



# TEEN TREE OF LIFE

## Having Joy When Facing Trials!

### Part 1

### August 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 [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."***

No matter what age you are – whether you're a believer or an unbeliever – you are going to go through trials in your life. Trial is not a word a teenager might use today, so let's look at that word. Do you know what a synonym is? If not, it's a word that has the same (or nearly the same) meaning as another word of the same language. For example, "big" and "large" are synonyms. Synonyms for the word trial are – test, examination, tryout, mental testing, visitation, and tribulation. So, keep those words in mind throughout this study.

The apostle James was Jesus Christ's brother. At first, James didn't believe in Our Lord and Savior and even challenged Him. But eventually, he became the leader of the Jerusalem church and wrote the **Letter of James** as its pastor, instructing and encouraging his separated students who themselves were facing many difficulties and trials. **The Book of James** teaches us about true faith and true wisdom! James' letter opens with an important commandment: ***Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So, don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.*** (JAM 1:2-4 The Message Bible) James is an exemplary example of a mature believer because when he wrote this, he had gotten to the point in his Christian walk that he could see the value and blessing in trials. This was the message he so eloquently shared with his flock of believers and it's an important message to us, as believers today. If you continue to seek God's Kingdom by studying His Word and staying in His Plan, you will "**become mature and well-developed,**" too!

Always remember this throughout your life: God never commands you to go through anything unless He gives you the power to succeed. Think about that statement. God has given us the power to get through **every** commandment that He has given us in the Bible. So, we can never say to ourselves, when we're in a difficult situation, "I can't do it!" If we do, we're implying that God isn't the Perfect, All-Powerful Provider that He truly is!

We're now going to look at the prayer Our Lord and Savior gave as part of the Upper Room Discourse. The Upper Room Discourse is a sermon which was given by Jesus Christ and transcribed by the apostle John in Chapters 13 – 17 of his Gospel. Our Lord and Savior spoke these words to his disciples the night before His Trial, Crucifixion, and Resurrection. He speaks with great love and mercy toward His disciples, as He prepares to leave them and ascend to heaven. The Upper Room Discourse was given to inform, prepare, and equip His disciples for what would soon happen, with a special emphasis on the sending of a Helper – Our Mentor, The Holy Spirit. In **JOH 17:13-19 (The Message Bible)** – which is just a small part of His Discourse – Our Savior is speaking to His Father: ***Now I'm returning to you. I'm saying these things in the world's hearing So my people can experience My joy completed in them. I gave them your word; The godless world hated them because of it, Because they didn't join the world's ways, Just as I didn't join the world's ways. I'm not asking that you take them out of the world But that you guard them from the Evil One. They are no more defined by the world Than I am defined by the world. Make them holy—consecrated—with the truth; Your word is consecrating truth. In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world. I'm consecrating myself for their sakes So they'll be truth-consecrated in their mission.*** So, what do we learn from these incredible words with respect to our study? First, Jesus prayed, to keep His disciples unified as a team. The point here is that, as Christians, we can't succeed on our own. We need our Pastor-Teacher and other believers to empower us and pray for us when we face trials. But more importantly, out of His deep caring for his disciples, Our Lord prayed for His Own Joy to be fulfilled in their lives. That's something to take special note of.

In the thirty-three years, Jesus Christ lived on earth, He had a life filled with joy and because of this, He could truly teach and pray about it. If He didn't have great joy, this part of the prayer in **JOH 17** would make no sense. Our Lord experienced great sorrow and grief which is described in **ISA 53:3-6 (The Message Bible):** ***The servant*** [Jesus Christ] ***grew up before God—a scrawny seedling, a scrubby plant in a parched field. There was nothing attractive about him, nothing to cause us to take a second look. He was looked down on and passed over, a man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand. One look at him and people turned away. We looked down on him, thought he was scum. But the fact is, it was our pains he carried—our disfigurements, all the things wrong with us. We thought he brought it on himself, that God was punishing him for his own failures. But it was our sins that did that to him, that ripped and tore and crushed him—our sins! He took the punishment, and that made us whole. Through his bruises we get healed. We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost. We've all done our own thing, gone our own way. And God has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong, on him, on him.***

This certain bible translation of **ISA 53:3-6** is difficult to get through, because of how it reads – but it truly makes its point in this rough language. The lesson in these verses is that despite all He went through on earth – for our Salvation – He still had joy throughout it all! And His Joy and Satisfaction during His Life on earth, far surpassed the joy of any other person who ever lived and will ever live. This is because His Joy was rooted in unbroken fellowship with God His Father and this is an accomplishment that only He Who is sinless could make. His Joy was never diminished by deception. His Joy was never diminished by allowing Satan to get to Him. His Joy was the fruit of true faith and confidence in God and it came from seeing the great things His Beloved Father had done.

Think of this! If Our Lord and Savior was so concerned with imparting His Joy with His disciples that He prayed for it, then we can be absolutely certain that He is also concerned that we have joy. God's purpose is to multiply joy in our lives, not to subtract it. The cosmic system, our old-sin nature, and Satan each work at trying to make us believe the opposite. God wants joy fulfilled in our lives and it's the same joy that His Son came to earth to give us!

This joy can be described as inner happiness; a sense of inner gladness, delight or rejoicing. The reason why we are told to consider "trials" as an occasion for happiness is that they may become the means through which better Christian qualities may develop. And as we have learned, Spiritual Maturity is our goal as Christians. **GEN 50:14-21 (The Message Bible)** give us the perfect example of Joseph's Spiritual growth, after he was sold into slavery by his brothers: ***After burying his father, Joseph went back to Egypt. All his brothers who had come with him to bury his father returned with him. After the funeral, Joseph's brothers talked among themselves: "What if Joseph is carrying a grudge and decides to pay us back for all the wrong we did him?" So they sent Joseph a message, "Before his death, your father gave this command: Tell Joseph, 'Forgive your brothers' sin—all that wrongdoing. They did treat you very badly.' Will you do it? Will you forgive the sins of the servants of your father's God?" When Joseph received their message, he wept. Then the brothers went in person to him, threw themselves on the ground before him and said, "We'll be your slaves." Joseph replied, "Don't be afraid. Do I act for God? Don't you see, you planned evil against me but God used those same plans for my good, as you see all around you right now—life for many people. Easy now, you have nothing to fear; I'll take care of you and your children." He reassured them, speaking with them heart-to-heart.***

{to be continued}