

8. Developing Leaders Who Are Learning to Be Led by the Spirit

In our last three topics, we have been talking about developing leaders who are learning to yield to the Spirit and walk in the Spirit. Today, we will be discussing how we help developing leaders learn to be led by the Spirit. In Galatians 5:18, we read, “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” Our purpose is to help developing leaders learn to be led by the Spirit.

In this verse, we see that we are not under the law if we are led by the Spirit. The reverse of this is also true. If we are trying to lead under the law, we will not be led by the Spirit. In order to help developing spiritual leaders understand this fully, we need to help them learn the purpose of the law. Galatians 3:24-25 says, “Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

The word that is translated “tutor” is only used three times in the New Testament. Two of those times are in these two verses. The third time is in 1 Corinthians 4:15-16, where we read: “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.” In these verses, we see that the word is translated “instructor”.

Among the Greeks, a tutor or instructor was a slave who was responsible to care for a child until that child became an adult. The instructor would often exercise severe discipline in the care of that child. As a result, the child was eager for the day when he would no longer be under the tutor. We see that, in Corinth, the church had many leaders who were acting as tutors rather than as spiritual parents. Paul points out that a true spiritual leader is to lead people by example rather than drive them with rules and severe discipline. That is why it is so important that developing leaders learn to be led by the Spirit.

If spiritual leaders are led by the Spirit, they will lead others in love and provide an example to imitate. If spiritual leaders only act as tutors, they will drive people with rules. We can see that this is what had happened in the church at Corinth. 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 show us what happens when spiritual leaders act as tutors. Those verses say, “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it*, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere* men?” This is why it is so important to help developing spiritual leaders learn to be led by the Spirit.

In Luke 4:1, we read, “Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.” In this verse, we see two things about Christ:

- ◆ First, He was filled with the Holy Spirit
- ◆ Second, He was led by the Spirit

There is a direct connection between the two. In order to be led by the Spirit, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 5:18, we read, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is

dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” The word that is translated “be filled” in Ephesians 5:18 is a command to keep on being filled with the Spirit so that it is a habit or a lifestyle. In Luke 4:1, it has the thought of something that was continually happening. In Ephesians 3:19, we see that Paul prayed that Christians would, “...know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with all the fullness of God. That is what we need if we are going to be led by the Spirit. Since Paul prayed that all Christians would be filled with all the fullness of God, we see that the Lord wants all of us to be filled with all the fullness of God as a lifestyle so that we are being led by the Spirit on a continuing basis. We have mentioned in earlier topics that we are either driven by fear or led by love.

In Ephesians 3:16-19, Paul prayed for all Christians, “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 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.” In this prayer, we see that Paul prayed for five things:

- that we would be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man
- that Christ would dwell in our hearts through faith
- that we would be rooted and grounded in love
- that we would 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 we would be filled with all the fullness of God

Here, we see five things that will make it possible for us to be led by the Spirit. First, we need to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man. To be strengthened with might by the Holy Spirit in the inner man means that we are yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit so that it is His power working in us rather than our own power. When we depend on our own strength, we will act out of fear. As we yield to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit gives His strength to our human spirit and we are able to be led and act in the power of the Spirit.

Second, we see that as Christ dwells in our hearts through faith that we can be led by the Spirit. In Colossians 2:9-10, we read, “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.” Christ has all the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him. Passages like 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and Ephesians 4:15-16 tell us that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit and Christ is the head of the body. As we allow Christ to dwell in our hearts by faith, He will lead us, because He is the head and we are the body.

Third, we see that we are to be rooted and grounded in love. As we take root in Christ and His love, this makes it possible for us to be led by love instead of being driven by fear. In fact, the love of Christ both leads us and motivates us. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “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.” As we grow in our understanding of the love of Christ, our desire is to be led by Christ through the Spirit, because we know that He will both lead us and motivate us.

Fourth, we see that the more we comprehend the four dimensions of the love of Christ, the more we are led by the Spirit. Normally a person can only see something in three dimensions – width, length, and height. However, Ephesians 3:18 adds the dimension of depth. If we compare this to a tree, we see the three dimensions of the tree that are above the ground but we do not see the roots that are below the ground. A healthy tree will often have roots that spread as far below the ground as the tree spreads above the ground. As we grow in Christ, we are actually taking deeper root in the love of Christ. The greater our understanding of His love, the greater our capacity for His leading in our lives.

Fifth, we see that we can be filled with all the fullness of God. That is what makes it possible to say as Christ said, in Matthew 26:39, “Not as I will, but as You *will*.” We will be led by the Spirit, because He will be leading us to do the will of the Father, just as Christ chose to do the will of the Father. If we are led by the Spirit to do the will of God, the Spirit will also give us His power to carry out the will of the Father.

From this prayer, in Ephesians 3:16-19, we see that being led by the Spirit involves the ministries of the whole Godhead. The Holy Spirit gives us His strength and power. Christ helps us to be led, and act, in love. The Father guides us to carry out His will in the world. As a result, we can say in the words of Romans 8:31, “If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?”

This prayer, in Ephesians 3:14-21, also gives us an example of how to pray for developing leaders, so that they will be led by the Holy Spirit. I have found that it is helpful to quote these verses every day before I begin to pray for others, especially those who are developing leaders. In that way, I am reminded of how Paul prayed for other Christians and I can use specific things from this prayer as I pray for the spiritual growth of developing leaders. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to be led by the Spirit rather than driven by their fears.