

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH
Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.

The Tree of Life from the week ending 08/20/06

What it means to be initiated into the secret of the mystery. Part 39.

Dealing with the mental attitudes of inordinate ambition and competition, fear, guilt, worry, anger, judging and hatred..

We have noted the importance of understanding election as it relates to our subject of equal privilege and equal opportunity. Under election, equal privilege is your royal priesthood; equal opportunity is logistical grace support and blessing for both winners and losers. 2Pe 1:2-11, *Grace and prosperity be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to the natural life and the spiritual life, through the epignosis knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence or virtue, and in your virtue, more knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness [living the spiritual life]; and in your living the spiritual life, brotherly kindness [RFHC], and in your brotherly kindness, virtue-love. 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. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore brethren, be more motivated [perception of doctrine regarding your portfolio of invisible assets] to make your calling and election a spiritual reality; for by doing these things [fulfillment of the PPOG, perception of doctrine], you will never stumble [become a loser in cosmic system]. For in this manner [execution of the PPOG], your entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ [ultimate sanctification in the resurrection body] will be richly supplied [conveyance of eternal escrow blessings to winners].* We are to be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and election. The principle of equal privilege and equal opportunity is that everyone is given the same chance to receive God's and best in this life and an abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

There are two categories of the Holy Spirit's ministry to the spiritually dead person. **First**, there is a restraint on total depravity so that the human race does not self-destruct under either moral or immoral degeneracy. Moral degeneracy is found in such things as terrorism, where people are told that if they kill Christians or Jews they will have 70 virgins waiting for them in heaven. **Secondly**, there is common grace which is the ministry of the Holy Spirit revealing the Gospel to the unbeliever. Common grace recognizes the inability of the spiritually dead person to understand the Gospel. The reaction of spiritual death to the Gospel is that of foolishness, 1Co 1:18, *For the doctrine pertaining to the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* The doctrine of the cross is simply the unlimited atonement. To the unbeliever that's foolishness, but to the person who believes all of our sins were judged at the cross, it is the power of God. The power of God is first seen in common grace where God the Holy Spirit's power makes the Gospel clear and understandable. In Rom 1:16 Paul said, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."*

In the function of common grace, the Holy Spirit acts as a human Spirit so that those who are spiritually dead may be enlightened on one subject, the Gospel. In common grace, the

unbeliever provides non-meritorious hearing. Listening is a non-meritorious function; however, once understood, the next step in the invitation is from God the Father. He invites you through your understanding of the Gospel to believe in Christ. This is called the *call of God*, 2Pe 1:10, *Therefore, brethren, be motivated even more to make certain about His calling and election*; The call of God includes two concepts: 1) The invitation of God the Father to believe in Jesus Christ. 2) The election of the believer which is the reason for equal privilege and equal opportunity. This should give you motivation and produce progressive changes in your life. **Motivation** and **progressive changes** are two principles that go together. There are many people who have no motivation, no meaning in their lives because they have nothing in the soul to make life interesting. They can be motivated for a short time from different stimuli such as drugs, lust, or alcohol stimulation, but none of these have fulfilling gratification. Pro 6:5-11, *Deliver yourself like a gazelle from {the hunter's} hand, And like a bird from the hand of the fowler. Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise, which, having no chief, Officer or ruler, Prepares her food in the summer, {And} gathers her provision in the harvest. How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest. And your poverty will come in like a vagabond, And your need like an armed man.* These type of individuals are without any true or normal motivation in life. They are usually guilty of inordinate ambition, desiring a lot but not willing to pay the price. They are usually guilty of inordinate competition, filled with envy and jealousy instead of taking advantage of their equal privilege and equal opportunity. This is what happens to a lot of believers; they begin to think that they are perfect in some areas, thinking that they have made good positive decisions, but they haven't; in fact, their fruit testifies to that. Our Lord said in Mat 7:16, *"You will know them by their fruits."* Or in Mat 7:18, *"A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit."* It begins because they have the wrong mental attitude which is carrying them backwards not forwards. As long as this type of individual remains arrogant and refuses to admit their negative decisions, they will live in the arrogant skills: Self-justification, self-deception, and self-absorption. Isa 44:20, *He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside. And he cannot deliver himself, nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"* Your mental attitude is where you develop proper motivation, and it is where you do most of your sinning. These mental attitude sins include arrogance, pride, jealousy, implacability, bitterness, vindictiveness, inordinate ambition and inordinate competition, all motivational sins, and sinful thoughts such as fear, guilt, worry, anger, judging, hatred, even murder, and these all are the sins that destroy your life. Character is the result of two things, **mental attitude** and **how we spend our time**.

Let's look at these Mental Attitude Sins (MAS): **Arrogance** is the antithesis of grace, the total blindness to the grace of God. Arrogance is synonymous with vanity, which is empty pride in regard to one's person, attainments, or possessions coupled with an excessive desire to be noticed; a lust for attention, lust for approval or praise from others. Arrogance deceives its victim. Jer 49:16, *As for the terror of you, The arrogance of your heart has deceived you.* Arrogance will bring dishonor in your life, Pro 11:2, *When arrogance comes, then come dishonor.* Arrogance will cause self-destruction, Pro 16:18, *Arrogance precedes destruction, and before a fall there is a lifestyle of arrogance.* **Pride** is defined by inordinate self-esteem, conceit, and a pre-occupation with self. Pride means rejection of authority. Arrogance, pride, and conceit is the original sin of the greatest genius creature of all time. We call him Satan or the devil, but his original name was son of the morning, or Heylel. He was the first creature to enter into this sin; in fact, it is the original sin found in the fallen angels in the pre-historic angelic conflict. Pro 8:13, *The respect for the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way, And the perverted mouth, I hate.* Pro 16:5, *Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; Assuredly, he will not be unpunished.*

Jealousy is older than the human race because jealousy existed in eternity past when Lucifer, the son of the morning, became jealous of God. The first case of jealousy in the human

race occurred when Cain became jealous of his brother Abel, and of course this motivated Cain to murder Abel. Scripture describes jealousy as cruel (SOS 8:6), filled with anger and revenge (Pro 6:34), and frustrating, (Pro 27:4). Pro 6:34 says, *For jealousy enrages a man, And he will not spare in the day of vengeance.* Jealousy is a self-destructive mental attitude; it is a system of thinking from the kosmos (the world system). Jam 3:14-16 says, *But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your right lobes, do not be arrogant and lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist there is disorder and every evil thing.* Jealousy always creates instability and disorder in the life of the believer, Pro 14:30 says, *A tranquil heart is life to the body, But jealousy is rottenness to the bones.* Jealousy is self-destructive, Job 5:2, *For jealousy slays the foolish man.* Jealousy is the worst of all the mental attitude sins because it is the strongest of the mental attitude sins (Pro 27:3-4). Pro 27:4, *Wrath is fierce; and anger is a flood; but who can stand before jealousy.* So great was the sin of jealousy in Israel that a special offering was made for it in Num 5:11-31. It is very difficult to get over jealousy, but remember, no one can make you jealous unless you let them.

Implacability is being impossible to please or satisfy, Pro 27:20, *Death are hell are never satisfied, Nor are the eyes of an implacable person ever satisfied.* This takes root in the mental attitude of the soul of a person who has no appreciation for life. The aim of life is appreciation, especially for all that God has done for you. There is no sense in not appreciating things, and there is no sense in having more of those things if you don't appreciate what you have now. It is better to be able to appreciate things that you don't have than to have things that you are not able to appreciate. Many people are so caught up in their destination that they forget to appreciate their journey, especially the graciousness and the love of people that they meet along the way. That's why Paul said one of the signs of the last days is the fact that people would be ungrateful. Appreciation of life itself, becoming aware of the miracle of being alive, can turn ordinary life into an extraordinary life.

Bitterness: Every believer who does not have a personal relationship with God eventually will become a walking bombshell ready to explode at any moment, and the trigger or the button which is pushed is the sin of bitterness. When you allow bitterness to cause you to explode, either inwardly or overtly, you hurt your own life. We call this self-induced misery, and if you harbor bitterness you have a very serious spiritual problem. Bitterness is a problem which is not correctable apart from personal love for God and impersonal unconditional love for all mankind. Bitter people are caustic or sarcastic; they have **pain in the mind**. Heb 12:15 says, *See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;*

Being rejected is a strong reason for bitterness in the lives of most believers, especially in marriage according to Col 3:19, *Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them.* Pro 14:10 tells us where bitterness lives and resides, *The heart knows its own bitterness, And a stranger does not share its joy.* Bitterness produces a complaining attitude, and no one likes to be around a complainer. Complaining is simply an outward effect of an inward sin. Job 10:1, *"I loathe my own life; I will give full vent to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul."* Bitterness also makes a person miserable, Psa 73:21-22, *When my heart was filled with bitterness, And I was pierced within, Then I was senseless and ignorant; I was like an animal before Thee.* David taught his son Solomon in Pro 5:3-4, *For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, And smoother than oil is her speech; But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword.* Solomon says in Ecc 7:26, *And I discovered more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are chains. One who is pleasing to God will escape from her, but the sinner will be captured by her.*

Vindictiveness is where revenge sets in. Vindictive people are obsessed with seeking revenge. Vindictiveness is marked by or resulting from a desire to hurt and be spiteful. Vindictive people have a disposition to retaliate for wrongs, real or imagined. These are bad people to be

around because even their countenance testifies against them. This sin is also accompanied by jealousy, Pro 6:34, *For jealousy enrages a man, And he will not spare in the day of vengeance.* Remember Heb 10:30, *For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people."*

Inordinate ambition and inordinate competition, are also mental attitude sins. There's nothing wrong with ambition or competition, but when a person is obsessed with them, everything is wrong. It is a lust that drives people crazy. 2Co 10:12, *"For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding."*

Fear is a whole system of sins which include worry, anxiety, insecurity, incapability of doctrinal application, and therefore inability to use the problem-solving devices. Fear is an emotional sin and torments the lives of others. 1Jo 4:18, *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.* For the believer who lives in a state of fear, the fear increases like a disease, and that individual becomes intimidated by life.

The mental attitude sin of **guilt** also needs to be identified. Guilt can be a devastating thing if it's not handled properly. Satan accuses God's people to try to make them feel guilty in Rev 12:10, so that they hide from God and separate themselves from Him (Gen 3:7-10). You may have failed in some facet of your life, but sooner or later you have to move on with your spiritual life. Do not be distracted by past failures, except to learn from them, but not to blame others for them. Our spiritual life instructs us to forget the past and move toward the high ground of spiritual maturity. Past failures must never become present handicaps. Believers need to learn how to handle their past and that great villain called guilt. The essential element for living in freedom from guilt is understanding grace. If we do not realize that God's justice and righteousness are completely satisfied and that our relationship with Him is based upon the accomplishments of the cross, then guilt will torment us.

Worry is a mental attitude sin in which there is soulish torment or anxiety regarding anything in life. It is a disquieting and painful state of mind involving undue concern over something in life. Worried people anticipate the worst, and so worry becomes apprehension or anticipation of danger, misfortune, trouble, or uncertainty. Worry is a state of restlessness and agitation, producing mental disturbance, uneasiness, foreboding, anxiety, and painful uncertainty; it is a destroyer of the soul, and if unchecked, results in mental illness. Worry in the mind causes shock to the body, Pro 12:25, *Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down, But a good word makes it glad.* People worry about sin which causes guilt, Psa 38:18, *For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin.* Worry is a sin, Rom 14:23, *whatever is not from faith is sin.* Therefore, we are ordered to stop worrying, Luk 12:29, *"And do not seek what you shall eat, and what you shall drink, and do not keep worrying."* These mental attitude sins are very subtle, because they blaspheme the character of God and say in effect that God is not capable of taking care of you.

Anger is a mental attitude sin which expresses antagonism, hatred, exasperation, resentment, irrationality, and can be mental or emotional or both. Anger motivates jealousy and cruelty (Pro 27:4). A person can't be angry without being cruel and unfair. Anger is related to stupidity, Ecc 7:9, *Do not be hasty to be angry in your right lobe; for anger resides in the bosom of fools.* Anger results in self-induced misery, Pro 22:8, *He who sows iniquity will reap vanity, And the rod of his fury will perish.*

Judging is a mental attitude sin as well, and you don't have to verbalize judging for it be a sin. Mat 7:1-3 is the practical application to your life, *"Judge not, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others you will be judged. And with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you again."*

Hatred is also a mental attitude sin, 1Jo 4:20, *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; Humble people haven't time to hate anyone; true humility avoids hatred. In fact, life is too short to hate anyone and if you hate anyone, this verse says you do not love God. Hatred is self-punishment. Hatred paralyzes life; love releases it. Hatred confuses life; love harmonizes it. Hatred darkens life; love illuminates it. Hatred is a boomerang which is sure to hit you harder than the one at whom you throw it.*

Murder can also be a mental attitude sin. 1Jo 3:15, *Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*

All of these things make up a very tragic person, and this simply means that there is no longer any motivation in life. Many believers have mental problems because they have rejected the plan of God and are controlled by what they observe in the cosmic system. Deu 28:34 says to those believers who are negative, *"And you shall be driven mad by the sight of what you see."* So, the problem among negative believers is simply that there is no longer any true motivation in life.