-age, despite years and years of warnings from the integrity and love of God.

The phrase “leading to” is the Greek preposition “*pros*,” which literally means “face-to-face.” The sin “*face-to-face with death*” is not based on gossip, maligning, spreading tales about the sins of others, or any specific sin. The sin face-to-face with death is the culmination of many repeated sins, and therefore there is no rebound for it. God has never made a judgment on anyone that excluded His love. Therefore, God’s judgment of this person is always fair.

The sin face-to-face with death is maximum **divine discipline** from the integrity of God, and is the worst form of disgrace that can ever happen to a believer. Divine discipline is the result of the believer creating his own failures with his own volition. The sin face-to-face with death is described in **Psalms 7**.

Psa 7:14-16 *Behold, he travails with [or shall have labor pains of] wickedness [vanity]. [This is warning discipline.] And he conceives [or has become pregnant with] mischief [frustration], and brings forth falsehood. He has dug a pit and hollowed it out [he has given birth to a life of deceit]. And has fallen into the hole [the sin face-to-face with death] which he has made. His mischief will return upon his own head, and his violence [frustration] will return on his own head.*”

The sin face-to-face with death does not come all at once, but in steady increments. There is no particular sin that causes the premature death of the believer; it is the result of years, even decades, of reversionism. Therefore, while the believer is going through this miserable death, he can still commit more sins, which only serve to intensify his suffering in dying. Regrets and sorrows now become greatly multiplied. The sin face-to-face with death includes the jealousy, bitterness, vindictiveness, self-pity, fear, worry, and anxiety experienced by the reversionist when he is in that “*death-shadowed valley*” of **Psa 23:4**. There are those who sow to the wind and reap the whirlwind in the death-shadowed valley, making their journey through that valley a very miserable one. The believer who is under this ultimate form discipline creates his own dying misery in the death-shadowed valley God has prepared for him.

The grace of God challenges the believer to deploy the problem-solving devices on the “FLOT” line (**F**orward **L**ine **O**f **T**roops) of the soul, so that he can travel through his death-shadowed valley with the most fantastic blessings, **Phi 1:21, Psa 23:4**. The training for the blessing (or “profit”) in dying comes from the daily function of the *spiritual skills* in your life. **2Ti 1:7** says, “*For God has not given us a lifestyle of fear, but of power and of virtue-love and of sound judgment.*”

There are five ways that believers can leave this earth:

1. **Dying grace** is given to mature or advancing believers. It is the greatest blessing of life and is only exceeded by the rewards given at the Judgment Seat of Christ, **Psa 116:15, Phi 1:21**.
2. There are only two known instances of **transfer to heaven** apart from death—Enoch, **Heb 11:5**, and Elijah, **2Ki 2:11-12**.

3. **Reversionistic super-imposition** (of the believer's will over God's *perfect will*), or Christian suicide, is a violation of **Psa 31:15a**.
4. The **exit-resurrection**, called the "Rapture," will take place at the end of the Church-age.
5. The **sin face-to-face with death** is the disciplinary death experienced by believers who refuse to execute the spiritual life.

The sin face-to-face with death results in loss of reward and blessing, as well as shame at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It includes discipline for carnality, and then the ultimate discipline for reversionism. No believer in his right mind wants to go through this disastrous experience, which comes with great failure in the spiritual life, suffering and pain, all eight stages of reversionism, and the three stages of divine discipline (warning discipline, intensive discipline, and finally dying discipline). This is the greatest time of self-induced misery. It is a miserable life followed by a very intensified miserable death.

It is important to note the **conditions** for the sin "face-to-face with death." It is the greatest possible administration of **divine discipline**, which can be defined as the sum total of punitive measures by which God judges, corrects, and teaches the believer in time.

Heb 12:5-6 *And you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives."*

Again, divine discipline results from the believer's own volitional decisions to create his own failures, as seen in **Psa 7:14-16**. For the believer living in the cosmic (world) system, there are three stages to the sin face-to-face with death:

1. **Warning Discipline, Rev 3:20**, "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone has heard My voice and he opens the door [rebound], I will enter face-to-face with him and dine with him [restoration to fellowship with God] and he with Me.*"
2. **Intensive Discipline, Psa 32:1-5, Psa 118:17-18**.
3. The **sin face-to-face with death, Rev 3:16**, "*Therefore, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold [the unbeliever] nor hot [the believer executing the spiritual life], I am about to vomit you out of My mouth.*"

There are two categories of suffering in the life of the believer:

1. **Suffering under discipline** is meant to be a teaching aid. However, if you ignore it, this discipline becomes unbearable.
2. **Suffering for blessing** is bearable and accelerates your spiritual growth by giving you the greatest opportunity to apply doctrine.

Divine discipline is confined to time, as seen in **Rev 21:4**, and administration of the sin face-to-face with death in no way implies loss of salvation, **2Ti 2:11-13**, "*It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we endure, we will also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us [of rewards]; if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.*"

Any believer who rejects Bible doctrine and the predesigned plan of God long enough will die under the sin face-to-face with death. He will be ashamed at the

Judgment Seat of Christ when he sees those fantastic blessings of eternity that will never be conveyed to him, simply because he refused to take advantage of the grace of God after salvation, and did not fulfill the conditions of the unique spiritual life, in spite of all the phenomenal assets that God provided.

Getting back to **Phi 3:19**, we are now studying the second characteristic of the reversionist, which is given in the second phrase of the verse, “*whose god is their appetite.*” Paul is dealing with the fact that the reversionistic believer is under the *emotional revolt of the soul*. Here we see that every reversionist has a god, and that god is not God the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit. “Appetite” is the Greek noun “*koilia*,” which means “emotion.” Emotion is part of the essence of the soul, which resides in the human brain. The reversionist’s emotions dictate his decisions; emotion becomes his “god.” This principle leads us to our current study—**The Doctrine of the Emotions of the Soul**. The Lord Jesus Christ said in **Mat 22:37**, “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul* [including the emotions of the soul].”

A warning concerning emotion is given in **Luk 12:15**, “*And He said to them, ‘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.’*” Emotion is the *appreciator* of the soul. Emotion responds or reacts to whatever thoughts are in the soul. Normally the emotion is to be dominated by the right lobe of the soul (i.e., by the mentality). Under abnormal conditions, the emotion rules the mentality, and neurosis and psychosis appear. Again, the emotions of the soul are only designed to *respond* to what is in the mentality of the soul (the soul also includes *self-consciousness*, *volition*, and the two frontal lobes, the *mind* and the *heart*).

Emotion is the “female” side of the soul and responds to the *right lobe* of the soul (the heart), which is the “male” side. “Category two” love (right man and right woman) illustrates the relationship between the right lobe and the emotion. As the emotion is to respond to the heart, the woman is to respond to her right man. The right lobe possesses a frame of reference designed for thought, the memory center, vocabulary and categorical storage, the conscience, momentum, wisdom, and the sub-conscious. What is in the right lobe determines who and what you really are (i.e., what you think); it contains your norms and standards.

In the right lobe of the soul is everything necessary to properly control the emotion, so that it can be what it was designed to be by God—an appreciator of blessing and any legitimate stimuli in life. The heart contains all thought and all standards; the emotion contains nothing. “*Koilia*” means something that is empty or hollow. Emotions contain no doctrine, thought, common sense, or ability to reason. When emotion controls your soul, you can no longer think or apply doctrine.

By definition then, the emotions are **the appreciator of the soul**. By function, the emotions were designed to respond to the right lobe. Emotion is strictly a *responder*; it is not designed to assume authority over the soul, but to be dominated by the right lobe. In fact, emotion has no true ability to love. Thus, emotional revolt produces love in areas that are against the Word of God.

Capacity for life has its basis in the right lobe and thought, rather than the emotions. You can really only enjoy life through your emotions when they are under the

control of the right thoughts. Once your feelings become the criteria for your life, you are no longer able to execute God's plan as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As our Lord and Savior was fulfilling God's plan for His life, He cried out in **Mat 27:46**, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*" that is, *'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'*" This was obviously not a positive emotional experience. In **Isa 52:14**, "*Just as many were astonished at you, My people, so His appearance was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.*" Even those who were antagonistic toward our Lord were shocked by His tremendous suffering. Not only was His face terribly disfigured in His physical suffering, but His spiritual suffering caused extreme mental pain, which showed on His face as well.

In **Isa 53:3**, "*He was despised and forsaken of men.*" In His humanity, He was a genius and a "tender plant," meaning that He was very sensitive. However, the more He loved, the less He was loved. Incredibly, in spite of all this rejection, and all the mental sins against Him, He still went to the Cross, the ultimate manifestation of grace.

In **Isa 53:4-5**, "*Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried. Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions.*" Every sin was like the point of a spear stabbing His soul. The punishment that brought us peace was laid upon Him, yet He never once succumbed to bitterness! No one else even protested or complained about the way He was treated!

In **Isa 53:10**, "*But the Lord [God the Father] was pleased to crush Him.*" It was the Father's plan from eternity past to crush the Son with our sins, **Rev 13:8**.

His wonderful gracious attitude is revealed in such passages as:

Luk 23:34 "*Father, forgive them...*" [He was concerned for those who were abusing Him.]

Luk 23:43 "*Today you shall be with Me in Paradise.*" [He was concerned for the thief being crucified with Him.]

Joh 19:26 "*Woman, behold your son!*" [He was concerned for His mother; in fact He was concerned for everyone except Himself!]

He is the ultimate example of living the spiritual life, and it is thought, rather than emotion, that is the basis of that life.