

Grace Bible Church
Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries



GRACE BIBLE CHURCH
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The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life from the week ending 08/21/05
What it means to be initiated into the secret of the mystery. Part 23.
The eighth and ninth fruit of the Spirit:
Gentleness and Self-control.

Gal 5:22, But the fruit or the production of the Spirit is love [a reference to virtue-love], joy [inner happiness], peace [inner peace and overt prosperity], patience [which refers to patience as well as longsuffering], kindness, [or graciousness], goodness, [the production of divine good], faithfulness [pistis],

We have seen that being rightly related to the vine will cause us to have the following virtues: 1) Personal love for God and then impersonal love for all mankind. 2) Joy or inner happiness 3) Peace or overt prosperity. 4) Patience as well as longsuffering. 5) Kindness or graciousness. 6) Goodness or the production of divine good. 7) *Pistis* or faithfulness.

Gal 5:23, gentleness, self control; against such things there is no law. The eighth manifestation of the production of the Holy Spirit is gentleness, which is the Greek noun praotes meaning gentleness, humility or meekness. These are among the most important ingredients from the fruit of the Spirit. No one, by self effort, could ever attain praotes, because it would cause the individual to become proud. Therefore, this is a quality and characteristic that only God can achieve! Humility does not consist in pretending to be less than one really is, but rather is demonstrated when one does not pretend to be more than one really is. In 2Co 10:1 reference is made to the gentleness of Christ, Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ,

Gentleness is commanded to the believer many times in the Word of God. Zep 2:3, Seek the Lord, All you humble of the earth who have carried out His ordinances; Seek righteousness, seek humility. In Eph 4:1-2, I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love,

Humility and gentleness is something that we need to walk in. This gentleness and meekness, like other virtues, is to be put on by that which God provides, Col 3:12, *And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;*

This virtue is commanded in 1Ti 6:11, *But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.*

Gentleness, meekness, or humility is the right condition of mind that we must have so that the Word of God may be received,

Jam 1:21, *Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.* James speaks of the gentleness of doctrine or wisdom in Jam 3:13, *Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.*

1Pe 3:15 says, *but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet [do it] with gentleness and reverence;*

This gentleness or humility is provided for every believer through the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. Biblical humility is freedom from pride and arrogance. Humility cannot and does not exist in the cosmic system. Cosmic one is the arrogance complex which begins with mental attitude sins. Arrogance has so many facets, and sooner or later, people are captured by it once they are out of the PPOG. Humility is also a prerequisite for learning doctrine, which requires the three R's: Reception, in which the pastor communicates Bible doctrine to a group of believers. The information goes to the believer's human spirit where the Holy Spirit makes the doctrine pneumatikos, or spiritual phenomena. It then goes to the nous, or left lobe, and becomes gnosis doctrine. Then the positive believer has faith perception; then metabolization of that Bible doctrine goes into the kardia, or right lobe where it becomes epignosis doctrine. Only epignosis doctrine has momentum. Retention or epignosis doctrine is how we grow in grace, the basis for momentum. Recall is where we apply that epignosis doctrine to experience, the basis for creating invisible heroes, which is the objective of the spiritual life.

There's a difference between enforced humility and genuine humility. Enforced humility is submission to legitimate authority. Genuine humility is the virtue of complete grace orientation through perception of Bible doctrine. There is also a difference between humility and humiliation. Humility is the virtue of freedom from arrogance. Humiliation is to reduce your view of self to a lower status in your eyes or in the eyes of others. Humility is recognition of, and submission to, the authority of The Lord Jesus Christ (TLJC). We submit by our daily intake of the Word of God. If we become neglectful of doctrine, we are in a state of rebellion. Most believers do not realize what rebellion really is. In 1Sa 15:1-23 we saw that sincerity is not accepted by the Lord, but rather accuracy is required. Samuel said that it is better to have doctrine in the soul than to run around sacrificing and serving. Saul and the people served God in their own way, they did a right thing in a wrong way,

and God does not accept it. The people had a chance to get rich, take the goods of the Amalekites, and cheat a little, but justify it by giving some to the Lord. They tried to bribe God to keep something that God had said to destroy. God is not interested in superficiality; He is only interested in the believer having Bible doctrine in his soul. The only thing that really counts is how much doctrine is in your soul. The verses in 1Sa 15 teach that to hear, listen and obey doctrine is better than sacrifice.

One doctrine needs to be reviewed if the believer is to have these first eight manifestations of the fruit of the spirit. The Doctrine of Forgiveness.

Point 1. Forgiveness means to give up resentment, excuse a guilty party, to release from payment, and to forget an offense never bringing it up again not even to discuss it. The principle of legal pardon is no different from the principle of personal pardon and forgiveness. This means that if someone asks for your forgiveness, and in honor you forgive them, then integrity and loyalty to doctrine demands that you forget whatever was done against you. It also means that you never again recall what the individual has done to you or penalize the individual for doing so. If you desire to know how many times you should forgive someone, Luk 7:4 says, *"If someone sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."*

Point 2. The ultimate expression of forgiveness was the cross of Christ. This is where all the personal sins of the human race were imputed to TLJC on the cross. God the Father judged every one of those sins in Christ. This was why our Lord screamed out, *"My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"* By His work on the cross, TLJC opened up the way for God the Father to forgive us! Eph 1:7, *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.* We do not have the right to remain angry or bitter toward someone who has legitimately wronged us or hurt us because Christ paid for that sin, and they, in reality, have sinned against God even though it may have been directed toward us. This is why not forgiving others is actually a sin against God.

Point 3. Scripture Passages on Forgiveness. The pattern for such pardon and forgiveness is found in Isa 43:25 *"I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake [because of My honor and integrity]. Furthermore, I will not remember your sin."* This pattern of forgiveness is applied to the believer as part of the Royal Family honor code, Col 3:13, *Bearing with one another and forgiving each other. Whoever has a complaint against anyone else, just as the Lord forgave you, so also you should forgive others.* You do this because it's to your own benefit. Forgiving and tolerating others may not benefit them, but it always benefits you because you will be free of mental attitude sins. Eph 4:32, *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other just as God in Christ has also forgiven you.* This command is for the believer who has attained spiritual adulthood. Mar 11:25 says, *"And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your*

transgressions."

Col 2:13, And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,

1Jo 2:12, I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. Notice that it is for His name's sake that our sins have been forgiven.

Point 4. One of the greatest illustrations of forgiveness is found in the story of Joseph. Joseph was thrown into the pit and then sold into slavery by his brothers because they were jealous of him. Joseph was a victim of great injustice, but it became a part of God's perfect plan for his life. The world is filled with acts of injustice, and only the grace of God and understanding our subject of forgiveness can get you through. Joseph had a change of circumstances but not a change of God's grace support. Look at what Joseph went through: 1) He was thrown into the pit by his brothers, which was a part of God's plan for his life, which he failed to recognize (Gen 37:1-24). 2) He was sold to a caravan and taken to Egypt, God's geographical will for Joseph (Gen 37:25-36). He had a change of environment and circumstances, but it did not hinder his spiritual growth. 3) He became a servant to Potiphar, who was an officer of Pharaoh, and Joseph learned that God can provide prosperity in any situation (Gen 39:2-6). Joseph was totally prosperous while a slave. God can bless us in one geographical area as much as in another. 4) Joseph was then tempted many times by Potiphar's wife to have sex with her, and he passed the test magnificently (Gen 39:7-10). 5) Mrs. Potiphar reacted against the rejection by Joseph, and falsely accused him of trying to seduce her, and this was a total act of injustice (Gen 39:11-18). 6) Potiphar believed his wife and threw Joseph into the dungeon for his second pit experience (Gen 39:19-20). 7) In Gen 40:1-4, Potiphar abuses his authority and gives Joseph double duties as a slave to two aristocrats in the Egyptian prison. If you are ever going to grow up spiritually, you must learn how to handle being mistreated. 8) In Gen 40:14-15, Joseph fails again by relying on man rather than the Lord, and the two men both forget to help Joseph in his prison experience.

This is the background to one of the greatest illustrations of forgiveness in the Bible. In Gen 45:1, Joseph's brothers, unknowingly, are begging Joseph for some food for the existing famine. After putting his brothers through certain tests, Joseph discovered that their attitude toward each other had changed. The brothers finally had love for each other, and love for their father. Notice Joseph's attitude in Gen 45:1-4, where Joseph brings their fears and worries right to the surface by stating what they lived in fear of, the fact that they sold him into slavery, and then showed unconditional love, and total forgiveness. This is why Joseph had been promoted by God. In Gen 45:6 Joseph shows that he completely understood that all these injustices had happened to him as a part of God's gracious plan for his life, and he reveals his tremendous humility. In Gen 45:9-15 Joseph would not only show his forgiveness, but he also would provide for his brothers and their families for the rest of their lives. In Gen 47:11-12, we see what true and gracious forgiveness will do. Joseph gave his father, brothers, and their families the best of the land of Egypt and

continued to provide for all of them. When God blesses and God promotes, the disasters, tragedies, and heartaches of life are all blotted out. So great is the blessing from God that the bad times are completely forgotten.

In Gen 50:15, Joseph's father Jacob has died, *When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph should bear a grudge against us and pay us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!"* Unfortunately Joseph's brothers have learned absolutely nothing from the principles which are found in the life of Joseph. The brothers are believers, but they are losers. They are in self-induced misery, and they are actually making their own unhappiness. They had one of the greatest illustrations of forgiveness before them, but they still did not learn. They assume that Jacob's death will remove Joseph's restraint and tolerance of them and that he will seek revenge. The brothers judged Joseph by assigning to him their own flaws, their own sins, and their own weaknesses. They would not have forgiven anyone for doing to them as they had done to Joseph. Remember what are our Lord said in Mat 7:12, *"Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them,"* Believers who are losers always assign to others their own flaws, sins, and failures. Gen 50:16-17, *So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father charged before he died, saying, Thus you shall say to Joseph, 'Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong.' and now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.'" And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.* Notice that Joseph wept! They attacked his motives and maligned his character, and they still have not learned that Joseph is a man with character and integrity. They had so little understanding of God's matchless grace.

Gen 50:18-19, *Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place?"* He was in God's place, in the place of God's geographical will. Joseph, long ago, had put the matter in the Lord's hands. Gen 50:20-21, *"And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.* Joseph has no intention of ever seeking revenge. He is a visible hero, a spiritual champion. He is functioning under doctrinal orientation plus grace orientation. Joseph was not in any way handicapped because he had a difficult childhood. Environment is not the issue; the issue is God's timing. He deferred any punishment that might come to them to the wisdom of the sovereignty of God. Joseph operated in the character and nature of God defined for us in Psa 78:28, *But he, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them;* Joseph knew the principle of Psa 130:3-4, *If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou may be respected.* Joseph knew the principle behind Dan 9:9, *To God belongs mercy and forgiveness.* To have forgiveness toward others we've got to know God. It is through occupation with TLJC that we develop a capacity to forgive.

The ninth and last manifestation of the production of the Holy Spirit is the Greek word *egkrateia*, meaning self-discipline or self-control. If you have self-discipline you are going to have an organized life. You will have the right priorities, which means a time for everything. An organized life is also based upon 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. Sooner or later you have to get organized. You have the same opportunity as anyone else to advance to spiritual maturity if you choose. However, if you have the wrong priorities you will never make it.

Most people who complain about their life have made a series of bad decisions, and are in self-induced misery. They have wrong priorities; they are disorganized and do not have *egkrateia*. The believer must have organization in his use of time, in his use of energy, and have the right priorities in life. This is why the apostle Paul said to the Ephesians, to redeem the time because the days are evil, Eph 5:15-17, *Therefore be careful how you walk [walk in the PPOG not in the cosmic system], not as unwise men [non-thinking individuals], but as wise [those with metabolized doctrine], making the most or the best of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.* The self-disciplined believer comes to Bible class, he is teachable through humility, and he has organized his life on the basis of Biblical priorities and a doctrinal scale of values.

Self-control is taught in many passages in the Bible: 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, *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* (see also Psa 39:1). 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,*

Self-control or *egkrateia* also means good manners when you're sitting in Bible class. The Apostle Paul said that self control must characterize the one who would contend for a crown: 2Ti 2:4-5, *No soldier on active duty entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life [a person on active duty in the army of God does not live a normal life and is not in bondage to the details of life], so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier [God enlisted you as a soldier for Him on the day of your salvation]. And also if anyone competes in the athletic games, he does not receive a winner's crown unless he trains according to the rules.*

Every athlete in the ancient world went through identical training no matter what his event. This is analogous to every believer having the identical equal privilege and equal opportunity inside the PPOG as the place in which we train and compete. Only the believer inside the PPOG is living the Christian way of life, and therefore is qualified to compete in the angelic conflict. The ancient world athletes trained under the rules of the national gymnasium for ten months. They were not allowed to leave

the large walled area of the gymnasium and had to exercise under the authority of the ruler of the gym, whose authority is analogous to the pastor. Everyone participated in group exercise, naked outdoors, regardless of the weather. This is analogous to everyone getting the same doctrinal teaching. Daily trumpet calls had to be met each day at various times; if you missed one you were disqualified. Everyone had equal privilege and opportunity to compete.

Each winner in the national games received many rewards and privileges. The winner received a crown of ivy leaves, which represented the rewards he would receive when he returned home. This is analogous to the winner believers receiving eternal escrow blessings when they go home to heaven. The winner had a special entrance cut into the wall of his hometown city which he passed through when he returned home. A plaque in his honor was put up after the wall was sealed up again. This is analogous to having your name recorded in the permanent historical record section of heaven because of your invisible impact on history during the Church-age. The winner received many other rewards including money, parades, and he was exempt from all income taxes for life. The Apostle Paul writes in 1Co 9:24-27, *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. 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. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave [he keeps it in training], lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.*

When believers become undisciplined they become incapable of understanding advanced doctrine, and start yearning for the basics again. They are more interested in fellowship with other believers than the true priority of fellowship with God and doctrine (Heb 5:11-13).

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