

# Led By The Spirit

**Introduction.** We have had the opportunity to investigate being led by the flesh and now we turn our attention to being led by the Spirit. To prevent turning our freedom in Christ into opportunities for the lust of the flesh, we need to “walk in the Spirit.” However, people have long misunderstood what the Bible talks about regarding being led by the Spirit. This misunderstanding is reflected in one way by people wallowing on the floor in religious services and in another way by people being led in some mystical, abstract, and mysterious way in all matters of life. Every emotional impulse is interpreted to be the leading of the Spirit.

In this lesson, we are going to examine the fruit of the Spirit. We are going to look at being led by the Spirit and define the fruit of the Spirit. In the same way the repulsiveness of the works of the flesh would deter the Galatians from yielding to them, it is our hope that the attractiveness of the fruit of the Spirit will influence you to yield yourself to the Spirit if you will listen with a discerning heart and respond at the end of the lesson in the way God wishes.

## ***I. What Does It Mean To Be “Led By The Spirit?”***

- A. Jesus promised His apostles that the Holy Spirit would come and guide them into all truth (John 14:16; 16:13). The apostles, led by the Spirit, preached and wrote concerning the gospel (2 Peter 1:20-21) and it was written and recorded for our learning (Ephesians 3:1-3).
- B. Once this revelation from God was written and recorded, anyone who follows it is led by the Spirit in everything in which the Spirit gives instruction and in the way man needs guidance. There is no need for the Holy Spirit to keep on telling us what we need, for it has been once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).
- C. Therefore, being led by the Spirit is to be led by the New Testament or the word of God. It is impossible to separate the Holy Spirit from the word of God which He delivered. To try to make that separation puts one adrift from the only promise of hope revealed to man.
- D. This revelation of the Spirit not only tells us what we need to know to become sons of God, but also leads us into all the truth that man needs relative to morality, worship, service, and every facet of life (John 16:13).

## ***II. The Fruit Of The Spirit***

- A. The fruit of the Spirit means that they are produced because of the Spirit’s influence on the heart. Unlike works, which are the products of man’s own lusts and desires, fruit in this passage means that it is a natural product of the Spirit. Fruit is not only a mature product but it is also a useful product.
- B. The use of the word “fruit” in the singular is very interesting. Many times we say “fruits” in the plural but it is actually singular. This form stresses that they are a unity, like a cluster of grapes instead of separate pieces of fruit, and also that they are all to be found in every Christian. Fruit is a sign of health; fruit of the Spirit is a great sign of spiritual health.
- C. The fruit of the Spirit:
  1. Love.

- a) It is appropriate that love heads the list because the greatest of these is love (1 Corinthians 13:13). It is the end result of Peter's list of Christian virtues (2 Peter 1:5-7).
  - b) This is the kind of love that seeks nothing but the highest good, regardless of insult, injury, or humiliation. It is therefore a feeling of the mind as much as of the heart; it concerns the will as much as the emotions. It describes a deliberate effort, which we can make only with the help of God, never to seek anything but the best even for those who seek the worst for us. Paul breaks down love into its component parts in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.
2. Joy.
- a) This is not a joy which comes from earthly things, but a joy which comes from being right with God (Romans 5:2; 14:17).
  - b) This may at first appear to be like happiness, but happiness depends on circumstances whereas joy does not. The Christian will be full of joy, even if it is in the midst of tears (1 Peter 1:6-9).
3. Peace.
- a) This peace comes from being right with God (Romans 5:1). Above all, peace is God's gift to man, achieved by Him at the cross of Christ. This peace not only exists in the mind of the Christian (Philippians 4:6-7) but also between all Christians.
  - b) It stands in great contrast to the works of the flesh which are divisive. This word is used 80 times in the New Testament and is used in every book.
4. Longsuffering.
- a) This is the quality of putting up with others, even when one is severely tried. The importance of patience is evidenced by its being most often used of the character of God toward men (Joel 2:13; Romans 2:4; 1 Timothy 1:16).
  - b) If God had been a man, He would have wiped out this world long ago; but He has that patience which bears with all our sinning and will not cast us off. In our dealings with our fellow men we must reproduce this loving, forbearing, forgiving, patient attitude of God toward ourselves. We should never be overbearing or argumentative.
5. Gentleness.
- a) This is a lovely word which is similar to goodness. It is the kindness out of which God acts toward men. It means a kind and mellow disposition toward your fellow man.
  - b) The same word is used of Christ's yoke in Matthew 11:30 which means mellow or that which does not chafe. A Christian does not have a harsh temperament. Harshness makes you lash out and makes you unpleasant to be around. A Christian will display a mildness of temper, calmness of spirit, and a disposition to treat everyone with kindness and politeness (Matthew 7:12).
6. Goodness.
- a) This word is a more active term than kindness and is often directed toward that which does not merit the action. Goodness might, and could, rebuke and discipline; gentleness can only help.

- b) Jesus showed goodness when He cleansed the Temple, but He showed kindness to the woman who anointed His feet. We have to stand for truth, even though people claim it is negative preaching (2 Timothy 1:13). Goodness can be kind and strong.
7. Faith.
    - a) This fruit means one who is trustworthy or reliable. It does not mean the feelings which we have toward God, but rather the feelings we have toward men.
    - b) The gospel in the heart makes a man faithful or full of fidelity. The Christian will be faithful to his word and promises; faithful as a neighbor, parent, friend, and spouse.
  8. Meekness.
    - a) Aristotle defined a gentle person as one who is so much in control that they are always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time. It is described as a virtue for meeting opposition to the truth (2 Timothy 2:24-25; 1 Peter 3:15-16).
    - b) The best description is given from the use of the word to denote an animal that has been tamed and brought under control (Ephesians 4:29). Therefore, the gentle Christian is submissive to the will of God, teachable, and considerate.
  9. Temperance.
    - a) This word means self-mastery. It is the spirit which has mastered its desires and its love of pleasures. It is used of the athlete's discipline of his body (1 Corinthians 9:25) and of the Christian's mastery of sexual desires (1 Corinthians 7:9).
    - b) A Christian must have self-control. This is the quality which lets a Christian live and walk in the world, yet keep his garments clean. Christians must be able to restrain themselves in the face of temptations.

### **III. The Rewards Of Following The Spirit**

- A. There is no such law against these attributes; the law does not denounce them. The law was given to restrain evil; but these qualities do not need to be restrained (1 Timothy 1:9). Hence, no law opposes them. The law cannot be against people who live like this because they are fulfilling all the law requires.
- B. This the person who is truly free. They are free from the condemning sentence of the law and free in the service of God. Being freed from sin, we are able to focus our thoughts and energies on the reward which is to come (Romans 6:22-23).
- C. We also crucify the works of the flesh. This does not mean that we escape the need to ever struggle against these sins. It simply means that victory is possible through our walk in the Spirit; that is, according to God's word. These sins no longer have dominion over the Christian (Galatians 2:20).
- D. The use of the crucifixion sheds light on the figure of speech. Even though the fleshly lusts are crucified, their desire lingers just as life lingers in a criminal who has been nailed to a cross. Putting away the works of the flesh is a final decisive act of will, but we have to be careful because those temptations will remain.

**Conclusion.** Galatians 5:24 has a very strong sense of repentance. Maybe you are here and want to see these qualities developing in your life. Only the gospel can give you this power (Romans 1:16). It has the power to save you and it has the power to allow you to crucify the works of the flesh and start producing the fruit of the Spirit. If you have never obeyed Jesus Christ as your Savior, we are going to give you that opportunity.

Maybe you are a Christian who has, because of temptation and weakness, fallen back into committing these works of the flesh. Your life may have ceased to bear this fruit. If you have sin in your life and wish to make it right with God, please let us know. Our goal in every case is to help those who wish to be led by the Spirit and have a home in Heaven.