

9. Developing Leaders Who Are Bearing the Fruit of the Spirit

In the last several topics, we have seen that the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives is the key to being led by love rather than driven by fear. Today, we will see that as we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us that our lives will bear the fruit of the Spirit. Just as an apple tree will bear apples, and a banana tree will bear bananas, a Spirit-led Christian will bear the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

As we yield to the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and are led by the Spirit, the Holy Spirit is working in our lives to produce the nine attitudes known as the fruit of the Spirit. First, we see that the Holy Spirit causes the Christian who is walking in the Spirit to grow in love. This is the kind of love Christ commands us to have in the new commandment. John 13:34-35 says, “...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.”

At any time we are yielding to the Spirit, our lives will demonstrate the love of Christ, because it is His Spirit that is working in us and through us. During the times we depend on our own strength, we will act out of fear as Peter did in Galatians 2:11-14. “Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before *them* all, ‘If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?’”

Joy is also an attitude resulting from yielding to the Spirit. James 1:2-3 says, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” Anyone can be happy when things are going well. That is because happiness is based on what is going on around us. In contrast, joy is based on what is happening within us. It is the result of yielding to the Spirit, even in trials, and asking the Holy Spirit to give us His joy. Paul and Silas demonstrated this in jail at Philippi. Acts 16:23-25 says, “And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.”

Peace is the third attitude resulting from yielding to the Spirit. We have three choices every time we face a problem. We can turn things out and get angry. We can turn things in and get worried or hurt. Those are the two natural responses. The third response is to turn things over to the Lord. That is the supernatural response. When we turn the problem over to the Lord, the result is peace. Philippians 4:6-7 says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” God gives us His peace

as we turn things over to Him.

Longsuffering or patience is the fourth attitude resulting from yielding to the Spirit. The Lord showed the meaning of longsuffering in His treatment of Paul. In 1 Timothy 1:15-16, we read, “This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.” God chose to show his longsuffering to Paul, even though verse 13 says that Paul was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man. Christ gives us His longsuffering toward those who might persecute us. As we yield to the Spirit, He gives us strength to endure pain, injury, or irritation from those who are rejecting Him.

Kindness or gentleness is the fifth attitude resulting from yielding to the Spirit. As we yield to the Spirit, He gives us the desire to treat others with kindness or gentleness because of the fact that the Lord has treated us with kindness. 2 Timothy 2:24-26 says, “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.” Here, we see that the Lord will use our kindness to help others escape from the snare of the devil.

Goodness is the sixth attitude resulting from yielding to the Spirit. Romans 15:14 says, “Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.” In this verse, we see that the Christians in Rome were full of goodness. The word that is translated “goodness” means *uprightness of heart and life*. Like each of the other attitudes, we see that it talks of inward attitudes that produce actions that minister to others. This is why it is so important for developing leaders to walk in the Spirit and be led by the Spirit. Attitudes that are the result of walking in the Spirit will always lead a person to minister to others.

Faithfulness is the seventh attitude resulting from yielding to the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 4:2, we read, “Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” A Christian who is walking in the Spirit will demonstrate godly character and will be a person that can be relied upon. Because their trust is in the Lord, others will also be able to trust them. This reminds us again that we become like those with whom we spend time. If we spend much time in fellowship with the Lord, we will become more like Him.

Gentleness or meekness is the eighth attitude resulting from walking in the Spirit. An attitude of gentleness or meekness is an attitude of humbleness that causes a person to submit to the will of God. A Christian with this attitude will also show real consideration for others. Ephesians 4:2-3 says that a worthy walk is, “...with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” A person who is walking in meekness will also have a teachable spirit. James 1:21 says, “Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word,

which is able to save your souls.”

Self-control is the ninth attitude that will be present in the Christian who is walking in the Spirit and yielding to the Spirit. Self-control speaks of one who has learned to control his desires and passions. Paul gives us a good summary of self-control, in 1 Corinthians 9:25-27. Those verses tell us, “And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown*. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” Paul chose not to do certain things because he was looking forward to the reward that comes from the Lord.

As we look at the fruit of the Spirit, we see that the Lord is changing the inner attitudes of the person who is yielding to the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, and being led by the Spirit. Romans 8:4 tells us, “That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” This verse tells us that a Christian who is controlled by the Spirit does not need any other law because he or she is led by internal character rather than external laws. This is a key for any spiritual leader who wants to be an effective spiritual leader. That is why it is so important that we help developing spiritual leaders learn the importance of walking in the Spirit.

We will develop leaders who are bearing the fruit of the Spirit if we focus on the development of godly character and dependence upon the Holy Spirit. That is why most of the qualifications for spiritual leadership focus on character and not knowledge or skills. We do want to help developing leaders develop knowledge and skills. However, the first priority must be the development of godly character. That will only happen as developing leaders learn to be led by the Spirit.

Today, we see that many Christians have not been shown how to walk in the Spirit, be led by the Spirit, and yield to the Spirit. For some, this is due to the fact that in the churches where they attend, the whole emphasis has been on spectacular manifestations of the Spirit rather than learning to be led by the Spirit. As a result, others have responded by almost totally ignoring the Holy Spirit. The result is almost like the statement of the disciples of John the Baptist in Acts 19:3, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” Both those who focus on spectacular manifestations, and those who ignore the Holy Spirit, never learn how to walk in the Spirit and be led by the Spirit.

We help developing leaders understand how the Holy Spirit works in our lives as we provide an example of depending on the Spirit in our own lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to walk in the Spirit, be led by the Spirit and learn to yield to the Spirit so that their lives bear the fruit of the Spirit.