

As we continue in our study of Phi chapter 3, we recently completed verses 12-13 ***“Not that I have already obtained it [the resurrection life or the ultra supergrace status], or have already reached the objective, but I continue pressing on that I may attain that [or overtake that, or gain that, arrive at the objective] on account of which I was overtaken by Christ Jesus. 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,”***

Here we see the advance of the believer who doesn't quit but with positive volition toward doctrine continues and becomes a winner in time and in the eternal state. Being a winner in time is measured not by the world's standards but by God's standards.

Speaking of our Lord in Isa 53:3 ***“He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.”***

Men gage from the externals, they looked at the Messiah and they said, that couldn't be the Son of God. After all He came from a manger in Bethlehem, from a teenage Jewish girl that wasn't even married. He came to the fulfillment of His ministry and He wound up on a cross, and even the disciples thought they have believed in a hoax, Mar 16:11.

So, after learning to reject the things and the ways of the world and after seeing the vanity of living for the things of the world, as Solomon saw, and then the hypocrisy of human accomplishments and compromise, as Paul saw, what should be our attitude?

Phi 3:14 ***“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”***

The advance is stated in terms of a military verb, “dioko” which means to advance to the objective, to pursue or to press on. It means to close in on the objective, it also has the connotation of being persecuted as you're pressing on and In the present tense it means to ***keep on pressing on.***

There's a difference in just keeping on or existing and ***pressing on toward the objective for the purpose of the reward of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***

The Apostle Paul has learned the lesson that even what appears to tear down, in the end will be built up.

Paul, as we have noted is not just waiting for the eternal state but something we can taste of in time. It has to do with a spiritual relationship that we can begin to enjoy now in this life. This brings out the importance of not quitting and going forward in the plan of God. Endurance is revealed not only in the ability to persist but the ability to start over. Always remember we are never losers until we quit trying. History has demonstrated that the most notable winners encountered heartbreaking obstacles before they triumphed. They won because they refused to become discouraged by their failures or their defeats. They won because they refused to blame others for their present situation. There's only one way you ultimately fail in the Christian life, and that is to quit or not to endure. We have been called to endure and to persist, that's how we find out who we are.

Paul said this to church of the Thessalonians in 2Th 1:2-4 ***“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is {only} fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.”***

James said in Jam 1:2 ***“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.”*** We must however be careful, for this endurance can cause us to lose our first love. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1Co 13:1-3 regarding this 1 Cor 13:1-3 ***“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.”***

In Rev 2:1-4, The Lord Jesus Christ spoke of this same thing when He said ***“To the church in Ephesus I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and you have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary, but I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”***

As we have seen many times the right thing must be done in the right way.

God the Father has provided from eternity past everything that the believer would need to execute His perfect Plan for the church age. Including encouragement in times of adversity and failure that the believer will inevitably face as he advances in the spiritual life.

Our most important encouragement is derived the mentorship of God the Holy Spirit, Who is our true teacher, Joh 14:26; Heb 10:25 which says ***“not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging {one another;}.”***

Believer's can receive encouragement simply by gathering together with other believers to hear the Word of God communicated by their divinely appointed pastor-teacher, 1Pe 5:3, Act 20:28, 1Th 5:12.

So far our corrected translation of Phi 3:14 says ***“I keep on pressing on toward the objective.”***

By pressing on, do not think that you will be purified through extreme events or by great trials. What God is after is that day by day love for Him and relationship with Him. Many people allow themselves to be led astray by the enemy, looking for the chills and the thrills or the sensational. Yet the Lord has warned us against these false teachings and the ***“false prophets and lying wonders of the last days?”***

2Th 2:9 ***“the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,”*** Satan and his kingdom of darkness gains great advantage because people love extraordinary manifestations, signs and wonders. This inordinate love for external signs is used of the enemy to draw people away from the Word of God and from the inward way of faith. The signs that come from God encourage you to die to yourself. Manifestations that come from God will humble, quiet, and edify you.

The only true and safe revelation is an inward revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the quietness of your spirit based upon the guidance and direction of God's word resident in your soul.

Experience must line up with Bible doctrine, not Bible doctrine lining up with experience. As our Lord said in Joh 10:27 ***“My sheep hear My voice,”*** A wonderful harmony between you and God is the result. We must, therefore, become as a child with regard to our will.

Continuing with Phi 3:14 ***“I keep on pressing on toward the objective for the prize.”*** Here we have Greek noun “brabeion.” It means a reward, prize, prize of victory, it means to receive a decoration in time as well as eternity. The interesting thing is that the decoration in time is something that ultimately takes place in the ***mental attitude of the soul*** whereas the decoration in eternity will be something that is overt and noticed as well. This is analogous to the uniform of honor, which being invisible and worn in the soul in time and is exchanged at the Judgment Seat of Christ for the translucent uniform of glory worn over the resurrection body, Rev 3:4-5.

We need to understand that ultimately the reward includes a visible decoration on the resurrection body plus great blessings in the eternal state. It also refers to the intimacy of having a relationship with God in time and therefore reaching ultra-supergrace or the maximum form of the experience of resurrection life in time.

Most people give up just when they're about to achieve success or victory. This is why the Bible teaches that a man is not finished when he's defeated; he's finished when he quits.

Remember that verse we have been quoting for months,

Pro 24:16 ***“For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again,”***

Job 5:19 ***“From six troubles He will deliver you, Even in seven evil will not touch you.”***

Psa 37:24 ***“When he falls, he shall not be hurled headlong; Because the Lord is the One who holds his hand.”***

This is why nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. So Paul says Phi 3:14 ***“I keep on pressing on toward the objective for the purpose of the reward of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”***

"of the upward call" is correctly translated calling, but it means an invitation or a vocation. The grace aspect of God not only is inviting us as a part of the call, but calling us to a vocation.

***“I keep on pressing on”*** refers to going through those so-called mundane times in life but really the time when God is silently at work in your life behind the scenes without you even knowing about it. There is a great blessing from silence. Then instead of talking to yourself, there is the privilege of talking to the Lord in silence and thanking Him for all He has done for you.

Remember that Elijah learned the lesson that the Lord was not in the wind, the Lord was not in the earthquake, the Lord was not in the fire but then after the fire, Elijah heard that still small or literally silent voice.

Do not despise the silence of the Lord.

Many believers do not understand how the grace of God and the life of God and the touch of God can take place in silence. Grace can be passed silently from spirit to spirit without words. We see an example of this in Mar Chapter 5 where the woman touched the Lord and He said, ***"I perceive that virtue or power has gone out of me."***

You see, in a similar way, without words, you may communicate grace to others as God imparts grace to you. Such communication is experienced in silence, and silence is often more effective than much conversation. Phi 3:14 correctly translated says ***"I keep on pressing on toward the objective for the purpose of the reward belonging to the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."***

All members of the human race enter the plan of God by means of Jesus Christ, who is the only Savior. Act 4:12 ***"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."***

That upward call or station in life refers to our vocation as a member of the Royal family of God. All of us are in full time Christian service. This is why we have the challenge of Eph 4:1 ***"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,"***

We have been called and you are now a member of the royal family of God and it requires learning a lot of things.

1. We are called to have personal fellowship with The Lord Jesus Christ, 1Co 1:9 ***"God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."***

There is no true fellowship with the superficial, for in life superficial relationships weaken the spirit. They can hold back one's relationship with God according to 2Co 6:14-17, 1Pe 4:3-4.

2. We are called to participate in His kingdom, 1Th 2:12 ***"Walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory."*** Luk 17:21 ***"For behold, the kingdom of God is within you."***

This kingdom is found in your spirit and your relationship with God.

3. We are called to experience eternal life, hopefully in time, absolutely in eternity, 1Ti 6:12 ***"Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."***

4. We have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light; 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;"***

Living in the calling is so precise and penetrating that it reveals your slightest faults. Those who are living in the natural life have faults, but nothing is being done to enlighten them and change them. Those who are being transformed by God have faults, faults that are like writing in the sand during a windstorm, here today, but gone tomorrow!

5. We called to participate in His sufferings, 1Pe 2:21 ***"For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,"*** This means that you are always ready to relinquish your will to His in a childlike way. By nature, we are proud of our ability to reason, but God will often lead us in a way that is opposite to human philosophy and human viewpoint.

6. We are called to inherit blessing, 1Pe 3:9 ***"not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing."***

7. We are called to share in His eternal glory, 1Pe 5:10 ***"And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you."*** Because of our failures, all glory must be imparted solely to the mercy and goodness of God. We can do nothing without Him. The world will not see this glory however. The Tabernacle, which housed the glory of God, was covered with unattractive and offensive animal skins while the temple of the evil Herod was decorated with gold. God allows certain human shortcomings to remain so that you might be humble in your own eyes.

8. We are called into liberty and freedom, Gal 15:13. Will such a liberty confine you and put you in slavery? Of course not! Joh 8:36 ***"If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."***

As you truly seek the kingdom of God within you, this kingdom is expanded in you a little at a time.

Concerning God's call upon our life, Paul prayed in Eph 1:18 ***“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,”***