

## Tree of Life for 03-28-99

This week we completed the **Royal Family Honor Code**. Why did we spend eighteen hours on this doctrine? Because the Royal Family Honor Code (RFHC) is important in that God only recognizes “integrity” as the standard of maturity that comes from the consistent perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine. The RFHC demands in us a development of an aristocracy that depends on who and what God is not who and what man is.

Natural power is not what we need to handle the problems of life. Therefore we must learn to distinguish between human power and divine power. We often get so wrapped up in *self* that we deploy self effort toward that grand objective of *self*. All the while we hide from our powerful God who is waiting to work on our behalf. Rather than recognizing God and the word of God as the final authority in our lives, man generally sets himself up as the authority in life thereby thwarting any divine power that could be his.

The thrust of the honor code demands authority orientation for continued momentum in the Christian life. As part of the RFHC we must acknowledge both spiritual and temporal authority. Romans 13:1 tells us that *all authority is from God*. If God does not want the authority to exist it will not. And we will never make it in life until we realize the fact that all of us live under a system of authority. One’s respect for authority is an index of one’s character. Weak and arrogant people resent authority.

In the spiritual realm all believers are under the authority of their right pastor teacher, Act 20:28. And the pastor is responsible, before the Lord, for the teaching he gives to his congregation, 1Pe 5:3. Authority involves a person who is willing to take responsibility for the lives of others. Any failure on the part of the one in authority is between that person and God. The only issue between you and your pastor-teacher is: are you learning doctrine from him or not? His personality and his lifestyle are never the issue. Your right pastor-teacher is one of the gifts you receive in the spiritual life! And if “he” is doing his job and you are positive, you will grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ through the different stages of spiritual adulthood. Notice that the accurate teaching promotes growth in the *grace* of God, not in *self*-righteousness and legalism.

To be right in one’s own esteem is the arrogant reliance on one’s own assumed (inconsistent and hypocritical) righteousness. The erroneous conclusion that one’s own righteousness is sufficient brings in the monster of *intolerance* of all others thereby leading to blind pride. And, the blind pride involved in thinking that you are better than others can lead to mental illness, Deu 28:28. Proverbs 16:5 tells us that arrogance and pride *always* brings discipline from God.

The imputation of our Lord’s perfect righteousness (+R) to the believer at the moment of salvation eliminates the function of self-righteousness in the Christian life. The presence of self-righteousness in the believer’s life is an insult to the integrity of God. Self-righteousness is a blasphemous denial of the divine provisions of logistical grace, Mat 7:11. Self-righteousness is also motivation toward committing the worse sin in life, *judging*. Self-righteousness has no regard for true liberty and freedom. It does not appropriate the *fact* that another believer’s relationship with God has **nothing** to do with them, 1Co 4:4; Rom 14:4. Self-righteousness therefore is Satan’s viewpoint! Judging others assumes the prerogative of God in the administration of divine discipline. In reality it is the self-righteous, judgmental believer who is the one most heavily disciplined!

Following is a list of seven areas of legalism which self-righteousness produces:



⇒ Salvation by works.

⇒ Spirituality by works.

- ⇒ The vanity of the “unique experience”. This is in regard to the arrogance of emotionalism and “feeling God” being placed over the study of the truth of God’s word.
- ⇒ Emphasis on human achievement rather than on what God has provided.
- ⇒ Morality as a substitute for Christianity.
- ⇒ Blessing from God through human good.
- ⇒ Blessing from God through human achievement or self-sacrifice rather than *grace*.



Self-righteous arrogance is the motivation, whereas legalism is the result or the action of self-righteousness. Legalism then, is the audacity of the energy of the flesh, the blasphemy of substituting Christian works and Christian service for the grace of God. Legalism is the arrogance of replacing grace with works and the pompous pretensions of the fulfillment of predestination with human ability. Legalism seeks to change others by imposing false standards on them.

Satan has done a great job evangelizing the Christian church by promoting self-righteousness and legalism. The legalistic believer is irrational and never satisfied until everyone in his periphery is a marionette dancing to his own tune. Legalism gears its attack in two major areas: the grace subject matter of doctrine and the grace communicator of doctrine. Legalism seeks to destroy privacy and insert tyranny. And, legalism certainly never considers the honor code principle of Phi 2:3, in considering others more important than self!

*Phi 2:3 “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself.”*

*Phi 2:4 “do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”*

*Phi 2:5 “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.”*

*John 15:12 “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.”*

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

*1Jo 3:16 “We know love by this, that He [Jesus Christ] lay down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”*

There is a divine code of ethics for the royal family to live in. Inasmuch as the royal family member lives in this code, God the Holy Spirit provides the power. It is the love and respect we show one another which reveals the representation of the honor code at work in us. And this code cannot be executed in human power. Many may attempt it in human power but their sweetness will only extend so far! The honorable believer represents Christ in a gracious style that reflects our Lord’s eternal aristocracy and excellence.



In closing let us note the summary of the RFHC:

- ◆ The RFHC is for **all** believers.
- ◆ It is essential that respect for the privacy of the royal priesthood exists, Rom 14:7-13.
- ◆ Respect for the privacy of the royal priesthood also demands tolerance for the erroneous opinions of immature believers in the non-essentials, Rom 14:1-3; 15:7.
- ◆ Bible doctrine is the essential and everything else, to a greater or lesser degree, is non-essential, Rom 14:19.

The immature believer must have privacy and freedom to grow while mature believers are offered the opportunity to continue to strengthen their humility through flexibility. And what better opportunity presents itself for the exercise of flexibility for the mature believer than the rash thinking of the immature believer!

- ◆ The RFHC recognizes that all believers have the same path and objective, that is to glorify God in their bodies, Luk 9:25.

**It doesn't matter what you become in this world, but what you become in the world to come.**

- ◆ As part of the RFHC, we are to learn the value of building integrity and developing virtue.
- ◆ Never assume that production is the means of divine blessings.
- ◆ Learn to depend on the character and nature of God, not man, Rom 15:13; 12:1-2.
- ◆ Under the RFHC, to whom much is given - much is required, Luk 12:48. Maturity imposes the obligation of honorable, generous, and responsible behavior that is to reflect the high rank of noble birth given to the royal family member.
- ◆ The RFHC includes grace-giving with no strings attached. This entails a generous attitude in return of the benefits received, Rom 15:26-27.



Our study of the RFHC stemmed from our study in the importance of *knowing your enemy*. In order to stand firm against the enemy we must be able to put on the full armor of God and part of that armor is the *Royal Family Honor Code*, which is the breastplate of righteousness, Eph 6:14.

