



# TEEN TREE OF LIFE

## Warning, Forgiveness & Peace

### Part 2

September 12, 2021

**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 1 JOH 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."***

Last week, we learned a very important principle: forgiveness comes out of your love for God and your love for others. Only out of love, will we see the goodness of other people and value our relationships with them. Forgiveness will heal and preserve our relationships. But without a relationship with God, we'll never know true forgiveness.

The goal of love, and the forgiveness that comes from it, is not just the end of the conflicts we find ourselves in. It's also the reconciliation of the relationships affected by the conflicts. The goal with forgiveness is for true peace and unity, not just the end of hostility. Think about that for a minute. The key to forgiveness is God's Peace – not just the quiet that comes from ending a conflict.

Peace is one of The Fruit of The Spirit. The Fruit of The Spirit is what God The Holy Spirit produces in the life of the believer who executes the Pre-Designed Plan of God through the filling of The Holy Spirit and the consistent intake of Bible doctrine. There are nine fruits according to **GAL 5:22-23 (New International Reader's Version): *But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself.***

Look at **The Message Bible** translation of **GAL 5:22-23: *But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves***

**involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.** That's an amazing message, isn't it?

We're commanded to pursue peace in **2 TIM 2:22-26 (The Message Bible):** ***Run away from childish indulgence. Run after mature righteousness—faith, love, peace—joining those who are in honest and serious prayer before God. Refuse to get involved in inane discussions; they always end up in fights. God's servant must not be argumentative, but a gentle listener and a teacher who keeps cool, working firmly but patiently with those who refuse to obey. You never know how or when God might sober them up with a change of heart and a turning to the truth, enabling them to escape the Devil's trap, where they are caught and held captive, forced to run his errands.***

Peace is supposed to play a huge part in our lives as Christians as Paul taught in **2 COR. 13:11 (New International Reader's Version):** ***Finally, brothers and sisters, be joyful! Work to make things right with one another. Help one another and agree with one another. Live in peace. And the God who gives love and peace will be with you.*** In other words, if you strive to make and keep peace, God will be a big part of your life. You're not in His Plan if you're not a peacemaker!

Humility is also an important part of being a good Christian and it's the key to living in peace. Paul explains why being humble is required of us in **PHI 2:3-4:** ***Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves. None of you should look out just for your own good. Each of you should also look out for the good of others.*** We should have the same attitude of humility as Christ Jesus – the One Who set aside the Glories of Heaven in order to become a man and redeem us at Calvary. If He did that, then we can certainly follow His example. It's this humility – which results in caring for others more than self – that allows believers to live in peace and harmony. Without this humility, any forgiveness offered or received will only be the peace of a truce and not the peace of reconciliation and unity. Remember, God wants Christians to be reconciled to one another and to live in unity and peace.

When a conflict you have with someone evolves into a situation in which the other person sins against you, take the advice given by Our Lord in **MATT 18:15 (New International Reader's Version):** ***"If your brother or sister sins against you, go to them. Tell them what they did wrong. Keep it between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them back."*** Do you see how this will bring you both peace? Look at Paul's similar advice in **GAL 6:1-3 (The Message Bible):** ***Live creatively, friends. If someone falls into sin, forgivingly restore him, saving your critical comments for yourself. You might be needing forgiveness before the day's out. Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law. If you think you are too good for that, you are badly deceived.*** This pertains to any sin. Confrontation when someone sins against you becomes necessary and can no longer just be overlooked. If there is no resolution, then it escalates. If it does, Our Lord tells us to bring in others who will help resolve the issues and bring about reconciliation: ***"But what if they won't listen to you? Then take one or two others with you. Scripture says, 'Every matter must be proved by the words of two or three witnesses.'"*** (**MATT 18:16 New International Reader's Version**) This is similar to bringing in a mediator to help resolve a dispute.

There are those that advocate that forgiveness should be unconditional. But that is simply not true. While we are supposed to be willing to forgive, there are conditions that must be met for it to be offered and accepted. The Lord Jesus Christ said in **LUKE 17:3-4**: ***“So watch what you do. If your brother or sister sins against you, tell them they are wrong. Then if they turn away from their sins, forgive them. Suppose they sin against you seven times in one day. And suppose they come back to you each time and say, ‘I’m sorry.’ You must forgive them.”*** Our Lord tells us that the condition for forgiveness is that they ***“turn away from their sins.”*** This is repenting. Repentance means to have a change of mind or purpose. A change of mind that doesn't result in a change in action – is not really a change of mind. In a nutshell, repentance is a recognition of and turning away from sin: it's mental and physical.

The results of forgiveness are reconciliation and restoration of the relationship. And peace... What was broken is mended so that there is unity once again. The resentment is removed and along with it any quest for revenge or punishment. There may still be necessary consequences for sinful actions that took place – such as restitution or restoration of what had been damaged, but there should be no animosity on anyone's part in fulfilling it. There should be no hatred by either person involved and while the offender should regret committing the sins, the consequences are seen as the pursuit of doing what's just and right.

The results of forgiveness between people should reflect what God has done for mankind. **MIC 7:18-19 (The Message Bible)** says this about how God forgives our sins: ***Where is the god who can compare with you—wiping the slate clean of guilt, Turning a blind eye, a deaf ear, to the past sins of your purged and precious people? You don't nurse your anger and don't stay angry long, for mercy is your specialty. That's what you love most. And compassion is on its way to us. You'll stamp out our wrongdoing. You'll sink our sins to the bottom of the ocean.*** PSA 103:12 says this about God's Forgiveness: ***He has removed our sins from us. He has removed them as far as the east is from the west.***

While we may not be able to “forgive and forget” because the wrong done sticks in our memory, we can follow God's Example as He is said to remember our sins no more. That means you should no longer think about or bring up a sin that has been forgiven. You should instead apply love. Bringing up past incidents that were supposedly forgiven in a current argument is ungodly, unrighteous, and unjust.

Those who are unforgiving become bitter and jealous resulting in anger and malice. Look at the apostle Paul's advice in **EPH 4:31-32**: ***Make a clean break with all cutting, backbiting, profane talk. Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.***

The goal for Christians is to resolve conflicts and bring about reconciliation. That's what forgiveness is all about. That's God's warning to us and it will bring about His Peace to any situation. It's a sad fact that in this sinful world, that it won't always be possible – even among fellow believers. But we're supposed to strive for it never-the-less.

