



# TEEN TREE OF LIFE THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT Part 5 June 23, 2019

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 [name] 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."*

We are now at the fifth Fruit of The Spirit which is **graciousness**. In Greek, the word for **graciousness** is **chrestotes**. It's pronounced kray-stot-ace with the emphasis on the middle syllable. If you think about it, it's pretty cool to be learning a few Greek words! After all, it is the original language of the New Testament! **Chrestotes** means graciousness, kindness, and generosity. You can't help but think about how Gracious, Kind and Generous God The Father, God The Son and God The Holy Spirit are to us. Stop for a moment and think about how much Each of Them does for us – not for who we are – but for Who and What They are. That's why you should thank Them every day of your life. They are our example of how to be. Our Savior lived on earth as our role model and because He died on The Cross for us, we are saved.

We learn about both God The Father's and Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ's Graciousness to mankind in **ROM 5:8: *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*** Look at **The Message Bible** translation: ***Christ arrives right on time to make this happen. He didn't, and doesn't, wait for us to get ready. He presented himself for this sacrificial death when we were far too weak and rebellious to do anything to get ourselves ready. And even if we hadn't been so weak, we wouldn't have known what to do anyway. We can understand someone dying for a person worth dying for, and we can understand how someone good and noble could inspire us to selfless sacrifice. But God put his love on the line for us by offering his Son in sacrificial death while we were of no use whatever to him. (ROM 5:6-8)***

Since you're doing so well with learning Greek words, let's learn a Latin phrase: **A`fortiori**. You pronounce it like this: ah-for-dee-oree. **A`fortiori** means "for stronger reason." It also means "all the more so." This way of reasoning is used when you draw a

conclusion that is understood to be even more certain than another one. As an example, if your friend can give you a gift of one million dollars, it follows under the principle of **A`fortiori**, that this friend would also be able to give you a one-hundred-dollar gift. Under **A`fortiori**, a comparison is used as an argument. It's a conclusion made when compared with some other recognized fact. You could also say that if someone can run twenty miles, it follows, a fortiori, that, that person can run five miles. Is this beginning to make sense?

Think about this: if God gave us the Greatest Gift – His Son – it follows, a fortiori, that He will, with certainty, give us smaller gifts. And imagine how great God's Smaller Gifts are! His gifts include blessings here on earth and then in Eternity; answered prayers; and so much more!! **A`fortiori** is used in the Bible by the apostle Paul in a verse in **ROMANS** which is a letter he wrote to the Roman church. His missionary work in the eastern Mediterranean was almost finished and he really wanted to visit the Roman church but couldn't go there in person. So, he wrote this letter. The Roman church included a large segment of Jewish believers, but many of them were going back to their own teachings. Paul uses **a fortiori** in a question in his letter to them: **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? (ROM 8:32)**

**ROMANS 8** is an amazing chapter, chock full of amazing, encouraging messages to us. Look at **ROM 8:31-39 (The Message Bible): So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose? If God didn't hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn't gladly and freely do for us? And who would dare tangle with God by messing with one of God's chosen? Who would dare even to point a finger? The One who died for us—who was raised to life for us! — is in the presence of God at this very moment sticking up for us. Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture: They kill us in cold blood because they hate you. We're sitting ducks; they pick us off one by one. None of this fazes us because Jesus loves us. I'm absolutely convinced that nothing—nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable—absolutely nothing can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.** Our Beloved Heavenly Father gave us His Son and, as if that wasn't enough, He now freely provides us with EVERYTHING. Because of this, as believers who are seeking Him, we should be completely confident that we have nothing to worry about or fear!

Now, let's look more closely at grace. Grace is God doing all the work and man receiving all of the benefits. Grace is all that God is free to do for mankind without compromising His Divine Essence. Grace means favor, kindness, and mercy. Grace is free, undeserved love and excessive kindness from God. We don't earn God's Grace from our human works or because we are attractive to God. Grace is God acting freely to save and bless us, because of Our Lord and Savior's Work on The Cross. If you understand and then treat others with God's Grace, you'll gradually become more grateful to Him and then become more gracious toward others. This doesn't happen

overnight. It develops as we become more spiritually mature.

If you operate in grace, you won't condemn, judge or criticize others. Instead, you'll uplift and encourage the people in your life, and you won't be angry when dealing with them, if they do something to hurt you. But you have to keep rebounding and studying and applying Bible doctrine to get to this point.

As we have learned, God gave us ten Problem-Solving Devices (tools). One of them is Grace Orientation. Grace Orientation is us becoming familiar and comfortable with God's Grace Policy. We can only do this by studying Bible doctrine with genuine humility, under The Teaching Ministry of God the Holy Spirit. The grace-orientated believer will always give privacy to other believers, while minding his/her own business! The grace-oriented believer will always treat others with God's Grace. Grace Orientation is a powerful problem-solving tool because it prevents you from having self-hatred and a bad self-image. It will also prevent you from becoming bitter, anxious and insecure.

The apostle Paul also wrote about grace in his first letter to the people of the city of Corinth which was a wealthy trading center. It was also known throughout the Roman world as a wicked, evil city. Because the church in Corinth was new, it was difficult for the Christians there not to act like their evil neighbors. Because of this, the Corinthians were having problems. In **1CO 15:10-11 (The Message Bible)** Paul wrote: ***But because God was so gracious, so very generous, here I am. And I'm not about to let his grace go to waste. Haven't I worked hard trying to do more than any of the others? Even then, my work didn't amount to all that much. It was God giving me the work to do, God giving me the energy to do it. So, whether you heard it from me or from those others, it's all the same: We spoke God's truth and you entrusted your lives.*** God has freely given everything to us, with no strings attached. Because of this, we should freely give and be gracious to others without expecting anything in return. Grace Orientation means showing grace to yourself and to others, just like God did when He gave us His Son.

The simplest way to look at **graciousness** is this: if each of us lives in the Pre-Designed Plan of God, through the Filling of The Holy Spirit, and the study and application of God's Word, we will automatically show graciousness, kindness and generosity. The key is sticking with it!

{to be continued}