

17. Learning to Bear the Fruit of the Spirit

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn the true purpose of liberty. We saw that true liberty gives us the opportunity to do good to all. We also saw that the Holy Spirit gives us the power to carry out those things that are good as we yield to Him. In this topic, we are going to learn the results that the Lord will produce in our lives and the lives of our children as we yield to the Holy Spirit and give Him the opportunity to work through our lives.

Galatians 5:17 helps us to understand that it is not the natural response for a person to produce the fruit of the Spirit through their own efforts. Instead, it is the other way around. The Holy Spirit bears fruit in our lives as we learn to yield to Him. Galatians 5:17 says, “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.” The natural response produces the works of the flesh. In contrast, as we make the supernatural response and yield our lives to the Holy Spirit, He will cause our lives to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

In Galatians 5:16, we read, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” Then, Galatians 5:18 says, “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” In these two verses, we see some key things that we want to help our children understand. As they learn to walk in the Spirit, God says that they will not satisfy the evil desires of the flesh. This is due to the fact that those who are led by the Holy Spirit are no longer under the law. Here, we see that the Lord describes two things that go together in our relationship to the Holy Spirit as we walk in the Spirit and are led by the Spirit.

To be led requires that there be a leader and a follower. Here, we see that the Holy Spirit is to be the leader and we are to learn to be the follower. Only as we learn this lesson for our own lives will we be able to show our children what it means to be led by the Spirit. Children often play the game of “Follow the leader.” As they play that game, one of the children is the leader and the others all follow that child and do what that child does. In the same way, we are to follow the Holy Spirit and do what He would have us to do and say what He would have us to say.

Romans 8:2-4 says, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 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.” Christ set us free from the law. That law is called the law of sin and death. It is called the law of sin because any law only has an impact when someone has disobeyed or broken that law. That is why Christ set us free from the law.

The law was weak because it could only condemn. In contrast, God sent Christ who perfectly obeyed the law. He also sent Christ as a man. As a man who was perfect and without sin, Christ was able to condemn sin in the flesh. That action by Christ meant that Christ fulfilled all of the requirements of the law for us and defeated sin and the penalty of sin. As a result, Christ made it

possible for us to walk according to the Spirit. This made it possible for us to have true Christian liberty. As a result, that made it possible for to walk according to the Spirit instead of continuing to walk according to the flesh as we did before we placed our faith in Christ.

The result of what Christ did makes it possible for us to be led by the Spirit because we are no longer under the law. As we yield to the Spirit, He gives us the power to avoid the works of the flesh mentioned in Galatians 5:19-21. Those verses say, “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” We did practice some of these things before we placed our faith in Christ. Once we placed our faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit began giving us the power to avoid these works of the flesh as we learned to yield our lives to the Spirit. As a result, we no longer practice the works of the flesh in our lives.

Instead, our lives begin to 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.” This is best understood if we understand what it means to bear fruit. Christ explained this principle in John 15. In John 15:4-5, we read, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” In verse one, Christ said He is the vine and we are the branches.

In these verses, we see that a branch cannot produce fruit by itself. The branch can only bear what the root produces. John 15:6 says, “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned.” Here, we see that when a branch tries to separate itself from the vine and produce fruit by itself, the branch withers and no fruit is produced. In fact, such branches are cast into the fire and burned. In the same way, if we depend on our own strength, we will not bear any fruit because without Christ we can do nothing.

The root determines the fruit. A bad root bears bad fruit. A good root bears good fruit. Since Christ is a good root, we will bear good fruit as we abide in Christ. John 15:7-8 says, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” Here, we see that as we abide in Christ and have His Word in our thoughts and hearts, the Lord will cause our lives to bear much fruit.

In Romans 15:26-28, we see that the fruit of a Christian is the result of our ministry for Christ. Those verses say, “For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things. Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this

fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain.” Here, we see that the fruit that we bear as Christians is the fruit of the ministry that the Lord has given us. In addition, God will also cause our lives to bear the fruit of the Spirit. As 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.” Here, we see that the fruit of the Spirit is the inner attitudes that the Holy Spirit produces in our lives as we yield our lives to the Holy Spirit moment by moment.

Galatians 5:24 tells us, “And those *who are* Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” Paul used the word “crucified” earlier in this book to the Galatians. Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” In chapter two, we see that Paul made the choice to yield to Christ as a pattern of life rather than try to be in control himself. Here, in chapter five, we see that if we make that same choice to yield to Christ as a pattern of life, He will work in our lives and through our lives.

That is why Galatians 5:25 says, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Christ put the Holy Spirit in our lives at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ. At that moment, we were made alive. Ephesians 2:1-6 says, “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.” We were given spiritual life and an eternal inheritance in Christ through the Spirit, which makes it possible for us to live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit.

However, it does not allow us to boast because this has all happened in our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. That is why Galatians 5:26 says, “Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that the changes that have happened in our lives have nothing to do with our own strength. Instead, these changes have happened as we make the choice moment by moment to yield to the Spirit and let His power work in our lives. If we allow pride or conceit to come into our lives, that conceit will cause us to either challenge one another or envy one another. Such attitudes do not cause anyone to bear the fruit of the Spirit. That is why we want to show our physical and spiritual children by our example the blessings of yielding to the Spirit so that our lives bear the fruit of the Spirit. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children by your example how their lives will bear the fruit of the Spirit.