

**GRACE BIBLE CHURCH  
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**EPHESIANS - 0290-014  
DIVINE DECREES, PART 11.  
GREEK DRAMA, PART 3. SELF-CONTROL.  
2PE 1:5-7; 1CO 13:1-8; PRO 16:32; PRO 25:28.**

We are still noting;

**The Doctrine of the Divine Decrees.**

Now, I would like to begin by reading 2PE 1:5-7 since we noted it on Sunday, but never read it.

2PE 1:5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge;

2PE 1:6 and in your knowledge, self control, and in your self control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness;

2PE 1:7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.

2Pe 1:5-7, and Greek drama relates to the Divine Decrees.

The chorus line that we all have which is about to come up is mentioned in verses 5-7 described in your Bible in the correct order.

These are your seven main performers in your life called the following:

- 1. Moral excellence (Virtue).**
- 2. Knowledge.**
- 3. Self-control.**
- 4. Perseverance.**
- 5. Godliness.**
- 6. Brotherly kindness.**
- 7. Love.**

There are seven members of your very own Chorus line and the point is:

**What will your play or drama be like?**

Now, in Greek drama there was another principle that all Greek drama's followed and that was to produce unity in the drama.

- 1. There had to be unity of action.**
- 2. Unity of time.**
- 3. Unity of place.**

Therefore;

**1. The first divine principle is that we must understand our lead actor in our drama.**

You are commanded to have virtue first not love...virtue, not fruit, virtue, not works, virtue!

Because if you did all great things without virtue, what do you have?

You have wood, hay, straw at the judgment seat of Christ, 1CO 3:11-15.

1CO 3:11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

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1CO 3:12 Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

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And then the verse that determines whether or not we have a drama or not.

1CO 3:13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the **quality** (performance) of each man's work.

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1CO 3:14 If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward.

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1CO 3:15 If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

You have what 1Co 13 describes – turn there.

1CO 13:1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have virtue-love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

1CO 13:2 And 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 virtue-love, I am nothing.

1CO 13:3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have virtue-love, it profits me nothing.

On the hand, if you have virtue;

1CO 13:4 Virtue-love is patient, virtue-love is kind, and is not jealous; virtue-love does not brag and is not arrogant,

1CO 13:5 Virtue-love does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

1CO 13:6 Virtue-love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

1CO 13:7 Virtue love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1CO 13:8 Virtue-love never fails;

This means that everything depends upon your love for God and at this point you should ask yourself... "Do I personally love God?"

To enter a dramatic contest, you had to have 3 tragedies, 1 comedy, 1 sad play.

And, It was the accumulation of those points that you made from those 5 different dramas that determined your score for the win.

And so, a person could become wealthy overnight, if he could write, direct, and produce drama.

**2. The second unity that had to be observed was time --- The drama in the fifth century B.C. must be compressed into one day.**

The action had to take place in one day or a 24-hour period.

**3. The third concept was place = The drama had to take place in one location (PPOG).**

Every scene had to take place in exactly the same setting = the PPOG and equal privilege and equal opportunity.

And so Greek drama would take a single episode in the life of a person and treat it as though it happened in one day.

And the analogy to this is quite obvious – every believer must live one day at a time before the Lord.

This is what our dramatic passage emphasizes in 2Pe 1:5-7.

In our life - we need the unity of action, time, and place.

At any given moment we must have the unity of action, time and place.

The action is the ability to meet any particular circumstance of life.

You are commanded to have virtue first not love but virtue, not fruit virtue, not works but virtue.

Because if you did all great things without virtue, what do you have?

You have wood, hay, straw at the judgment seat of Christ, 1CO 3:11-15.

To win the dramatic contest Aristotle from his poetic tells us you could become a millionaire overnight.

To enter a dramatic contest, you had to have 3 tragedies, 1 comedy, 1 sad play.

And It was the accumulation of those points that you made from those 5 different dramas that determined your score for the win.

And so, a person could become wealthy overnight if he could write, direct, and produce drama.

Now, when Peter says back in;

2PE 1:5 Now for this very reason also, having made every effort in your faith

Faith is a reference to the Greek word pistis, which is simply perception of doctrine, it is knowledge of doctrine.

The reason gnosis is used and not epignosis is because Peter can only take us as far as our volition.

We must make the decision to either believe or reject the knowledge we are learning from Bible doctrine; it cannot be forced upon us.

To supply to your virtue knowledge or gnosis there are a couple of decisions you must make.

1. You must subject yourself to academic teaching and therefore positive volition toward doctrine (including staying up to date with the communication of every doctrine your pastor-teacher communicates).

2. You must mix faith with what you hear at the point of perception, Heb 4:1-2.

HEB 4:1 Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it.

HEB 4:2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

And with that permission God the Holy Spirit will metabolize the doctrine into divine energy.

In other words, to be a winner "gnosis doctrine" must always be metabolized.

Even if you have virtue, you never arrive, you need to supply to that virtue more "gnosis" doctrine.

2PE 1:6 and in your knowledge, supply epichorégeó self-control,

With your doctrinal perception, you will have self-control.

**1. The first member of the chorus line is virtue.**

**2. The second member of the chorus line is perception of doctrine.**

**3. The third member of the chorus which virtue will lead to is self-control.**

Self-control is the accusative singular feminine noun egkrates which is self-discipline, or self-control.

Self-discipline and self-control are based upon humility.

Self-discipline and self-control are a manifestation of basic virtue.

Egkrates also means an "organized life."

If you have self-discipline you are going to have an organized life.

An organized life is based upon two concepts:

**1. Having the right priorities which is "A time for Everything as Solomon says," ECC 3:1-8.**

ECC 3:1 There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven--

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ECC 3:2 A time to give birth, and a time to die; A time to plant, and a time to uproot what is planted.

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ECC 3:3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; A time to tear down, and a time to build up.

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ECC 3:4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; A time to mourn, and a time to dance.

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ECC 3:5 A time to throw stones, and a time to gather stones; A time to embrace, and a time to shun embracing.

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ECC 3:6 A time to search, and a time to give up as lost; A time to keep, and a time to throw away.

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ECC 3:7 A time to tear apart, and a time to sew together; A time to be silent, and a time to speak.

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ECC 3:8 A time to love, and a time to hate; A time for war, and a time for peace.

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A time for God.

A time for doctrine.

A time for family.

A time for friends.

A time for business, etc.

Secondly, an organized life is based upon

**2. Bible doctrine which will give you the capacity to organize your life and have inner happiness with the right priorities.**

It is the organized person who is persistent and consistent in the perception of doctrine.

Show me a person who is disorganized and I'll show you a person who will be a loser in life.

Sooner or later, you have to get organized.

If you're always late, then obviously you're disorganized.

You'll never make it till you learn to organize your life.

And under the doctrine of election, there is no excuse.

You have 24 hours in a day like everyone else.

The doctrine of election says equal privilege, equal opportunity for all.

This means that:

You have the same opportunity as everyone else to advance to spiritual maturity and have your personal drama glorify God, if you choose.

If you have the wrong priorities, you will never make it.

Most believers try to blame the devil or even blame God, saying, they are being tested by the Lord.

And they are not being tested by the Lord at all.

They are simply objects of their own bad decisions.

Most people who whine and complain have made a series of bad decisions and they are not being tested by the Lord.

They are in "self-induced misery."

They have wrong priorities.

They are disorganized.

They do not have egkrates.

The believer must have organization in his use of time, in his use of energy and to have the right priorities in life.

As Paul said to the Ephesians, to redeem the time because the days are evil, EPH 5:16.

The self-discipline believer comes to Bible class.

He is teachable through humility.

He has organized his life on the basis of biblical priorities and a doctrinal scale of values.

Now, self-control is taught in many passages in the Bible.

For example; turn to Proverbs 16.

PRO 16:32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.

This passage actually teaches that an individual who can triumph over himself is greater than an individual who captures an entire city in battle.

Or go forward to PRO 25:28 A city that is broken into without walls is like a man who has no control over his spirit.

When an individual lacks self-control he is totally defenseless from the attacks of the cosmic system.

Self-control over the tongue is taught in Jam 3:2.

JAM 3:2 For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a mature man, able to control the whole body as well.

PSA 39:1 says the same thing, "I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth as with a muzzle, while the wicked are in my presence."

Self-control over the lust of the flesh is taught in Rom 6:12, Therefore do not let the sin nature reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts.

So, self-control is an important manifestation of virtue.

Egkrateia [self-control] also means good manners when you're sitting in Bible class which means that you refrain from talking, moving around, etc.

This indicates that you have self-control.

And when you hear something with which you violently disagree with, you have self-control.

And as a result of self-control, you maintain your poise.

And from you poise you will eventually develop a phenomenal ability for learning.

The Apostle Paul asserts that self-control must characterize the one who would contend for a crown: 1CO 9:24-27.

1CO 9:24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

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1CO 9:25 And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

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1CO 9:26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;

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1CO 9:27 but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

Back in 2PE 1:6 and in your knowledge, self control, and in your self control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness;

2PE 1:7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.

2PE 1:8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2PE 1:9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.

Your former sins refer to all the past sins you committed before salvation that have been completely blotted out or wiped away, Isa 43:25; 44:22.

Go there once again.

ISA 43:25 "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.

ISA 44:22 "I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud, And your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."

And remember;

Even your present sins, once you confess your known sins to God are no longer remembered, 1Jo 1:9; Heb 8:12; Heb 10:17.

Now, this past week we noted some of the fantastic principles and analogies that exist between Greek drama and the divine plan of God.

Let's note ten of them.

**1. There is the epichoregeo which was the word used for the one who provided the finances to train the Greek actors of his day.**

He provided the furnishings and supplies needed.

**Bible doctrine metabolized is our epichoregeo.**

It provides all the furnishings and supplies needed for our very own drama.

**2. Then we have the choregeo which is the Greek chorus which was made up of a small group of very excellent dancers and singers.**

The training of the chorus was the most important part of Greek drama.

And so;

The training of the 7 qualities in 2Pe 1:5-7 is the most important part of our life.

**3. It took time to train those in the chorus and it cost a tremendous amount of money and effort.**

And it takes time to develop these qualities in our life.

It is very expensive and very time consuming as

PRO 23:23 says Buy doctrine, and do not sell out, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding.

This is a part of fulfilling;

MAR 12:30 and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.

Something most believers do not do.

**4. Just like every Greek chorus has a chorus leader, Bible doctrine is the leader of our "divine chorus," 2Pe 1:5.**

**5. The lead actor in the Greek chorus was the most important actor and therefore the lead actor and the first one mentioned which is virtue, the first one mentioned in our chorus line.**

Virtue is the visible manifestation of the invisible, i.e., metabolized doctrine and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Virtue is the monopoly of God.

Therefore, it can only be manufactured inside the PPOG.

Basic virtues developed in the PPOG include enforced and genuine humility, love, worship, morality, courage, and confidence.

Humility is the foundation for all virtue.

Virtue is greater than morality, it is the quality of intrinsic good.

You can't fake virtue but you cannot fake-out God.

Why?

Turn to HEB 4:13

HEB 4:13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

1SA 16:7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

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PRO 23 warns us about individuals who are moral but have no virtue. (Turn there).

PRO 23:6 Do not eat the bread of a selfish man, Or desire his delicacies;

And then this selfishness is described in;

PRO 23:7 For as he thinks within his soul, so he is. He says to you, "Eat and drink!" But his heart is not with you.

PRO 23:8 You will vomit up the morsel you have eaten, And waste your compliments.

What a person thinks in his soul is what he really is.

And this passage reveals that;

Hypocrisy is a manifestation of an evil mental attitude.

People use evil thinking to justify their wrong actions, and hypocritical speech to conceal their thoughts.

This passage teaches that the real person here is the implacable person, not the hypocrite who invites you.

Be careful for the con-artists in life.

Be careful of the moral self-righteous types.

The ones who every time they walked into a room where our Lord was, they got our Lord angry, Mar 3:5.

Do you realize that our Lord got angry?

Turn to Mark 3.

MAR 3:1 And He entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there with a withered hand.

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MAR 3:2 And they were watching Him to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, in order that they might accuse Him.

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MAR 3:3 And He said to the man with the withered hand, "Rise and come forward!"

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MAR 3:4 And He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?" But they kept silent.

MAR 3:5 And after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

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MAR 3:5 And after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

All of us at some time or another have contact with self-righteous moral Christians whose righteousness is nothing more than a menstrual rag, Isa 64:6.

They have morality, but no virtue!

And of all of the people it would be nice to avoid, they are the ones.

And in some cases, perhaps even here in our local assembly, the words of Nathan the prophet ring out loud and clear:

2SA 12:7 "You are the one -- pointing to David who was the man Nathan was talking about and who passed judgment on the man in the parable that Nathan told but he didn't know he was passing judgment on himself.

But then again,

We need these people in our life, we can't always run from them because that would be loss of people testing and therefore loss of spiritual growth.

## **6. In Greek drama action, time and place was very vital.**

And for you as a believer - action, time, and place is also very vital.

Your life must have virtue as its action.

The time is one day at a time.

The place is the "PPOG."

**7. There was no Greek drama without an actor and therefore there is no Christian service without virtue first.**

Virtue is the actor of life.

And remember the actor is the key to the drama.

**8. Christian service which is praying, giving, witnessing, serving, etc., are all actions of the Christian life but without the lead actor (virtue), there is no part to be played.**

Virtue is the actor that plays out the role.

9. As the action of the drama was required to flow together with consistency so the believer's lifestyle is to be one of unity and consistency from the power of God within.

MAT 11:30 "For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."

**10. The "dramatic contests" also have an analogy to the Christian life.**

A person could become wealthy overnight if they were successful with their drama.

So, the winner believer who is successful with his life can become a winner overnight, Rev 2:7;11;17;26; 3:5,12,21.

In all those passages the Greek word “nikao” means winner.

And all of that is a perfect description of what your life and my life is all about.

We all have an X amount of routine in our life.

And God has provided the concept of routine in our life for a purpose.

Routine is designed to help you organize your life.

You can only have an organized life when you have organized thoughts.

When you find a disorganized person whose always late for this and that, it's usually because they have a disorganized life.

And therefore, disorganized thinking.

And the whole point of routine is to come up with an organized life and organized thinking.

And I'm merely anticipating what's coming up in our passage.

Routine is very important in life because "routine" prepares you for what is not routine.

"Routine" prepares you for what is exciting, pleasurable, fun, and enjoyable.

Routine prepares for that.

You need to learn to organize the routine parts of life so that they do not interfere with the enjoyable parts of your life.

There are certain number of things that we all have to do in life.

The key is being faithful even in the little things.

When we talk of routine, we are not talking about meaninglessness.

Remember that in ECC 9:10, the Bible says;

ECC 9:10 Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might.

COL 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Many mothers hardly have time to look up her day-to-day assignments of the home as being godly, and she thinks that she is dying of monotony, boredom or routine.

Not because she isn't busy, of course she is!

In most cases a lot busier than her husband.

But, because she doesn't sense in her activity any meaning, aside from just the essentials of getting it done, therefore, what she thinks is meaningless.

Don't let that happen to you!

When in reality it may be a part of the plan of God for her life and a manifestation of her pressing on toward the objective for the purpose of the reward belonging to the upward call of God by means of Christ Jesus.

MAT 25:21 says "Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master."

LUK 16:10 "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much."

LUK 16:11 "If therefore you have not been faithful in the {use of} unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true {riches} to you?"

LUK 16:12 "And if you have not been faithful in {the use of} that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?"

Let me remind you again, ZEC 4:10 "Do not despise the day of small things!"

You may think that what you are doing on a continual and faithful basis is a small thing, God doesn't!

MAT 10:42 "And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you he shall not lose his reward."

Many children have said on a number of occasions, especially the younger ones through the summer, "I'm bored."

Now, they are busy through the day, but they are bored!

It can happen to preachers.

It happens to employers and employees.

The monotonous schedule of work can create boredom.

It can happen to bankers, salesman, to merchants, to people who are engaged in “people to people relationships” through the week.

However, routine is very important.

We have to prepare to live in public and everything, whether it's eating, dressing, cleaning, sleeping, they all take time.

Now, another point of Greek drama which is very interesting in our study is the fact that;

When you failed to prepare for life in a Greek drama it was known as "tragedy."

When you succeeded in preparing it, it became known as "comedy."

Life is a tragedy when seen in close-up, but a comedy in long-shot.

Life is a tragedy for those who feel, but a comedy to those who think.

And actually, tragedy and comedy came out of Greek drama.

Now, if you fail to prepare for the spiritual life through metabolized doctrine, it will be known as a "tragedy."

The tragedy of life and of the world is not that men do not know God; the tragedy is that, knowing Him, they still insist on going their own way.

If you succeed in preparing through metabolized doctrine it will be known as a comedy or a relaxed situation.

Once you begin to metabolize doctrine as routine in your life, taking it in tomorrow the next day, the next day, and the next, you develop capacity from this routine and there comes a time when you take it and use it in a magnificent way.

You develop capacity from this routine of metabolized doctrine.

And From your capacity you can handle the pleasures of life which is the comedy.

And you can handle the disasters of life which is the tragedy.

And there is nothing greater in life than the capacity you develop in your routine of metabolized doctrine.

So, Greek drama found its way in the Word of God to describe some fantastic things to us.

Now, back in 2Pe 1.

2PE 1:5 Now for this very reason also, making every effort, by means of your doctrine supply [epichoregeo] virtue, and in your virtue, knowledge;

Knowledge, as we noted is the dative singular feminine noun from gnosis referring to academic information.

Gnosis is used in Greek drama simply as perception of doctrine, it is knowledge of doctrine.

The reason gnosis is used and not epignosis is because Peter can only take us as far as our volition.

We must make the decision to either believe or reject the knowledge we are learning from Bible doctrine; it cannot be forced upon us.

So;

Peter is saying in verse 5, "Supply with your doctrine virtue and to your virtue, knowledge."

Why is knowledge mentioned after virtue?

Why add more doctrine?

We've already seen under the subject of election that God wills the highest and the best for us.

However, what keeps you from getting it?

The answer is negative volition toward doctrine.

And that means;

Even though the sovereignty of God wills you to be a winner, you're still a loser.

So, Peter is saying supply to your virtue - knowledge or perception of doctrine.

Notice the characters so far in your chorus line = "virtue and knowledge," not personality and sweetness.

The issue here is do you have humility?

Are you teachable?

Do you function consistently under the filling of the Spirit?

Virtue must take you to gnosis then your volition must be positive so that gnosis is converted to epignosis.

2PE 1:6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness;

Now, self-control is taught in many passages in the Bible.

2PE 1:5 Now for this very reason also, making every effort, by means of your doctrine supply [epichoregeo] virtue, and in or with your virtue [epichoregeo-supply] knowledge [gnosis-referring to biblical academic information].

You have the same opportunity as everyone else to advance to spiritual maturity and have your personal drama glorify God if you choose.

The problem is that most believers do not choose because they do not really believe what the Bible has to say.

They believe that they are sinners and that they need to trust TLJC as their savior but they do not believe that they really need the word of God daily.

They reject Neh 8:18, where a revival was taking place in Israel because of the desire for doctrine from their teacher, Ezra, the priest.

And please notice what it says;

NEH 8:18 And he read from the book of the Law of God daily, from the first day to the last day.

They reject that TLJC made doctrine His delight on a daily basis as well; LUK 19:47.

LUK 19:47 And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him.

Of course, they tried to destroy him because they were the worst sinners alive, like the apostle Paul was in 1TI 1:15.

1TI 1:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him.

Turn to Pro 8:30 Then I [doctrine] was beside Him, as a master workman; and I was *daily* His delight, rejoicing always before Him.

Doctrine was a daily thing for TLJC and it should be a daily thing for us.

They reject the fact that doctrine promises blessings to those who listen to it daily in Pro 8:34.

Pro 8:34 Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at my doorposts.

They reject the fact that TLJC made it crystal clear that we would need the word of God daily to survive in Mat 4:4 and Luk 9:23.

And that's where we pick it up next time.