

## Tree of life for the week ending 10/22/00

Our corrected translation of Phi 3:15 says ***“Therefore, as many as are spiritually mature, let us have this attitude,”***

With that first phrase we spent 32 hours on the doctrine of mental attitude. The next part of the verse should read ***“In fact, if in anything you have a different attitude God will reveal that also to you;”***

Even in a church like Philippi there were those who sat under the teachings of the Apostle Paul and Epaproditus who were not like-minded and who had a different attitude than those who were excited, dedicated and devoted to the plan of God.

There will always be those who in like in Luk 14:18-20, have bought a piece of land and need to go out and look at it; or have bought five yoke of oxen, and are going to try them out; or have married, and for that reason they cannot come or cannot carry through or persevere.

Phi 3:15 ***“Therefore, as many as are spiritually mature, let us have this attitude or think objectively; In fact, if you have a different mental attitude,”***

This means to hold different opinions because of mental attitude, to have a different attitude in something. When we advance through different stages of spiritual growth, we cannot go forward unless we have the proper mental attitude. Having this proper mental attitude we learn how to handle thought testing, people testing, system testing and disaster testing.

People testing can come in two categories.

1. In personal love or admiration, where the one we love can control our life and provide unhappiness, unless we have attained at least spiritual self-esteem, and function with the ten problem solving devices. Many times, in wanting to please the one we love personally, we find we are being a different person and not following our ordinary function.
2. In personal hatred or resentment, when the object of our antagonism or irritation has control of our life or happiness, unless we have advanced to spiritual adulthood. Under the Pre-designed Plan of God, God designed His plan so that our happiness will always reside in us, and we do not need to depend on people or things for our happiness.

In system testing the authority may give unfair and unjust treatment. This can come from management, a senior officer, a coach, a professor, government bureaucracy, the husband, the parents, the pastor, the deacons, etc. The policy may be unreasonable, or may conflict with normal living or with our own personal norms and standards, or it may be an ignorant, though still enforceable policy. There may be a conflict between our personal life and the objectives.

This proper mental attitude also means learning how to handle disaster testing.

Before the believer reaches maturity, there will be at least one or two major disasters in the life. How the believer handles these determines whether he accelerates his spiritual growth or retreats and goes backward.

There are two categories of disaster testing.

1. Personal disaster testing is designed as suffering for blessing for acceleration of momentum, or warning of cosmic involvement, in which case divine discipline becomes involved.
2. Historical disaster, collective disaster, or national disaster testing is related to the bad decisions of others in which we are involved by association.

The point is that we must learn to handle these problems or else the second half of verse 15 will be true about our own lives ***“and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;”***

The word “different” is the key here, it means different than what is mentioned in the first part of the verse. Really it means ***“to have a different attitude in something other than the plan of God.”***

Paul addressed this verse to the Philippians, many of whom had reached different stages of spiritual adulthood and are now being challenged to move to the next objective which is ultra supergrace. Paul knew the situation in Philippi and had a complete report on the situation in the local church there. Paul had discovered a rather tragic thing. In the absence of their pastor Epaproditus, there had been sort of a power grab and there had been some ***bad feelings*** and people were beginning to think, not in terms of divine viewpoint, but in their reaction to each other. There are those who are striving for power, fighting with each other. Sects and cliques were becoming formed, people were taking sides.

We will see that in Phi 4:2 with two women who were causing problems, one who had a trend toward lasciviousness or loose living, the other who had a trend toward legalism.

Unfortunately, because the believers at Philippi were not taking a doctrinal stand, they were in danger of becoming like the church at Corinth. 1Co 1:10-15 ***“Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, that no man should say you were baptized in my name.”***

God even uses this in 1Co 11:18-19 ***“For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part, I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, in order that those who are approved may have become evident among you.”***

Back in Phi 3:15, some had a different mental attitude. They were not thinking on the basis of what the Bible says, objective thinking.

They were thinking according the flesh, subjective thinking. They were looking at people and the weakness of their flesh and 2Co 5:16 forbids that They were thinking in terms of their reactions in life.

They were allowing Satan and the kingdom of darkness to cause division and stop their work. There is no one who knows the value of causing divisions more than Satan. Our Lord even warned us about this in Mar 3:24-25, ***“And if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.”***

The issue is how we observe things, it is reaction or response.

Reaction is a negative attitude toward someone. While Response is a positive attitude.

We will never wear that mantle of supergrace or ultra supergrace and have the intensification of happiness and experience that resurrection life as long as there is any malfunction in the mental attitude.

All of us, at some time in our life have had an opinion based upon reacting to someone.

But, we break out of it through the intake of doctrine and spiritual growth. So, there comes a time when you break through that maturity barrier and this becomes a test again.....what is your attitude? Because that is what the Lord is looking at, Attitude!

1Ch 28:9 ***“For the Lord searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts.”***

Pro 16:2 ***“All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the Lord weighs the motives.”***

Many at Philippi were thinking in terms of their reactions in life.

By doing so they were allowing Satan and the kingdom of darkness to cause division and to try and stop the work at Philippi. Emphasis on people rather than on Bible doctrine, had destroyed unity among members of the royal family of God, the body of Christ. Paul dealt with this in 1Co 12:22-25 and in Rom 16:17-18 which reads ***“Now I urge you brethren, be alert for those believers who are causing divisions and apostasies contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; in fact, separate yourself from them. For such believers are slaves to their own emotions, and by smooth and flattering speech, they deceive the right lobes of the ignorant.”***

Back in Phi 3:15 when it says “the God will reveal that also”, it means God is the ultimate source but the revelation comes through the Bible, the immediate source, the canon of Scripture. That is the means by which He has chosen to reveal everything. He does this through the joints of the body who are the pastor-teachers, Eph 4:16, Col 2:19.

This falls back again on the function of the local church, the academic discipline which we have studied so extensively, by which it is communicated to you.

Remember God is in charge of His church.

Look at 1Co 12:7 ***“But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”***

1Co 12:11-18 ***“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.***

***For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body, it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body, it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.”***

Under the conditions of positive volition toward doctrine, God reveals through that doctrine, through the daily function of perception, metabolization and application of doctrine, if you have an attitude that needs to be dealt with for your own benefit.

The daily function of perception, metabolization and application of doctrine forms the basis for your thinking by which you avoid building mental attitudes on reaction to people in life, situations in life. When the believer's thinking does not line up with divine viewpoint as revealed in the word of God, there are two ways his mental attitude can be corrected to agree with divine viewpoint.

1. The easy way: The daily function of perception, metabolization and application of doctrine.
2. The hard way: The administration of divine discipline to the negative believer.

Some stage of discipline often awakens the reversionistic believer to his true condition, at which time he has an option. He can opt for reversion recovery or divine discipline eventuating in the sin unto death, one or the other.

We never win with a bad mental attitude toward anyone, life is too short.

So the entire verse Phi 3:15 ***“Therefore, as many as are spiritually mature, let us have this attitude or think objectively; In fact, if you have a different mental attitude, the God will reveal that also to you;”***

Now that puts us right back in the saddle for the command to advance to ultra supergrace which we see in verse 16.