



TEEN TREE OF LIFE

Warning, Forgiveness & Peace

Part 1

September 5, 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."*

Danger Ahead

One of the first things each person must realize and remember is that life is full of spiritual danger, and even more so if we don't have a healthy, active relationship with God. The apostle Paul gives strong warnings to be prepared for danger throughout **EPHESIANS 6**. He warns us that we're in a spiritual battle and must learn to stand firm against the schemes of the devil by putting on The Full Armor of God. Though Satan often uses people to carry out his schemes, the battle is not against flesh and blood, but rather with what is behind it: the rulers, powers, and the world forces of darkness. Paul teaches that we must put on The Belt of Truth, The Breastplate of Righteousness, The Shoes of The Gospel of Peace, The Helmet of Salvation and take up The Shield of Faith and The Sword of The Spirit which is The Word of God. If any of these are missing, you're a vulnerable target for Satan's lies, deceit, unrighteousness, discord, doubt, and empty philosophies.

All of us who have walked with The Lord for any length of time are aware that these dangers come from our own sinful desires. They come from the enticements of the world, and the temptations of our adversary, Satan. We're aware of the struggle with our flesh and its desires as well as those of our eyes and our pride which we read about in **1 JOH 2:16 (New International Reader's Version): *Here is what people who belong to this world do. They try to satisfy what their sinful desires want to do. They long for what their sinful eyes look at. They take pride in what they have and what they do. All of this comes from the world. None of it comes from the Father.***

As knowledgeable Christians, we know all about the struggle to resist the pressure of the cosmic system to conform us into its image. Paul warns us about this in **ROM 12:2 (New American Standard Bible): *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*** We know our adversary the devil's goal is to get us to sin. Peter warns us about this in **1 PET 5:8 (New International Reader's Version): *Be watchful and control yourselves. Your enemy the devil is like a roaring lion. He prowls around looking for someone to swallow up.*** And his goal, of course, is to get us out of God's Plan for our lives by sinning.

And Satan wants us to keep sinning and not look back. But God has a different goal. So, in His Infinite Wisdom and Love, He created rebound so that we can get right back on track. You see when we're swayed by Satan and our own wicked desires and we sin, we have two ways we can go. The first is to rebound and get back in God's Plan. This is making the choice to allow God to forgive us. But we can be easily swayed to ignore rebounding. This is because Satan has so many distractions to deaden thinking so that born-again believers become mindless imbeciles, struggling through life looking for some emotional experience to pull them through. God has delegated to every Church-Age believer all of the power to handle any problems or difficulties in this life. Rebounding – allowing God to forgive us – is part of that power. The born-again believer should be an alert, mindful individual – not a mindless, emotional, irrational, yapping imbecile. Be on the alert for the distractions designed by Satan and the kingdom of darkness to lure you away from God's Pre-Designed Plan for your life and from your personal sense of destiny. Heeding these warnings will motivate you to study God's Word and use it throughout the conflicts you will face in your life.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is the place to start after any conflict. Your little brother breaks the TV remote when you're babysitting, and you get punished for not keeping an eye on him. Or your best friend steals your idea for the science fair, and you must come up with another one or you'll fail science. These are the times when you have the choice to stay angry and keep sinning or to show forgiveness and get back in God's Plan. Most times forgiving is hard to do. Mostly because the hurt is too much, or the anger is too big. But no matter what, we need to learn to forgive one another because conflicts are inevitable in life, and without forgiveness, those conflicts will hinder, damage, and destroy the loving relationships we should have with one another. Conflicts can happen when even small differences of opinion cause frustration, hindrance or even blockage of the goals or desires of others. **JAMES 4:1 (The Message Bible)** give us great insight about fighting: ***Where do you think all these appalling wars and quarrels come from? Do you think they just happen? Think again. They come about because you want your own way, and fight for it deep inside yourselves. You lust for what you don't have and are willing to kill to get it. You want what isn't yours and will risk violence to get your hands on it.*** Think about that for a minute. It says a great deal about society and the current state of affairs in the world today!

The root of quarreling and conflict is very often selfishness and envy. Conflicts also arise from simple misunderstandings. How many of us have had an argument with someone only to find out we both agreed, but had misunderstood what the other person was trying to say? Often, we simply need to step back from an argument and listen! Listening can get you on the path to forgiveness.

But what is forgiveness? What does it entail? It involves giving up resentment, excusing the guilty party, and forgetting an offense. **LUK 17:4 (New International Reader's Version)** teaches us a very important command when it comes to forgiveness: ***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.*** So, you can't hold on to it. That's what Satan wants you to do. That's why you must follow Paul's warnings in **EPHESIANS 6**.

The ultimate expression of forgiveness is The Cross of Christ. It's also the perfect example of how we should forgive. Look at **COL 3:13 (New International Reader's Version): *Put up with one another. Forgive one another if you are holding something against someone. Forgive, just as the Lord forgave you.*** This idea is also taught in **EPH 4:31-32 (The Message Bible): *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.*** Forgiveness is God's invention for coming to terms with a world in which, despite their best intentions, people are unfair to each other and hurt each other deeply. He began by forgiving us. And He invites us all to forgive each other.

Forgiveness comes out of love: a love for God and a love for others. Only out of love, will we see the goodness of other people and value our relationships with them. Forgiveness will preserve these relationships. But without a relationship with God, we'll never know true forgiveness. If we don't take heed of the warning to be on the alert of Satan's schemes, we will never become accustomed to forgiving others. His ways totally preclude the ability to forgive others. And this is because there is no love for others in the cosmic system. There's only love for self.

Without love for one another, forgiveness cannot exist. Without forgiveness, relationships are worthless and a waste of time. They become something to be manipulated in order to achieve our own selfish desires. Because of the Christian's love for God, we naturally seek out a relationship with Him and desire to remove any obstacle in its way. Since God is always right, any conflict with Him requires us to confess our sins to Him in order to receive His forgiveness and cleansing: ***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. (1 JOH 1:9 New American Standard Bible)***

God grants forgiveness because of His love for us. He proved His Love for us when He paid the price needed to satisfy His Justice so that we could be forgiven and adopted as His sons. That's why God the Son became a man, lived a sinless life, then willingly died on The Cross as a substitute payment for our sins. His Resurrection from the dead stands as the acceptance of The Sacrifice and The Truth of His Promises to provide forgiveness to those who believe in Him.

The reason forgiveness is so important is that everybody is a sinner. There's no argument there. Sinning comes from arrogance – the opposite of humility. Forgiveness requires humility. The Lord Jesus Christ addressed this in **MATT 7:1-5 (The Message Bible)**: *Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults—unless, of course, you want the same treatment. That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging. It's easy to see a smudge on your neighbor's face and be oblivious to the ugly sneer on your own. Do you have the nerve to say, 'Let me wash your face for you,' when your own face is distorted by contempt? It's this whole traveling road-show mentality all over again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face, and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbor.* (What a translation!!) Paul expands on this 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.* Humility allows for more give-and-take between people in the quest to find a resolution to the conflict that will glorify Our Lord. Christians are to walk in humility and be willing to forgive.

{to be continued}