



# TEEN TREE OF LIFE THE DOCTRINE OF PROSPERITY

## Part 2

November 18, 2018

Before you begin, ask yourself a very important question: Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins? If you answered yes, you will need to be sure that you are filled with The Holy Spirit. How do you do this? You name your sins to God The Father in His Son's Name. This is called rebound. As a Christian, you must rebound any time you sin. This is taught in 1JOHN 1:9: *If we confess our sins* [directly to God], *He [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Now, if you have never believed that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins, all you have to do is say to yourself that you believe in Him and you are saved! The Bible verse which teaches us this is ACTS 16:31: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."*

God the Father wants the world to see prosperous, joyful, loving Christians. The apostle Paul wrote in **ROM 8:32**: *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?* David said the same thing in **PSA 84:11**: *For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.* So, we've established that, without a doubt, God wants us to prosper. The next issue is how will we respond to prosperity?

There are two extreme positions which some Christians take when it comes to prosperity. There are those who've learned that God wants to prosper them and their immediate reaction is to go for it. They stick with God for that reason only. But as soon as things change, they fall away wondering what happened to the good times and all their "winnings." They never learn a very important lesson: most great spiritual growth comes through trials, sacrifice and suffering. You will never grow spiritually or prosper without going through tough times.

Then there is the opposite extreme position. These Christians believe that prosperity is totally wrong. They believe having wealth and success is evil and that prosperity destroys humility and draws you away from God. But if it's wrong to prosper, how can you explain why many of the greatest men of the Bible were prosperous? These men of God have flourished as a result of following His Pre-Designed Plan for their lives!!

One good example of this is Abraham. The Scriptures teach us that he lived a prosperous and fruitful life. But he did it the right way – God's Way! **GEN 13:2** tells us that: ***Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold.*** Abraham had been blessed by

God in every way you can imagine. He trusted God in every aspect of his life, waiting years for God to fulfill His promise of an heir. It's a truly incredible story of faith because when Abraham was finally blessed with a son, he was commanded by God to sacrifice him. His son's name was Isaac and he was twenty-five years old when Abraham presented him to God as an offering. But God replied: **"Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."** (GEN 22:12) What God wanted was Abraham's faith, not Isaac's life. So when the knife was raised to slay Isaac and Abraham didn't flinch, he was blessed by God because of his faithfulness! Not only is Abraham heir to these blessings, but so are you. Anyone who believes in The Lord Jesus Christ has the chance to share in Abraham's prosperity. And God wants to bless you just like He blessed him. It may not be in the same way, but it will be magnificent just the same. Just be patient and stay in His Plan.

According to God's Word, there is absolutely nothing wrong with prosperity, provided you're in God's Pre-Designed Plan for your life. God provided everything you need to execute His Plan. And He provided the secret to having true prosperity! The secret is being content in whatever circumstance you find yourself in. And there is no way you can find it apart from learning Bible doctrine. **PHIL 4:11** says it all: **Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.** This is the key to prosperity!!

Another example of God prospering those who put Him first is found in the life of Solomon: **The king [Solomon] went to Gibeon, the most prestigious of the local shrines, to worship. He sacrificed a thousand Whole-Burnt-Offerings on that altar. That night, there in Gibeon, God appeared to Solomon in a dream: God said, "What can I give you? Ask." Solomon said, "You were extravagantly generous in love with David my father, and he lived faithfully in your presence, his relationships were just and his heart right. And you have persisted in this great and generous love by giving him—and this very day!—a son to sit on his throne. "And now here I am: God, my God, you have made me, your servant, ruler of the kingdom in place of David my father. I'm too young for this, a mere child! I don't know the ropes, hardly know the 'ins' and 'outs' of this job. And here I am, set down in the middle of the people you've chosen, a great people—far too many to ever count. "Here's what I want: Give me a God-listening heart so I can lead your people well, discerning the difference between good and evil. For who on their own is capable of leading your glorious people?" God, the Master, was delighted with Solomon's response. And God said to him, "Because you have asked for this and haven't grasped after a long life, or riches, or the doom of your enemies, but you have asked for the ability to lead and govern well, I'll give you what you've asked for—I'm giving you a wise and mature heart. There's never been one like you before; and there'll be no one after. As a bonus, I'm giving you both the wealth and glory you didn't ask for—there's not a king anywhere who will come up to your mark. And if you stay on course, keeping your eye on the life-map and the God-signs as your father David did, I'll also give you a long life."** (1KI 3:4-14 The Message Bible) Because Solomon was not greedy and asked only for what would help him rule wisely, God was pleased. Solomon had his priorities straight! He put God first and he showed more concern for the people he ruled than he showed himself. And, did you read how God prospered him because of his faith??!!

Many of Jesus Christ's followers were wealthy, including Joseph of Arimathea: **Late in the afternoon a wealthy man from Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, arrived. His name was Joseph. He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate granted his request. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in clean linens, put it in his own tomb, a new tomb only recently cut into the rock, and rolled a large stone across the entrance. Then he went off. But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary stayed, sitting in plain view of the tomb. (MAT 27:57-61 The Message Bible).** Again, there's nothing wrong with being well off unless you're consumed by it. Throughout your Christian walk, you will have to check and recheck your priorities to make sure God's Word is your priority. God wants you to possess a good life, but He doesn't want it to possess you!

Some Christians believe that Our Lord was poor during His earthly ministry and because of this they believe we should also live in poverty. That's insane! It might seem that Jesus was relatively poor while growing up as the son of a carpenter – but only to those Christians who haven't learned God's Word. This passage teaches us that Jesus Christ ate great food and drank fine wine: **"The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds." (MAT 11:19)** This is Our Lord speaking.

During His Ministry, Jesus Christ had quite an organization. He had many people who followed Him from city to city: **Later the Master selected seventy and sent them ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he intended to go. He gave them this charge: "What a huge harvest! And how few the harvest hands. So on your knees; ask the God of the Harvest to send harvest hands. On your way! But be careful—this is hazardous work. You're like lambs in a wolf pack. Travel light. Comb and toothbrush and no extra luggage. Don't loiter and make small talk with everyone you meet along the way. When you enter a home, greet the family, 'Peace.' If your greeting is received, then it's a good place to stay. But if it's not received, take it back and get out. Don't impose yourself. Stay at one home, taking your meals there, for a worker deserves three square meals. Don't move from house to house, looking for the best cook in town." (LUK 10:1-7 The Message Bible)** In this passage we see that Our Lord sent out seventy disciples knowing that their needs would be met. How could a poor man run an operation this big? How could a poor man meet the needs of so many people? In fact, His organization was large enough to have a treasurer. And guess who He picked to handle the money? Here's a hint: the disciple who would ultimately betray Him for thirty pieces of silver: **But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii, and given to poor people?" Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it. (JOH 12:4-6)**

{to be continued}