

Ministering by the Spirit

Key Verses:

2 Corinthians 3:6 NLT - *He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life.*

Galatians 5:25 - *If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.*

Objective:

We have all been called to ministry. The three realms in which we are called to minister are the church, the world, and the family. For us to be effective, all ministry must flow out of us by the Spirit and be more than mere human effort. Last week we said every believer has been given a ministry gift (or gifts) by the Holy Spirit. In this lesson, we will discuss another aspect of our Spirit-led ministry by exploring how the Holy Spirit wants us to minister by bearing His fruit.

Disciples are fruit-bearing followers of Jesus.

John 15:5 - *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit...*

John 15:8 - *By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*

Two types of fruit: Personal Fruit and Ministry Fruit

1) _____ fruit is a natural by-product of the indwelling of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-25 - *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, v.23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. v.24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and*

desires. v.25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

- a) Word Study: The Greek word translated “fruit” is the word “karpos.” One Bible actually translates “karpos” as “harvest,” the “harvest of the Spirit.” Thus, we have the beautiful image of Christ growing His fruit within us by the Spirit and harvesting the fruit for the sake of the His Kingdom.
- b) One of the primary works of the Holy Spirit is transforming our character to resemble that of the indwelling Christ.

Ephesians 4:13 - ... until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...

- c) The fruit of the Spirit is the outward expression of Christ dwelling within us.
- 2) _____ fruit is the manifestation of the Christ’s power flowing out of us through the Holy Spirit and His gifts (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12).
- a) As true disciples of Jesus we must seek to develop personal fruit so that our ministry life will not be void of Christ-like character.
 - b) Ministry becomes the most fruitful when it is flowing from a disciple of Jesus who manifests both personal character and powerful gifts.

Christ-like Character and Personal Fruit

1) _____

- a) God is love.

1 John 4:7, 8 - Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. v.8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

b) God is love and according to John, if you are a Christian, you will produce the fruit of love that extends to people and touches their lives.

c) The foundation of all ministry must be established on love.

2) _____

Nehemiah 8:10 NIV - ...*Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*

a) This joy is not some shallow passing emotion resulting from a positive life experience.

This kind of joy is a deep spiritual joy that is not overcome by natural disasters or difficult circumstances.

b) According to Jesus, “love” and “joy” are tied together.

John 15:10, 11 - *If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. v.11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.*

c) The joy of the Lord is strength and therefore, we must count all things joy knowing that Jesus wants us to produce a harvest resulting from joy.

James 1:2 - *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds...*

3) _____

Matthew 5:9 - *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”*

a) The Greek word translated “peace” in Galatians 5:22 is the word “eirene” and it expresses the calmness of mind that comes from right relationships.

b) The word was used in two ways during the days of Christ.

- i) First, it was used for a reconciliation of two conflicting enemies. Alan Vincent taught us that this kind of peace comes about when two conflicting people do more than merely lay down their weapons; they will also embrace and become like brothers.
- ii) Secondly, this word was also used in the medical world for a fracture that has healed. We now know that often, when a bone is broken, the body will calcify the wound and once it is healed properly it is stronger than the original surrounding tissue.

c) Effective ministry should always be promoting and establishing peace.

4) _____

- a) This word translated “patience” is also translated “forbearance” as well as “longsuffering.”
- b) It is used frequently of God when He had patience on His disobedient people.
 - i) 1 Peter 3:20 speaks about how God waited patiently in the days of Noah for the ark to be built. He was longsuffering.
- c) How patient God is with us. He suffers long and bears with us in all our sinning, our rebellion, and all our apathy. God does not withdraw His love.
- d) Being patient with people is a powerful expression of love and therefore, we must be patient with people in order to minister effectively to them.

Galatians 6:2 - Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.

5) _____

- a) In the New Testament, the Greek word translated as “grace” best represents the idea of God’s “kindness” or “lovingkindness.”

Because God has been gracious toward us believers, we should treat all people with kindness or grace.

Luke 6:35 - But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.

- b) Kindness is not an apathetic response to sin, but a deliberate act to bring the sinner back to God. Romans 2:4 tell us that it is God's kindness that brings us to repentance.

6) _____

- a) Goodness is similar to kindness but it is more than an action; it is an attitude.
- b) Goodness is cultivated in us by the Spirit through conviction that God is good.
- c) Healed people grow kindness and goodness. Hurting people have a hard time growing these fruits.
 - i) Most people struggle with "God is good" because they cannot answer the "why" question. "If God is good, then why did _____ happen to me?"
 - ii) When we get the revelation that God is good, even in this bad world, then we will be able to bear the fruit of goodness.

Romans 8:28 - And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

7) _____

- a) We live in a society where people are becoming increasingly more untrustworthy. Even in the church leadership, we find ourselves asking where the integrity is.
- b) The ability to remain faithful in the course of temptations and crises is inherent within you because you are a Christian.



As Christ was faithful to the very end, so must we be faithful to our calling by the power of the Spirit.

c) Faithfulness is the fruit of faith.

i) Faithfulness is believing when I don't see it.

Noah built the ark because God said to do it. No one had ever seen a thunderstorm before. Because of his faith, Noah was faithful for 120 years.

ii) Faithfulness is obeying when I don't understand it.

Abraham was willing to kill his own son on an altar because God told him to do it.

iii) Faithfulness is giving when I don't have it.

There was a famine and Elijah asked the widow of Zarephath to use up her very last supply of food. That was all she had, but she gave it anyway and God provided for her.

iv) Faithfulness is persisting when I don't feel like it.

There were many times that Moses wanted to stop leading all of those "hard-hearted" people around, especially after he found out he wasn't going into the Promised Land but he kept leading. He was faithful.

8) _____

a) We live a world of rage. There are psychologists who now specialize in anger management due to the upswing of crimes committed in outbursts of anger.

b) When a minister loses his temper, he often loses his influence.

c) Gentleness is that quality of maturity that filters words and emotions through the eyes of the Spirit before it manifest in our words and actions.

Even when anger is the proper response, it still gets filtered.

Ephesians 4:26, 27 - *Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, v.27 and give no opportunity to the devil.*

9) _____

- a) Self-control has to do with the mastery of one's self.
- b) The works of the flesh manifest in laziness, gluttony, drunkenness, gossiping, slander and sexual immorality.
- c) A person who does not have himself under the control of the Spirit will soon default in ministry.

Remember, Jesus is seeking to harvest the fruit from a life of the person who has his flesh life under the Spirit's control.

1 Corinthians 9:25, 27 - *Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable... v.27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*

REFLECT

1. Discuss how personal fruit is manifesting in your life since starting The Journey.
2. How is ministry fruit expressing itself in you these days?
3. Which fruit of the Spirit do you find most challenging and a growth area in your life?
What steps can you take this week to change that?
4. What questions do you have about this lesson? Discuss.

ACT

Choose one of the statements about “Faithfulness is...” and write a paragraph in your lesson outline about a time when you experienced the statement firsthand and how you overcame it by faith.

- Faithfulness is believing even when I don’t see it.
- Faithfulness is obeying when I don’t understand it.
- Faithfulness is giving when I don’t have it.
- Faithfulness is persisting when I don’t feel like it.