

Led By the Spirit

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The title of my message today is:

Led By the Spirit

In preparing for the sermon—of course you get on the internet and start searching—I read a ton of stuff about the Holy Spirit. What I realized was that the Holy Spirit is largely misunderstood. You have some people who think it's a third person in the trinity. We know better than that. But what is the Holy Spirit? The Evangelicals think that it's the Holy Spirit that causes them to babble in tongues or go into almost a seizure fit. They think that's what the Holy Spirit does. Non-evangelicals look at that and think that's crazy.

What's the truth? The Holy Spirit is obviously the Spirit of God and since it's the Spirit of God that's what makes it the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament the word is *ruach*—in the New Testament, the Greek word for spirit is *pneuma*. These words have essentially the same meaning in the Old Testament Hebrew and the Greek of the New Testament. When I have the same meanings, that's plural because each word has a long, long list of meanings. So, people can take one aspect of the Holy Spirit and they can say, here's what it is and does. Then there is a whole list of scriptures they can use to prove that that's what it does. Then you take another definition and there's a whole list of scriptures to show that in that context, that's what it does.

With all the different meanings, it's hard to nail it down. Let's look at the power of the Holy Spirit in Judges 15:14. This is one way the Holy Spirit was used. This is the story of Samson. We're not going to go deep into the story because we're just focusing on the Holy Spirit.

Judges 15:14 *When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him; and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands.*

15) He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it. (NKJV)

Can you imagine 1000 men? We look at the wars going on and the number of people getting killed and here you have one guy grabs a bone and kills 1000 men with it. Does that mean that Samson was led by God's Spirit? You can see from his life that he had a problem with women. He tried to marry outside of Israel, which was specifically against God's instructions. He visited prostitutes and didn't lead a very converted life. But God used Samson and God's Spirit was the source of Samson's abnormal strength. So God's Spirit was used many times in a different way than what we think of in the New

Testament, New Covenant time. Let's look at Exodus 35:30; this was another way God's Spirit was used.

Exodus 35:30 *And Moses said to the children of Israel, "See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; 31) and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship, 32) to design artistic works, to work in gold and silver and bronze, 33) in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of artistic workmanship. 34) "And He has put in his heart the ability to teach, in him and Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. 35) He has filled them with skill to do all manner of work of the engraver and the designer and the tapestry maker, in blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine linen, and of the weaver—those who do every work and those who design artistic works. (NKJV)*

In this sense, God used His Spirit to impart particular skills—you might say artistic skills, mechanical skills—to get the Tabernacle built. Sometimes these words, *pneuma* and *ruach* mean a certain attitude or emotion or a certain disposition. Like when Pharaoh had a dream and his spirit was troubled. The Hebrew word *ruach* is used 389 times in the Old Testament. The Greek word *pneuma* is used 385 times for a grand total of 766 mentions. Like I said, these have a wide variety of meanings.

The literal meaning of both words is "breath" or "wind". Trying to come up with a simple definition that covers everything, is like trying to catch the wind. Christ used a metaphor of wind in talking to Nicodemus. Let's look at John 3:1. I know you're familiar with these scriptures but it really is like trying to grasp the wind.

John 3:1 *There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2) This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." 3) Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4) Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5) Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6) that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7) Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8) The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." 9) Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?" (NKJV)*

Since we can't really nail down all the different meanings of *pneuma*, I want to focus on what Paul meant in his epistles to the churches. Paul was taught directly by Jesus Christ. So, the term, *led by the Spirit*, which is the title of the sermon, only appears two times in scripture. In Romans—we're going to go through the scriptures so I'm not going to give them to you now—it says:

As many as are led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God.

In Galatians it says:

If you are led by the spirit, you're not under the law.

The context of both of these is that being *led by the Spirit of God*, separates us from the rest of mankind and we are to think and act differently. The problem is our carnal nature. You don't have to turn there but we all know Jeremiah 17:9 says, *the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked*. That's our carnal mind. Turn to Ephesians 2:1.

Ephesians 2:1 *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2) 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, 3) 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.* (NKJV)

Paul is clear that this is where we started. This is what we were. We need help to change that and Christ is the one that provides the help. Let's turn to John 14 to some scriptures that are normally read around Passover time. Christ was talking to His disciples and encouraging them and preparing them for what was ahead—His crucifixion.

John 14:15 *"If you love Me, keep My commandments. 16) And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—(NKJV)*

We know that "he" is not a person and the "he" is really an "it". But in some languages you have to have either a feminine or masculine gender for words and that's what it is here. I'm just going to read the words instead of changing it to "it".

17) the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18) I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. 19) A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.

- 20) *At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.*
- 21) *He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”*
- 22) *Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”*
- 23) *Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*
- 24) *He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.*
- 25) *These things I have spoken to you while being present with you.*
- 26) *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*
- 27) *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (NKJV)*

That dialogue with Christ started with a big “if”. *If you love Me, keep My commandments.* We see a prerequisite for the Helper to come—we have to love Christ; we have to love the Father and demonstrate that by keeping His commandments. Let’s go to John 16:7; this is where Christ is elaborating on the Helper.

John 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.*

8) *And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

9) *of sin, because they do not believe in Me;*

10) *of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more;*

11) *of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*

12) *I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.*

13) *However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. (NKJV)*

One of the functions of the Holy Spirit is to guide us into all truth—if we’re willing to be led. But there are things we have to do and things we have to follow. We have a carnal nature that’s just rotten to the core. The only way that we can overcome our own nature is if we get some help. To get the help, there are certain things we have to stop doing and certain attributes that we have to adopt and certain things we have to start doing. These are all conditions. If we do our part, then Christ will give us all the help we need. Turn to Ephesians 1:15. Each one of these scriptures is going to add another layer of what the Holy Spirit and the conditions for the Holy Spirit to do that and how it works.

Ephesians 1:15 *Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,*

16) do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

17) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

18) the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

19) the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints ... (NKJV)

Here you see Paul praying and explaining that the source of our understanding comes from the Holy Spirit—the *spirit of wisdom and revelation*. We need more strength than we have on our own. Let's look at Ephesians 3:14-19.

Ephesians 3:14 *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

15) from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

16) that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, [it's where we get our strength]

17) that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

18) may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—

19) to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (NKJV)

We're seeing more and more of what the Holy Spirit does for us and what it gives us and how it gives it to us. Let's go to Ephesians 4:1-3, talking about the unity and peace which we don't see much of in the world.

Ephesians 4:1 *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,*

2) with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,

3) endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (NKJV)

We see there is a spirit of the world and there is Spirit of God and they are in conflict. We are going to read scripture after scripture that shows this conflict of the spirit of the world and the Spirit of God. What you have to see is that there is no middle ground; there's no half way between. It's one or the other, and if it's not one it's 100% the other. Let's look at verse 17.

17) *This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,*
18) *having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;*
19) *who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*
20) *But you have not so learned Christ,*
21) *if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:*
22) *that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,*
23) *and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,*
24) *and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. (NKJV)*

Paul is very consistent in all his epistles, whether he is talking to the Romans or Ephesians or Galatians or Colossians—the message is pretty much the same. He’s reminding us that in our previous state, we were doomed. We were dead and through God calling us, opening our eyes and giving us His Holy Spirit and training us in how to develop that more and more, Paul is setting a clear target of what we must do and what we must stop doing. You don’t get there all at once; it’s definitely a process. Let’s look at Ephesians 5:15.

Ephesians 5:15 *See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,*
16) *redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*
17) *Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*
18) *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,*
19) *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*
20) *giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,*
21) *submitting to one another in the fear of God. (NKJV)*

Very, very consistent message. Let’s go to Romans 12; I could tell you, on this subject, you could read the whole chapter. You could read all of Romans 6, Romans 8; it all really has to do with the subject.

Romans 12:1 *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.*
2) *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. (NKJV)*

Paul is putting a lot of emotion here. *I beseech you*—I beg you; I pray—he wants people to get it. There is a clear contrast between the spirit of the world and the Spirit of God. Drop down to verse 9.

9) *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil.* (NKJV)

Why would anyone need to tell you that—*abhor what is evil*—it's just common sense. This is a consistent message over and over again.

9 continued) ... *Cling to what is good.*

10) *Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;*

11) *not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;*

12) *rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;*

13) *distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.*

14) *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.*

15) *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*

16) *Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.*

17) *Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.*

18) *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*

19) *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*

20) *Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."*

21) *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.* (NKJV)

You have to wonder, what is wrong with these folks? Paul having to give such basic, commonsense stuff. We're going to talk a little about that. The spirit of the world and the Spirit of God are not compatible. It's like mixing hot water with cold water, it's neither hot nor cold. Now you just have lukewarm water. These don't mix at all. What we've seen so far is that:

The Spirit of God is the source of our understanding.

The Spirit of God is the source of our strength.

The Spirit of God is the source of peace and unity.

The Spirit of God gives us the power to transform.

In contrast, we've seen the spirit of the world leads to futility, darkened understanding, ignorance, blindness, lewdness, greediness, deceitful lust and being a slave to sin.

So, you wonder, "What is Paul dealing with? Why is he covering such basic things?" He's dealing with two major misunderstandings in the Gentile churches. One of those misunderstandings is called antinomianism. It's the teaching that Christians are under no obligation to obey laws of ethics or morality. The term comes from the Greek meaning "lawless". Antinomians rejected the very notion of obedience as legalistic and

hindering the work of the Holy Spirit. They think they literally have a license to sin. Antinomianism is still around.

On the other extreme, Paul was addressing the Judaizers who believe salvation is dependent on keeping Jewish rituals. Today, antinomianism is alive and well. Some believe teaching self-control, self-restraint, trying to keep God's laws, will prevent you from being saved. That you are hindering the Holy Spirit whenever you are trying to keep the law. But to a far greater extent, there are those who feel safe in their compromises. In their minds they think God understands that we are weak and we are doing our best. So, they feel safe in their compromises. But Judaizing is also alive and well today. Many religious customs, even some in the COG's are based on rabbinical traditions. Some are just COG traditions, but they are still not part of God's law. Some COG's claim administrative privilege and make up rules and enforce the rules as if it's part of the Mosaic law. There is a strong urge to go along with the herd. A strong urge to adhere to traditions; to be like our peers; to not look different than our peers. We see that even Peter was caught up in this. Galatians 2 is where Paul called him out for this very thing. Don't think it's not something we can be sucked into because Peter was sucked into it.

Galatians 2:11 *Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;*

12) 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.

13) And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

14) 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?"

15) We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

16) knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. (NKJV)

A lot of people get this all screwed up thinking that *the works of the law* is talking about God's law—the Mosaic law—but it's not. The example he's talking about is "Jews eating with Gentiles". That's the subject; Jews eating with Gentiles. This is a Jewish custom. There were a whole host of traditions like this that weren't a part of God's laws but were Jewish customs. The Greek word *nomos* for *law* means "anything established, anything received by usage, a custom, a law, or a command". Jews not eating with Gentiles was a custom. That was a Pharisaical law and that was a command by the Pharisees. It was the law but that's different than God's law.

Let's get back to the Holy Spirit now. As we think about getting caught up in herd mentality and traditions, it's good to verify that what we're believing to be true is actually

what God is telling us in scriptures. Ephesians 4:29. Remember the Spirit guides us into all truth but only if we are following the Spirit.

Ephesians 4:29 *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.*
30) *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God ...* (NKJV)

The word *grieve* means “to make sorrow, to make sorry, to disappoint or to make heavy”.

30 continued) *... by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*
31) *Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.*
32) *And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.* (NKJV)

Paul is showing contrast—this is black, this is white. Look at 1 Corinthians 2:4. The Holy Spirit is what works in us to help us to understand, to reveal to us.

1 Corinthians 2:4 *And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,*
5) *that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*
(NKJV)

Drop down to verse 10.

10) *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*
11) *For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.*
12) *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.*
13) *These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*
14) *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*
15) *But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.*
16) *For “who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.* (NKJV)

You can take each of these scriptures and read them over and over to get the message in, but we all know that if we’re trying to talk about God’s Word and God’s way to a person that is unconverted, it’s like talking to a door. It just doesn’t make any sense. What we are talking about is just *foolishness* to them—it doesn’t make any sense. We

read the words here but we've also experienced it. We all have people that we love and we want them to get it, we want them to have what we have, but if the Spirit is not working with them, then they can't see it. It's just not there. Let's go to Galatians 5 where it talks about the Spirit in a condensed thing.

Galatians 5:16 *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.* (NKJV)

We all have the lusts of the flesh, but if we *walk in the spirit*, we're not *fulfilling the lusts of the flesh*. It's pretty simple but it's also pretty profound.

*17) 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.
18) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.* (NKJV)

If you're being *led by the Spirit*—that's a contrast.

19) Now the works of the flesh are evident ... (NKJV)

You have to think why is he even bringing these up? They are evident; this is like no-brainer stuff, right?

*19 continued) ... which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,
20) idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,
21) 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.* (NKJV)

Let's just slow down and go through this list and look at each one of these. It starts off with sexual immorality. Sexual immorality has been a problem in all human societies because it's rooted in one of our strongest drives—our hormones. The Greek word is *porneia* from which we get the word *pornography* and it encompasses a wide variety of sexual sins including prostitution, committing adultery, engaging in premarital sex, homosexual acts, incest, every kind of perverted thing you can think of. You think, "Wouldn't everybody in the church know that that's wrong?" Yes, everyone knows it's wrong but does that mean that nobody ever gets sucked into it? Look at impurity, an even broader term covering any inappropriate sexual activity. That is sexual activities that make a person unclean or unfit for approaching God. One example would be viewing pornography which has a long history. It was a part of Greco-Roman culture. I remember the first naked people that I saw were Greek statues—bare breasted women. In our culture it's hard to get away from soft porn because it's pretty much in all the R rated movies and in some of the PG rated movies. It's pervasive—it's everywhere. Sensuality refers to throwing restraint to the wind and indulging oneself without regard to normal moral standards. It denotes being so consumed by the pursuit of sexual

pleasure that public opinion no longer matters. It's just wild living; this is your antinomianism at its highest level.

Idolatry: worship of idols was a major problem in the Old Testament and common in the Greco-Roman culture of Paul's day. Idolatry isn't limited to material objects of wood and stone. Paul describes *covetousness* as *idolatry* in Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3. He shows that idolatry can take non-material forms. Money, possessions, career, reputation, ambitions of various sorts—can all be forms of idolatry. And a whole lot more. Whatever we're placing above God is idolatry.

Sorcery: in the English translation of the Greek word, *pharmaca* from which we get the words *pharmacy* and *pharmaceuticals*—it means using “drugs”. In Paul's day it's applied to drugs used in witchcraft and in poisoning people. Today, to sorcery you can add pretty much all of the occult. There is a huge fascination with the occult whether it's astrology or even really darker things. Mind-altering drugs is often a part of that.

Enmity: includes negative attitudes, feelings, and hostile actions towards other people. Either individuals or groups. Examples would include refusing to forgive, holding grudges, working mischief against someone. At the group or community level today, enmity would encompass dislike and prejudice towards people of other races, religions or cliches, as well as hatred of political figures and parties.

Strife: that's relational discord and animosity resulting from quarrelsome, argumentative attitudes that take pleasure in self-assertion and confrontation.

Jealousy: refers to the selfish resentment of another's success or achievement.

Fits of anger: temper tantrums, explosive outbursts of anger against other people.

Rivalries: denotes selfish ambitions, putting one's self interests above others.

Dissension: refers to divisive teaching that is disruptive to church unity. unbiblical divisive teaching.

Divisions: party or partisan spirit and cliches around particular people or teachings.

Envy: not merely begrudging the good fortune of others, but is also maliciously resenting it and wanting to spoil it or deprive them of it.

Drunkenness: speaks of revelry where alcohol impairs moral judgment, inhibitions and possibly leads to immoral actions. Orgies are closely connected to drunkenness and denote wild partying behavior.

Verse 21 says, “*and the like*”—it means this was just a sample, it wasn't everything.

21 continued) ... 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. (NKJV)

Have the COGs in our day been completely immune to those things? I have to admit I haven't seen any drunken orgies, but the rest of them, I have seen in most of the COG congregations, in families, in everything. These are real things.

Next Paul elaborates on the fruit of the Spirit, which is in contrast, and that's what he's been doing through all his epistles—contrasting the spirit of the flesh, the spirit of the world and the Spirit of God.

*22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23) gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (NKJV)*

Notice that the works of the flesh have a whole lot of different works. There's a whole lot of them. And then he says, that's not all—just a sample—there are a lot of works of the flesh. But there is only one fruit of God's Spirit. The singular fruit of God's Spirit is all of these things at the same time. If it's not all of these things at the same time, then it's not the fruit of God's Spirit. Let's go through and unpack some of these.

Love: by which Paul means the love of God poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The Greek word is *agape*. This is a responsive love that evokes in us a love for God and a desire to please Him. Wholehearted worship, surrender and obedience are at the heart of pleasing Him. God's love does something; it produces something. A love for our neighbor, a servant love that is rooted primarily in the will and acts for our neighbors' best interests and highest good. As Paul says in Galatians 5:6, the only thing that matters in the Christian life is faith working through love. In Galatians 5:13, *through love serve one another*. So, love is—I think James gave a sermon recently on God's love does good rather than just feels good. This is something where *agape* is an active love. It's not just an emotional feeling that you have for the moment. It's what we do. It's a servant attitude. It's one of the dominant characteristics of Jesus' life and of all the apostles that we read about. In a very real sense, the other 8 characteristics are expressions of this *agape* love.

Joy: joy flows out of the awareness of God's gracious favor to us in the hope of living with Him and His Son and all His children in the Kingdom of God. That's what we all hope for; that's what we are going for. Hope for the future is a key part of joy and is an anchor that keeps us from being blown to and fro by the many and varied circumstances of life. The hard times that sometimes overtake us. Happiness depends on circumstances. Joy does not depend on circumstances. It's a fruit of God's spirit.

Peace: peace is not simply the absence of conflict but the deep abiding peace of God. It's grounded in the assurance of God's mercy and personal love for us. It's shown in His saving us from our sins (John 3:16). This produces a tranquil heart that is set at rest

in God and compels and enables us to be peacemakers. To pursue peace with others including those in our family, our community, our congregation and beyond across all ethnic, racial, political and other barriers that separate us and divide people. We're going to do a detour and go to one of my favorite scriptures—Philippians 4:6. I know most of you guys can probably quote it. It talks about the peace of God.

Philippians 4:6 *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7) and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 8) Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. 9) The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you. (NKJV)*

It's a peace that surpasses all understanding. We're going to go back to our list from Galatians 5 and look at patience.

Patience: it's also translated as long-suffering and chiefly a matter of forbearance with the people and of not being easily offended. This particularly includes people who are difficult. People who displease you, people who irritate, provoke, mistreat you. It includes those who persecute us. Steadfast endurance with difficult people and circumstances is the idea. That kind of patience illustrates a patience of God and that is a powerful witness to others, when you can be patient. When you can endure difficult people and circumstances.

Kindness; kindness is an attitude of graciousness and good will towards others, especially those who don't deserve it. Kindness is an expression of love that goes above and beyond what is warranted and demonstrates the kindness of God. It resists all harshness and coldness towards others.

Goodness: goodness is love and kindness in action—an expression of moral excellence. It gives generously and spins itself to help others without any expectation of return.

Faithfulness: a matter of being trustworthy and reliable to God and others. Being dependable and true to one's words and commitments. Someone in whom others can have confidence.

Gentleness: is not weakness but it's strength under control. It's rooted in humility. Jesus was gentle yet capable of expressing righteous indignation when appropriate. Gentleness is not arrogant. It does not bully or force others and it's not insulting. It's not condescending but considerate and exercises mildness in dealing with people.

Self control: engages both mind and body in the business of properly regulating one's life in all areas. The scope of self control ranges from such mundane matters, like food and drink, to material possessions, to one's thoughts, life, what's going on ahead, to speech, to the expressions of emotions and much more. With special attention to sexual matters and the mastery of our passions.

24) And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (NKJV)

Crucifixion is a brutal and permanent death. We are to crucify our passions and desires.

25) If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26) Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (NKJV)

We're supposed to be doers of the Word. Let's look at James 1:21.

James 1:21 *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

22) But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. (NKJV)

James 2:17 *Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (NKJV)*

Can we do better? The first commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength—that's the first commandment. Most of the whole Bible is how to keep that commandment. What are we doing with our minds? Let's look at Joshua, some instruction that he was given, that is appropriate for us. Joshua 1:8.

Joshua 1:8 *This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*

9) Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." (NKJV)

The word here used for *meditate* can also mean "to mutter". It means "it's on your breath, it's in your mind—you're not departing". It shall not depart from your mouth. That's where that "mutter" comes in. We need to study the Bible and we need to meditate on it, we need to fill our minds with it. But what is getting in the way? We know that the spirit of the world is in conflict with the Spirit of God. So, what is getting in the way of us truly, fully, walking and being led by the Spirit? If we look at our habits, we look at our attitudes, we look at our beliefs, we look at our expectations—these are things that we can really think about. Habits are huge. If you think about it, after God gave the law to Moses, the next thing they did was build the Tabernacle. Then they instituted these rituals and what did these rituals do? They were habits that reminded

them of what they were doing and why they were doing it and why it was important and wasn't important. A lot of it was laying a foundation for us to go back and understand too. It was rituals; so, what are your rituals? What are my rituals? What do we do habitually that is similar that keeps us on track? If we don't have our own rituals to keep us on track, we can be thrown off track. We have to really question our beliefs because you cannot grow in grace and knowledge if you know it all. If you think you know everything—all my beliefs are right, I have it nailed down—you're not going to *grow in grace and knowledge*. We have to continually question and be curious and look at another point of view to see what the defense is.

I learned from my mentor, when he is putting together a paper explaining something that he's looking at:

- What are all the things?
- Where can people poke holes in this?
- What are the scriptures they are going to use?

Some of these things—by going to disprove something—you find out it's actually accurate. We have to question to grow—our daily rituals, our beliefs, our habits, and our attitudes. We need to question our attitudes about other people. Everybody knows they have a bad attitude about this or that, but what are we communicating in our actions where we don't have the attitude of Christ?

I like how one guy explained this like an airplane. Your attitude is which way you're leaning. What is your attitude towards a particular thing? If you just look at which way you're leaning, you may not be balanced on that.

Beliefs: I had something happen recently with an aunt, who has a 21 year old son. Somebody pointed out to her that in her son's bedroom the screen was gone. So, she called her son and asked what had happened to the screen?

"It fell out."

"Well, do you ever go out of that window?"

"Yeah, sometimes just to get a breath of fresh air I go and sit on the roof."

Everybody knows he was sneaking out at night—everybody but the mom. She just can't see it—she can't believe that her son would do anything like that. He just needed a breath of fresh air. We need to be honest with ourselves.

You also notice that after the Tabernacle was built, God set in motion rituals where the cloud lifted, they packed up and left. When they left they didn't know where they were going, didn't know what they were doing or where they were stopping—they were just following. When the cloud stopped, they made camp. When the cloud lifted up, they went. They learned how to follow and how to trust God. We have to do the same thing. If we're being led by the spirit, we don't always know exactly where the Spirit is leading us. We have to follow. Let's go look at Romans 8:16 really quickly.

Romans 8:16 *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God ... (NKJV)*

So, God's Spirit is what stamps us and identifies us as His child.

17) and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. (NKJV)

The Holy Spirit is in conflict with the spirit of the world—it's a battle. There's no road down the middle. It's 100% here or if you are off, you're just off. Let's go to Acts 16:6. How does the Holy Spirit work? We don't have a fleece like Gideon where we can ask a question, throw it out there and get an answer. We don't have an Urim and a Thummim, we have God's Word. He speaks to us through His Word. He reveals Himself, but He doesn't give us a sign. If we are tuned in, then He puts thoughts in our minds and He can lead us through our minds. That's only if we are tuned in. If we are tuned into the wrong thing, then what God might be communicating to us, we don't pick up.

Acts 16:6 *Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.*

7) After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.

8) So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.

9) And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

10) Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them. (NKJV)

We see the big conflict. Let's go to Colossians 3:5.

Colossians 3:5 *Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*

6) Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience ... (NKJV)

So, what is our part? What are we to do? It's clear that we have to choose. We have to realize that if we are not choosing the fruit of the Spirit—if we aren't hearing that or there is any deviation—we have room to grow. We have to learn, we have to practice and set examples. Sometimes we can think, "Who is going to notice?" We don't have a big corporate entity that is successfully doing evangelical work and calling people in. But there are thousands of people that, if they are bearing the fruit of the Spirit, the people that God wants to notice—they will notice. It will be like a neon sign and they will ask.

That's why we are to have an answer. If we're not doing our Bible study, we won't have an answer. We have to learn, just in case somebody sees something that we do—some time, somewhere—and they are curious and ask. That's what we can do. We can be happy, we can be joyful, we can be content, we can be untroubled, because in this world that's different. People can notice. 1 Corinthians 6:19.

1 Corinthians 6:19 *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?* (NKJV)

When we're filtering the things that come to us from the world—when we are choosing movies to watch or TV shows or what we are allowing to come into our mind, do we have this in mind? That we are not our own. We've been sealed, we have the earnest of the Holy Spirit. We have *the spirit of wisdom and revelation*. Ephesians 1:17 says that.

Ephesians 1:17 *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him ...* (NKJV)

If we want that to be inside us, then our conduct, our habits, attitudes, beliefs, expectations, faith, behavior—everything that we allow into our minds—has to match up with that—tune in and tune out. The spirit of the world is in conflict with the Holy Spirit. To tune into the one, you have to tune out the other. It's like a radio—you can't tune into two things at the same time. We have to stop sabotaging ourselves with media that normalizes sin and makes us insensitive to the Holy Spirit. That's in conflict with God's Spirit. We can't take on the worldview. So, what can we do instead? Do something productive. Sometimes I come home from work and I am just dead tired. I don't want to do anything. I just want to turn on the TV and watch something. But I have to ask myself, if I'm in a state where I'm tired and not mentally up and then I put on some movie that is putting the messages of the world into my brain at a time when I don't have the mental energy to resist it, that's probably not a smart thing to do. That's not the time to do that. I sat down and made a list and asked the question, "What can I do?" I made a list of about 20 things that when I'm bored or tired, I can do.

I think that we can do a better job of filtering what goes into our minds. I know I can do a lot better job. This sermon probably helped me identify that. A computer is a wonderful thing but there's a term in computing called GIGO—garbage in, garbage out. If the computer isn't programmed right, it will give you bad answers. But if it has the right programming, it will give you good answers. We have to watch what goes into our minds. The Holy Spirit is in conflict with spirit of the world. If we're allowing—if we are tuning into the spirit of the world—allowing it to infect us, it's in conflict.

Let's go to 2 Corinthians 5:10; we need to be aware of this.

2 Corinthians 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.* (NKJV)

We're accountable for every minute of every day. We're accountable for the choices. The one thing Paul makes crystal clear over and over again—there's a spirit of the world and there's the fruit of that spirit, the works of that spirit. Here's the Spirit of God, here's the fruit of that Spirit, the works of that Spirit, and they are incompatible. It's one or the other. My last scripture is 2 Timothy 1:7.

2 Timothy 1:7 *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.* (NKJV)

God has given us everything that we need. Now it's up to us.