

## 5. Developing Leaders Who Are Learning to Yield to the Spirit

In our last topic, we talked about the fact that developing Christian leaders need to be shown how to be led by love instead of driven by fear. One of the keys to becoming led by love is learning to yield to the Holy Spirit. Once a person becomes a Christian, that person now has a choice. He or she is no longer a slave to sin. Instead, every Christian is now free to make wise choices.

In Romans 6:13, we read, “And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.” Here, we see that every Christian has the choice to present himself to sin or present himself to God. We are told to stop making the choice to present ourselves to sin. Instead, we are urged to make a decisive choice to yield ourselves to God. The word “present” has the thought to make this happen in your life.

The question that many Christians ask is, “How can I make this happen in my life?” Many Christians would use Romans 7:14-25 to describe their lives. In those verses, we have “I”, “me”, “my”, and “myself” used about thirty-seven times. We see that it talks about Christians who have a desire to do what God says but do not seem to have the power to obey what God says. This thought is summarized in Romans 7:19. That verse says, “For the good that I will *to do*, I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do*, that I practice.” Here, we see that many Christians want to do good but feel they cannot do good. They do not want to do evil, but they find themselves continually doing evil.

One of the very interesting things to notice is that the Holy Spirit is only mentioned four times in the first seven chapters of Romans. As a result, Romans 7:24 tells how many Christians feel, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” In contrast, the Holy Spirit is mentioned nineteen times in Romans 8. That chapter concludes in Romans 8:37-39, “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

When Christians and Christian leaders depend on their own strength, they will act out of fear and experience the same feelings we have mentioned in Romans 7. In contrast, when they yield to the Holy Spirit, walk in the Spirit and are led by the Spirit, they experience the fact that we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. That is why this topic, and the next few topics, are so important to every Christian, especially to those Christians who are becoming spiritual leaders.

This brings us to the question, “How do we yield to the Holy Spirit?” Romans 6:16 says, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?” Many times, every day, we face choices. Someone says something that hurts, and we have a choice about the way we will respond. We are tempted to sin, and we have a choice as to whether we will choose to sin or choose to obey God. When we depend on our own strength, we will act out of fear. As

Romans 7 tells us, we will usually fail when we depend on our own strength.

In contrast, each time we face one of these choices, we can pray and ask the Lord to give us His strength to obey Him. When we pray, “Lord, I don’t have the strength to obey, give me Your strength to obey”, we are yielding to Him. As we yield to the Lord, the Holy Spirit gives us His strength to obey. Many days, we face five hundred or more choices. With each choice, we need to ask the same question that Saul asked on the road to Damascus in Acts 9:6, “Lord, what do you want me to do?” When we ask the Lord that question, He will guide us by helping us to remember what we have learned from His Word. Then, we need to pray, “Lord give me Your strength to obey what you tell me to do.”

The Lord has promised to supply us with the power that we need, as we ask Him for His strength. In Luke 24:49, Christ told the disciples, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” Then, Christ’s final words spoken on this earth are given to us in Acts 1:8. That verse says, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” In both verses, we see that the Holy Spirit is the one that gives us the power to do what is right.

Before we became Christians, we had no desire to change most of the time, so we did not even think about the need for power to change. Once we became Christians, we had a desire to change; but, when we depended on our own strength, we found that we had no power to change. However, each time we yield to Christ and ask Him to give us His strength, the Holy Spirit gives us the power to act in obedience to Christ. As we help developing leaders in their spiritual growth, this is a key thing we want to help them understand and learn to apply throughout the day.

When we present or yield ourselves to Christ, we are placing ourselves at His disposal and asking Him to work in us and through us. In fact, Romans 12 gives us a very interesting progression. Verse one says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.” In this verse, we see that we are to present our bodies to Christ.

Romans 12:2 says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” This verse tells us that we are no longer to think and act the way that the world thinks and acts. We see that once we have presented our bodies to Christ, we can also experience the transforming of our lives by the renewing of our minds. That transformation happens as we hear, read, study, memorize, and meditate on the Word of God so that we begin to think and view things from God’s viewpoint, instead of the world’s viewpoint. This helps us to know the will of God.

Then, in Romans 12:3, we read, “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.” Here, we see that as we grow spiritually through the transformation of our minds, we will learn to think humbly, because we realize that all we have

has been given to us by God. This makes it possible for us to exercise sound judgment, because we realize that we can do nothing in our own strength.

Romans 12:4-8 goes on to point out the fact that we have each been given exactly what we need to carry out the ministry the Lord has designed for us. We want to help developing leaders understand that God has given them a unique SHAPE to carry out the particular ministries He has prepared for each individual Christian to help the whole body of Christ function properly. The word SHAPE stands for:

S - spiritual gifts

H - heart or passion for particular ministries

A - abilities

P - personality

E - experiences in life

If developing spiritual leaders depend on their own strength to do the work of God, in John 15:5 Christ said, “Without Me you can do nothing.” As developing leaders learn to yield to the Lord moment-by-moment, the Lord is able to work in them and through them to carry out the ministry the Lord has for each one. As a result, Ephesians 3:20-21 says, “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” In these verses, we see that when we place ourselves at the disposal of Christ and serve in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord will do:

- ◆ exceedingly
- ◆ abundantly
- ◆ above all
- ◆ we can ask
- ◆ or even imagine
- ◆ because His power is working in us
- ◆ and we are to give Him all of the glory.

The privilege of helping developing spiritual leaders grow and develop is a great privilege. The Lord will work in their lives and through their lives more than they can ever imagine as they learn to yield to the Holy Spirit moment-by-moment. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing spiritual leaders learn to yield to the Holy Spirit so that they are acting in the power of the Spirit, instead of their own strength.