

SPIRIT AS GUIDE - *Conversations on the Holy Spirit*

Almost all of the conversations I have had about GUIDANCE has had to do with **“DOING”** steps not **“BEING”** steps.

This is the trap of our culture - **“DOING”** takes precedence over **“BEING”**. But the Holy Spirit is the one who:

#1. Guides us to Jesus

#2. Guides us into BEING more like Jesus

The main objective of the Spirit is to guide us in our **“BEING”** - therefore shaping us to be able to both contain and obtain our **“DOING”**.

How does the Spirit do this?

Galatians 5:16-26

16 So I say, walk by **the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of **the flesh**. **17** For **the flesh** desires what is contrary to **the Spirit**, and **the Spirit** what is contrary to **the flesh**. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. **18** But if you are **led by the Spirit**, you are not under the law. **19** The acts of **the flesh** are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; **20** idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions **21** and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. **22** But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, forbearance [patience], kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. **24** Those who **belong** to Christ Jesus have **crucified the flesh** with its passions and desires. **25** Since we live by **the Spirit**, let us keep in **step with the Spirit**.

When Paul says in **VERSE 18** - *“...if you are led by the Spirit...”* He means...**IF YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN**. Then these character traits will be **GROWING IN YOU** as you increasingly REFLECT JESUS' NATURE.

In other words, IF you don't see this fruit growing in you, you might not be a Christian. **It's that strong here**. In **MATTHEW 12** - Jesus said: *“How do you know a tree is alive? If there's no fruit on the tree, you know it's dead.”*

So let's quickly take a look at the evidence that we know Jesus and His Spirit is in us...Paul says we will have:

LOVE - Serving the needs of other people for their sake NOT yours - not for what you get out of it.

JOY - To delight in God, not for what He gives you, but for who He is to you. **To delight in GOD not in the GIFTS OF GOD.**

PEACE - Trust in God. If you're growing in PEACE **you're becoming less and less anxious in life.**

PATIENCE - Patience is **the ability to suffer and even to be wronged without melting down...or becoming bitter.**

KINDNESS & GOODNESS - These characteristics are basically integrity. A person of integrity is the same person with one group as they are with another group. **You're the same in PRIVATE as you are in PUBLIC.** You are **HONEST**.

FAITHFULNESS - What is faithfulness? Faithfulness is **fearlessness, reliability and courage.** Faithful people are **BOLD and ASSERTIVE.**

GENTLENESS - Is **HUMILITY** - it is **self-forgetfulness...**it's being sensitive and humble. Someone gentle is a PEACEMAKER, a GOOD LISTENER.

SELF-CONTROL - If you have the other EIGHT - you have that one.

Now, what's challenging about this list is that we can look at it and we can immediately notice some things were good at and some things we're bad at.

*- “I'm actually a **pretty loving person** but I lack peace and I'm full of anxiety”*

*- I'm actually a pretty sensitive person...I'm **pretty gentle** with people - but I'm **not really assertive**, I really don't like conflict.”*

In other words, we all look at this list and say: **“I'm OK over here but I'm not OK over here.”**

What Paul is driving at though - is that **we could mistake our personality for the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.** And this idea gets lost on us because our English language is so limited.

Paul is saying that we could mistake our NATURAL TEMPERAMENT for a FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - **because the GREEK word Paul uses for “FRUIT” in this passage is singular.**

Paul does not say “*the FRUITS of the Spirit*” - he says “*the FRUIT*” [singular]. You don’t grow one fruit and not another - the FRUIT - SINGULAR grows ALL in unison.

This is critical...because when the Spirit is at work in us - **all of these FRUIT grow at the same time.**

You see, we sometimes mistake the **Fruit of the Spirit** for our **natural personalities.**

That’s why when Paul says the “**FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**” singularly, **he is saying unless you’re growing in all of them you’re actually not growing in any of them.**

This is challenging. Unless these things are growing in your life - **how can you know whether you are being GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD?**

So how do we get in on the HOLY SPIRIT’S guidance?

The key is found in verse **24** - “*Those who **belong** to Christ Jesus have **crucified the flesh** with its passions and desires.*”

There are two things here...the first thing is that you have to; “**crucified the flesh** with its passions and desires.” What does that mean?

in VERSE 19. Paul says that these sins are obvious...and certainly the first ones are really obvious - “*sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery*” - they all sound REALLY *fleshly* - “*drunkenness, orgies*” - passions of the flesh...makes sense.

But wait a minute - look at the **middle part - 8 of them**...the majority of the things that are mentioned - “*hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition [pride], dissensions, factions and envy*”

Herein lies a problem with our English renditions of the Bible - when we hear Paul say that the “FLESH” is in conflict with the “SPIRIT” - we

think of these *FLESHLY* type sins - but that’s not what Paul is talking about.

So when Paul says: “*You have to **crucify the FLESH and it’s passions***” - he’s not talking about the body. So what is he talking about then? Well...the key to this whole passage is to understand that Paul is contrasting: **TWO DIFFERENT OPERATING SYSTEMS.**

There’s the **F.O.S.** - the **FLESH OPERATING SYSTEM** and the **S.O.S.** - the **SPIRIT OPERATING SYSTEM.** The **F.O.S.** creates passions and desires and the **S.O.S.** creates passions and desires [that’s what Paul tells us]. What’s important is the word that Paul uses for “*passions*” doesn’t mean **EVIL DESIRES** it means **OVER-DESIRES.**

Your F.O.S. looks at GOOD THINGS: your career, money, family, sex, human opinion and human approval - and what it does is it SUCKS that good thing into the centre of your heart - and it tells you that that’s what you have to have to be something.

The FLESH **distorts** really good things and in turn produces **out-of-control over-desires.** While the **S.O.S.** is constantly saying; “**Only JESUS can satisfy**”

To be **GUIDED by the SPIRIT to BECOME MORE LIKE JESUS** and not led by our F.O.S. We need the POWER and GUIDANCE of the Spirit to destroy the F.O.S.

SO LET’S GET ON THE REMEDY SIDE:

#1. The SPIRIT Guides us TO Jesus - “*...no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” **except by the Holy Spirit.**”* - 1 Corinthians 12:3 [NIV]

And the work of the SPIRIT **continues to GUIDE us to Jesus** - BECAUSE - we need, you need, I need constantly to be reminded that **WE BELONG TO JESUS.**

“*And the Spirit himself **joins** with our spirits to say **we are** God’s children.*” - Romans 8:16 [NCV]

#2. The SPIRIT Guides us into BEING more like Jesus

2 Corinthians 3:8 - *“And so we are transfigured much like the Messiah, our lives **gradually** becoming **brighter** and more **beautiful** as God enters our lives and we **become like him**.”* [The Message]

Then the Holy Spirit guides us to BECOME MORE LIKE JESUS - by replacing the F.O.S. with the S.O.S. - **we so desperately need to HEAR the SPIRIT**, we need to experience the **PRESENCE and POWER** of the SPIRIT so much more than we know. We need to feel **the SPIRIT move in us and through us** - when the Spirit moves we are reminded of that we **BELONG to JESUS** - when the Spirit convicts us **He is guiding us to BECOME more like Jesus**.

Friends...can we make some room for the Spirit?

#1. Through God’s living Word - the Spirit is consistently and constantly **taking us to Jesus, the Living Word**. In the Gospel of John, the Spirit is referred to as the **Paraclete** [Advocate]. The mission of the **Paraclete** is to witness to Jesus and to glorify Jesus.

WHEN WE READ THE SCRIPTURES - the SPIRIT LEADS US TO JESUS.

#2. Through other Christians - More on this in the weeks to come...but the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts so that we can encourage each other and build up each other.

#3. Through moments when we gather - Friends...sometimes we are consumed by the F.O.S. because gathering with other believers is not a priority. Now when I say gather, I don’t just mean attend a gathering. I mean we are HERE, we are LISTENING FOR THE SPIRIT - in corporate worship, in corporate teaching...I mean we have gathered to be reminded that we are loved by Jesus, we belong to Jesus and we want to hear Jesus’ Spirit speak.

The SPIRIT is sent to bring us to Jesus. Where the Spirit is, Jesus is being exalted; where Jesus is not being exalted, there the Spirit is absent.