

Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The TREE OF LIFE is a weekly teaching summary.

Tree of Life for 12--06-98

In Philippians 2:17 we find Paul congratulating the Philippian congregation for their positive volition toward doctrine (PVTD). "But even if I am being poured out as a libation on the altar of sacrifice [study] and service [teaching] with reference to your doctrine, I keep on having inner happiness and I congratulate all of you." Paul, as their pastor-teacher, has given his very best, he has dedicated his energy to the worship (study and teaching) of the word of God in spite of the obstacles in his life. And so the Philippian congregation has followed suit in their own PVTD.

Paul was poured out as a drink offering, a libation he calls it, in accordance with the requirement of God. It is the pastor's job to be tied to the altar of sacrifice as the communicator of Bible doctrine. It is the pastor's job to be tied to the altar of service, those services performed free of charge. The pastor/communicator of Bible doctrine is called to an altar of sacrifice. This requires of course the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher and the willingness to devote one's life to being on the horns of an altar of studying and teaching day in and day out, 2Ti 4:2 "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction." And the positive congregation supports their pastor so that he is free logistically to do so. So Paul says he is pleased to share his joy with them all. The word "joy", as we have it translated in our English Bibles, is the Greek word "sunchairō" which means to rejoice with someone; to have happiness with them, or literally to congratulate them. We

also see this word correctly translated in Luke 1:58 as congratulate. Now, why is Paul congratulating the Philippian congregation? The reason is found in the previous verse, verse 16, for their PVTD and that they have stayed hot on his heels in their spiritual advance. Their pursuit in the spiritual advance is what is known as positive volition toward doctrine as noted in Matthew 5:6 to hunger and thirst for God's righteousness. To be positive is to express clearly and confidently a certain action; a motion or decision that is definite, unyielding, constant or certain in its action; that which is directed and moving toward a source of stimulation. PVTD is a very sensitive and delicate desire and must be fed consistently else it will dwindle away. PVTD can be hindered by arrogance and emotionalism! This desire can be put out by hardness of the heart, scar tissue of the soul or occupation with the details of life. God gives every believer in Christ this desire for truth which is two-fold:

1- The ministry of God the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer's body at the moment of salvation, 1Th 5:19; Mat 5:6, causes the believer to hunger for truth.

2- Just as the body and soul desire stimulation, the human spirit (imputed at the moment of salvation) also hungers to be filled, Joh 6:35.

"Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word". The word long for as used in 1Peter 2:2 (eipipotesate) is the same word translated lust and means to desire something, to long after it, to yearn for, to intensely crave possession of something whether it's lawful or wrong. It is a strong driving, unyielding force to know the grace and truth of Jesus Christ. It should not be a desire to grow in legalism or self, that is not the desire of God. The desire placed in us by God is for the unadulterated word and grace of God and the more this desire is fed the stronger it grows. As this desire is fed it becomes a power and this power is able to sustain the believer and carry him through the most difficult situations in life! In fact, extreme pressure only intensifies the desire even more.

So how can you, as a believer, meet the demands that PVTD requires in your life? PVTD is exhibited by the believer's love

toward the Lord Jesus Christ. The desire must be fed daily through, not only the perception and metabolization of doctrine, but also through the application of that doctrine to life's experiences. That is how the believer meets the demands of positive volition. As the Christian way of life progresses ignorance may continue due to negative volition toward doctrine, indifference or apathy toward doctrine or just plain old distraction. For the believer who tends to this delicate desire and is disciplined in feeding it, a power and way of life emerges that is far beyond anything this world can offer. The driving desire and craving for Bible class causes the believer to meditate on the word of God and not on the pressures of life (Psa 119:97), that right there is a blessing of peace in itself. The believer's love for doctrine determines what he concentrates on throughout the day. The driving desire behind positive volition and yearning for God causes the believer not to forget the word in a pressure situation. All basis for giving the believer spiritual energy in time of pressure is derived from the building on one's positive volition, Psa 119:159 "Consider how I love Thy precepts;". PVTD is illustrated by your attitude toward any place that is teaching doctrine, Psalm 84:2. PVTD is evident by the inner thirst and longing for the teaching of the word of God, Psalm 42:1-2 "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God;".

Hebrews 4:16 informs us that with PVTD you have a great confidence in God, "Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace,". Hebrews 10:19 tells us that this confidence is due to the blood of Christ, i.e., the saving work of the cross. The confidence we cultivate from positive volition has nothing at all to do with our own power, if it did our confidence would not be very stable. In Psa 63:1 David records his driving desire in a desert situation as he "earnestly" sought God, "O God, Thou art my God, I shall seek Thee earnestly; My soul thirsts for Thee, my flesh yearns for Thee in a dry and weary land where there is no water." PVTD motivates believers to overcome all obstacles in life and center their lives around the word of God. The soul which is filled with grace and truth in response to positive volition

loves Him who it seeks, Sol 3:2. God has a system of grace provisions for those with PVTD:

- 1- God has provided the mechanics of inspiration for the formation and preservation of the canon of Scripture.
 - 2- God provides the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit inside the pre-designed plan of God enabling us to understand the mechanics for the execution of His plan.
 - 3- God provides the divine plan for the church. Hence, predestination for the royal family of God.
 - 4- God provides a right pastor-teacher for every member of the royal family who is positive to doctrine. There is no such thing as a self-made Christian. The believer must learn from someone.
 - 5- God provides the privacy of the royal priesthood for the perception of mystery doctrine. Every believer is given a royal priesthood for the purpose of freedom and privacy. And Bible doctrine in your soul is your altar of worship to God.
 - 6- God provides logistical grace support, by which every member of the royal family is kept alive for the execution of God's plan in equal privilege and equal opportunity.
 - 7- God provides spiritual freedom, in contrast to human freedom.
 - 8- God provides the local church as the classroom for the royal family to learn His word. Worship is academic, not emotional.
 - 9- God provides human volition as the means of transferring Bible doctrine from the left lobe to the right lobe of the soul.
 - 10- God even provides the positive volition toward doctrine which is that driving desire which motivates believers to overcome all the obstacles of life and center their life around doctrine class.
- Jer 15:16 "Thy words were found and I ate them, and Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart"

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