

4. Understanding How Christian Leaders Can Become Led by Love

In our last two topics, we have looked at the fact that leaders who are not Christians and even many Christian leaders are driven by fear. We saw that when a person is driven by fear that it is very easy for a root of bitterness or a root of the love of money to take control of their lives. Today, we are going to learn how Christian leaders can become led by love. This will make it possible for them to lead others in love rather than drive them.

We mentioned that there are four roots mentioned in the New Testament. The two negative ones are mentioned in the previous paragraph. The two positive roots are keys to helping spiritual leaders become led by love. The first of these roots is mentioned in Colossians 2:6-7. Those verses tell us, “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.” Here, we see that we are to be rooted in Christ. As we focus on growing in Christ, we will learn to:

- ◆ Take deep root in Christ
- ◆ Walk in Christ
- ◆ Be built up in Christ
- ◆ Be established in the faith
- ◆ Be abounding in the faith
- ◆ Be filled with thanksgiving

First, we will learn to take deep root in Christ. In Psalm 1:1-3, we read, “Blessed *is* the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.” In these verses, we see that a basic requirement for taking deep root in the love of Christ is delighting in the Word of God and learning to meditate on the Word day and night.

Second, we learn to take root in Christ by learning to walk in Him. Walk speaks of our daily actions throughout the day. To walk with Christ means to grow in our understanding of the fact that Christ is walking with us wherever we go and is with us in whatever we do. Needless to say, if we are walking in Christ we will want to go the places He would go and do the things that He would do. As we consciously think of the fact that Christ is walking with us, it will probably cause us to change some of the places that we decide to go and also cause us to change some of the things that we do.

Third, we see that we learn to be built up or built upon Christ. Here, we see the foundation for building our lives. Matthew 7:24-25 says, “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.” Here, we see that there are two requirements to be built up in Christ. First, we choose to hear what Christ tells us. Second, we choose to obey what Christ tells us to do. We will

not be built upon Christ unless we are making it the practice of our lives to be obedient to what Christ tells us to do.

Fourth, we are to be established in the faith. To be “established in the faith” means *to be made firm in the faith*. This happens as we become familiar with the whole Word of God. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” The Word of God brings us to spiritual maturity and equips us for every good work.

Fifth, we are to be abounding in the faith. The word “abounding” means *to be filled to overflowing* so that we excel in our faith. As we make it our goal to excel in our faith, we will develop the spiritual maturity needed for spiritual leadership. After Paul and Barnabas made many disciples, in Acts 14:21, we see what they did to prepare spiritual leaders for the churches. Acts 14:22 tells us that they were, “...strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’” As a result of this strengthening ministry, to help them abound in the faith, verse 23 tells us that they had developed a team of spiritual men to lead every church. Acts 14:23 says, “So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

Sixth, we see that we are to be filled with thanksgiving. One of the basic evidences of the fact that we are being led by love is the fact that we have developed a thankful heart. Colossians 3:16-17 says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And *whatever* you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” A healthy spiritual leader is a thankful spiritual leader.

Ephesians 3:17-19 gives us a second positive root. Those verses say, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” Here, we see that we are to be rooted and grounded in love. In addition to taking root in Christ, we are also to take root in His love. As we have mentioned, ever since Adam, people have been controlled by fear. Now, we see that, as Christians, we are to learn to take root in love.

In 1 John 4:18-19, we read, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.” The deeper our roots go into the love of Christ, the less fear we will have. Many Christian leaders are still controlled by fear, because they have never learned to take root in the love of Christ. This is often the result of never having a spiritual parent who was led by love.

Christ said, in John 13:34-35, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples,

if you have love for one another.” Christ gave the command to the disciples to love one another in the same way that Christ had loved them. That command only came after the disciples had observed for more than three years how much Christ loved them. Christ had been a spiritual parent to them and led them by love. Now, He was commanding them to follow His example.

In the same way, today, before people become Christians, they are driven by fear. They will continue to be driven by fear until someone becomes a spiritual parent to them and leads them by love. That is why Paul said, in 1 Corinthians 4:15-16, “For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do not have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me.” Paul knew that the only way the Corinthians were going to learn to be led by love was to imitate someone who was being led by love. The Corinthians had large numbers of people telling them what to do (driving them), but they lacked spiritual parents who would lead them by love.

Today, our world has become much like the city of Corinth. There are people everywhere who want to tell others what to do, but there are very few who are willing to invest large amounts of time in others to show them how to be led by love. If we are going to be effective spiritual leaders, we must choose to invest our lives in a few people, so they can see a living example of someone who leads by love. As we follow the example of Christ, and take the time to invest our lives in the lives of a few others, they will grow and mature spiritually and will begin to invest their lives in a few more. As this happens, there will be a growing number of disciples who are led by love.

Paul explained how the love of Christ motivated him. In 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, we read, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” Paul said that the love of Christ was what motivated him. As a result, he had made the choice to live for Christ instead of for himself. The result of choosing to live for Christ, instead of self, meant that he chose to invest his life in the lives of others and lead them with love.

In 1 John 4:10-12, we read, “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.” In these verses, we see several key lessons. We see that:

- we learn to take root in love as our response to the love of Christ for us
- we are to love others in the same way that God has loved us
- we show others the love of God because no one has seen God
- we have God’s love perfected in us as we abide in Him and love one another

The Lord has given us a great privilege to be His servants and lead others by love so that they can see the love of Christ working in us and flowing through us. If we lead others with the love of Christ, they will learn by example to do the same. They will become leaders who are led by love instead of leaders who are driven by fear. May the Lord richly bless you as help others become leaders who are led by love.

