

**GRACE BIBLE CHURCH**  
*Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries*

**The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.**  
**The Tree of Life for week ending 03/17/02.**

What is it that God desires from us?

David said in Psa 51:6 *Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part Thou wilt make me know wisdom.*

In Pro 23:26, *Give me your heart, my son, And let your eyes delight in my ways.*

God desires our Heart, in fact the giving of the whole heart to God is commanded in the Scriptures, Pro 4:23, *Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it {flow} the springs of life.*

During our 2002 Florida Conference, we looked at the different types of believers or the different types of churches that exist in every generation. We noted that in Rev 2:2-3, as a church or individual believers, those at Ephesus had good deeds, produced divine good works and persevered and had not grown weary. However Rev 2:4, we read that the Lord had something against them, *“But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”*

Then the church of Smyrna is mentioned in Rev 2:8 who went through tremendous tribulation and poverty. In verse 10, they were told about suffering for blessing and that they were going to be tested ten days, the number of completion.

The church or individual believers in **Pergamum** in Rev 2:14 were warned about the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel and committed acts of immorality.

In Rev 2:18-20, as a church or individual believers, **Thyatira** tolerated false doctrine and false teaching, even though in Rev 2:19, they had deeds, love, faith, service and perseverance, Rev 2:19 *“I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.”*

The church or individual believers at **Sardis** are told in Rev 3:1-2, to wake up and strengthen the things that remain. Rev 3:1-2 *“And to the messenger of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.’”*

Then in Rev 3:8, the church or individual believers at **Philadelphia** are described as having divine good deeds and a little power, and they have kept with doctrine and have not denied the Lord's name. They are warned in Rev 3:11 ***"I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown."***

Their problem was that they were being tempted by Satan and his kingdom of darkness to become distracted.

Finally in REV 3:14, we have the Lukewarm believers of **Laodicea** as a church or individual believers. These are the type of believers who in Rev 3:17, have the attitude "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and they do not know that they are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

If we were all to examine ourselves, what type of believer would we be?

We studied one type of believer in detail, the Ephesus type.

Rev 2:1 ***"To the messenger of the church in Ephesus write: The One [Jesus Christ] who keeps on empowering the seven stars [pastor-teachers in the Church-age]"***

The seven stars refer to the teaching pastors of the Church-age, seven being the number of completion and the finished work.

We know that because back in Rev 1:20, when John describes his encounter with The Lord Jesus Christ, he writes, ***"As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the messengers or the pastor-teachers of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches."***

The pastors of the Church-age are called stars because the stars in the celestial heavens were once the voice God used to communicate His word all over the earth. Before the scriptural record there was the Stellar record, the record or the witness of the stars. Therefore, that which the stars in the heavens once did, the stars on earth must do now as they communicate from the scriptural record. In this verse the stars are pastors teaching Bible Doctrine, while the lampstands are believers of the local church learning and applying doctrine.

The corrected translation of Rev 2:2, ***"I know your accomplishments (productions) both your strenuous effort and your perseverance (residence and function in the PPOG), furthermore you are not able to tolerate evil (categories of evil), and you have tested those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, consequently you have discovered them to be false;"***

So far this is a good report on the Ephesian church or the Ephesus type believer.

In Rev 2:3 ***"Furthermore you keep having perseverance (residence and function inside the PPOG) and you have endured because of My name (or because of Me), and you have not fainted under pressure."***

In Rev 2:4, we come to the criticism of the Ephesus type of believer, ***"But I have this against you, that you have left your first love."***

One of the reasons why believers fail is because they leave their first love. Actually the Greek here means that they have abandoned, deserted, omitted, disregarded or neglected.

It doesn't mean to leave as such but really to lightly esteem. They have become familiar with Him which causes apathy, indifference, passiveness, complacency.

The corrected translation of Rev 2:4 ***“But I have this against you, that you have neglected your most important love.”***

As a believer, the most important love in this life is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then in Rev 2:5 ***“Remember therefore from where you have fallen,”*** Remember when the Lord was your most important love?

The next phrase tells us how to get back and recover.

Rev 2:5 continues with ***“and repent.”***

This is strictly a mental function, to change our mind, change our system of thinking, it means to rebound and recover.

Then we have ***and accomplish the deeds you did at first;***

This means to do the deeds or the things a believer did and to have the same excitement they had as a new believer. To the Ephesus type believer, the one who has done well but has lost his first love, Rev 2:5 contains the solution as well as the alternative.

The solution - ***“Remember therefore from where you have fallen [your personal love for TLJC], and repent [change your system of thinking] and do the deeds you did at first;”***

The alternative – ***“or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place-- unless you repent.”***

God Desires our Heart and that all begins by going back to the very simplistic principle of knowing Him and this requires spending our time.

Most of God's people have difficulty in realizing and facing up to the fact that God is not on a timetable and He is not in a hurry in His progress of their spiritual life. They feel that they are not making any spiritual progress unless they are experiencing some emotional high and constantly having evidence of growing spiritually.

Many times when it seems like we are receding or going backwards, it is not, as so many think, a matter of backsliding or losing your first love or apostasy or reversionism. It is a matter of God at work in us in His timing and His ways, Phi 1:6 ***“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who has begun in you an absolute good work will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.”***

Phi 2:13 ***“for it is God [the Holy Spirit] who is at work in you, both to will [give you motivation] and to work [He gives you the ability to execute] above and beyond His good pleasure.”***

This is important to understand because the spiritual life matures and becomes productive through the principle of growth, 2Pe 3:18, rather than by adversities and experiences, much time is involved. Getting to Know Him involves a lot of time, time to learn and then after that, especially time to *wait*. Paul warned us about become weary because of not receiving desired results in Gal 6:9 ***“And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary.”***

Our responsibility is to patiently wait on Him and the time necessary for Him to work into our character, our life, that which we have learned and received as we are getting to Know Him. It's that word that most of us don't like, patience. We wait, and in reality the

time is short, but the waiting seems long, Heb 10:36, ***“For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.”***

The Lord is far more interested in what motivates our activity than in the activity itself and so He tells us to take heed to examine ourselves, and be careful when we do our righteous deeds so that the motive isn't to be seen by men, to be a people-pleaser, Mat 6:5.

So often in our service for God we're concerned about what people might think of us. Sometimes we're motivated by the desire for people to know how talented we are, our motivations are often people-oriented rather than God-oriented. We must be far more concerned about what God thinks rather than what people think.

When our motives are right we do things not for people but for God, all without fanfare or bringing any attention to ourselves.

This issue is so important that Jesus told the church that unless there were some immediate changes in Ephesus, he would come quickly and move the candlestick out of its place.

As we continue our study on the Arab-Israel conflict, we have seen the importance of Adjusting to the justice of God.

We pick up our passage in Gen 17:1 ***“Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, Jehovah appeared to Abram and said; I am omnipotent God of many breasts. Continue to advance under My supervision maintain spiritual maturity.”***

We have noted that Abram has arrived at spiritual maturity and that he has adjusted to the justice of God. Part of adjusting to the justice of God has to do with reaching spiritual maturity or what we call maturity adjustment to the justice of God. Through the consistent and daily function of perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine, the believer reaches spiritual maturity. It is maximum doctrine in the soul of the believer that frees the justice of God to provide blessing for the mature believer.

There are six categories in this blessing package; Spiritual, Temporal, Association, Historical, dying, and Eternal. Some are received immediately, while others are received as the believer continues to grow.

Abram has reached spiritual maturity and he has the capacity to appreciate the *source* of blessing, as well as the *blessing* itself.

Doctrine in the soul is what gives a person the capacity to enjoy for life in general. There is a principle that is experienced when one reaches spiritual maturity; it is the giver not the gift that is important, Psa 103:2 says ***“Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits;”***

Prosperity comes to us because of the grace of God. Everything we have has been given to us either directly or indirectly by God.

In Gen 17, Abram reached a point in his life where he appreciates the source of everything he has, the Lord Jesus Christ, but now he also has great capacity to appreciate the gift.

There are many things in life that are associated with blessing, but they will not be enjoyed, unless there is capacity to accompany it.

Promotion is often associated with happiness, but there is no happiness in promotion unless there is occupation with the person of Christ.

Abram now has perfect happiness, and the fact that he is about to be given sexual prosperity and he is about to become a new race, means that he has entered the primary zone where he is now, for the first time, ready for the blessing. By the way, he entered the primary zone for divine blessing as an Arcadian, not a Jew, at this time, there were no Jews in the world. Before he will receive his sexual prosperity, he will be converted from Arcadian from the Semitic race, to Jew, a brand new race, and this will be accomplished at circumcision.

Circumcision will revive the use of his sexual apparatus, so that he can enter into sexual prosperity and have the blessings of the primary zone.

In Gen 17:17 we see Abram's response, ***"Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"***

In the next chapter, the chapter after that, the mother of the son will laugh.

Later in Gen 18:14 ***"Is anything too difficult for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son."***

He would name the child Yitschaq which means laughter or he laughs, that's what Isaac means.

So two principles emerge:

1. Divine justice releasing divine power is the problem solver of life.

Abram had a hopeless problem.

2. And therefore, here is a second principle, if God can solve Abram's hopeless problem, He can solve your problems whether they are hopeless or not. There's no such thing as a problem in life that has no solution, but to get the solution with the problem, you must have the secondary or the primary zone of blessing.

Abraham and Sarah will learn the lesson of Gen 18:14 ***"Is anything too difficult for the Lord?"***

Mat 19:26 ***"With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."***

Mar 9:23 ***"All things are possible to him who believes."***

Luk 1:37 ***"For nothing will be impossible with God."***

Luk 18:27 ***"The things impossible with men are possible with God."***

We all need to remember that when we give something over to God.

In Abram's case, the maximum use of divine power includes the restoration of two helpless people in the field of procreation and pregnancy. Furthermore, divine power will manufacture and perpetuate the new race through one person, Isaac, and multiply it into a great nation as well as a great race.

What God does for Abram, He will be done for the Jews many times thereafter. This means that every time we turn on the news or read what's going on in the Middle East

and see this little nation called Israel, the center of attention, we are seeing the faithfulness and the omnipotence of The Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of the devil's world.

Therefore, the very existence of a Jew today on planet earth is a demonstration of the justice of God, the grace of God, the faithfulness and the power of God.

The perpetuation of the Jewish race is a reminder of the faithfulness of God. The fact that the Jewish race is still here today, and that there is a small Jewish nation in the Middle East today, reveals that God will provide.

Satan understands the importance of the Jew, even if we do not. This is why throughout human history, time after time, Satan has sought some way of destroying the Jew.

God, whose power is greater than the ruler of this world, has perpetuated the Jew down to the very hour in which we live. God has fulfilled and still is fulfilling Gen 17:2 ***“And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you with power of power.”***

This brings us now to Gen 17:3 ***“And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying,”***

Abram did not fall standing on his toes and leaning forward, he did not fall on the ground and break his fall with his face. The Hebrew word *naphal* simply means that when he heard these things he got right down on his knees and then he just gradually stretched out until he fell forward and he wound up with his face on the ground, bowing before The Lord Jesus Christ. In the ancient world, this was a sign of recognition of authority and submission to that authority.

Abram has learned above all to recognize God's authority. This is the first time we read that he fell on his face when the Lord spoke to him.

The prostration of Abram recognizes the fact that through authority, and submission to authority, Abram has come to the place of pleasing God. This is still applicable to us today, whenever God speaks through His word, we do not get down flat on our faces, but we are to listen and concentrate on what the word of God teaches, Ecc 5:1 ***“Guard your steps as you go to the house of God, and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools;”***

In other words, don't let it become just another place to go.

In fact, we should never forget that all of us will be judged and evaluated based upon our love and desire for God's word, Joh 12:48.

So, back in Gen 17, we now have then the confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant.

Abram has adjusted to the justice of God, that means that God's essence will be free to provide everything necessary in the primary zone of blessing. On the hopeless side, both Abram and Sarai are incapable of sex, are incapable of having children, are incapable of everything that is necessary. But on the positive side, God has promised it. God has given certain promises and as Abram has seen those things as a mature believer, he staggers not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith giving glory to God and being fully persuaded that what God promised, God is able also to perform.

So in Gen 17:3 ***“And Abram fell on his face or prostrated himself, and God talked with him, saying,”***

Abram fell flat on his face because as an ultra supergrace believer, he has recognized the authority of God totally and completely.

Abram, by his posture, indicates the acceptance of authority.

This was the attitude that He had toward the Living word, TLJC, who was about to speak the spoken word, the word of God.

The supergrace attitude longs for the communication of the Word of God, Bible doctrine. The supergrace believer is willing to be like the Queen of Sheba who went over 1,000 miles to come to Bible class and hear the wisdom of Solomon.

We praise God by our faithfulness and support and daily intake of the word of God. If you have the privilege of having a local doctrinal ministry then you should live in the light of Heb 10:25 ***“not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.”***

There must be the acceptance of the authority before there is the acceptance of the ministry of any pulpit in America or in the world today.

And so when Bible class is about to begin, it begins with the Lord Jesus Christ definitely accepted as the teacher.

His authority is important and Abram's posture indicates subjection to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Maximum doctrine resident in the soul plus maximum spiritual growth does not remove the believer from the authority of Bible doctrine or a doctrinal teacher, and this why the Lord Jesus Christ, as Abram's teacher, tells him to continue advancing.

And therefore to maintain his spiritual maturity, maintain the primary zone.

It now becomes obvious that doctrine resident in Abram's soul gives him instant recognition of and submission to the authority of the essence of God. From the very essence of God, to which he has submitted to, is coming fantastic blessing.

Abram has come to the place of occupation with the giver, which makes the potential gift enjoyable. He already is totally occupied with the giver, this is noted in his posture. The Lord Jesus Christ is the giver. Abram has maximum category one love for maximum doctrine in his soul as an ultra supergrace believer, he is totally occupied with the Lord. His gift is going to be sexual prosperity, from which will come, not only the sign of a new race, which will be the cutting away of the foreskin of Abram's phallus, but it will also be the means of perpetuating that new race through one person only.

And therefore, as this comes, Abram will have the capacity to enjoy, he will have the capacity to appreciate because he is occupied with the giver.

The gift does not bring the happiness, but occupation with Christ brings the happiness, and therefore Abram's posture indicates both his respect for the giver, and therefore his love for the giver, and Abram had no qualms at all about getting down on his knees and then prostrating himself with his head to the ground, because in his soul he was totally occupied with the one who was now teaching him.