

GUIDANCE FROM GOD SERIES

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT PART THREE

We have been doing a series on guidance from God. We have seen how God guides us through the fruit of the Spirit. We are talking about things that God do within our lives that confirms and direct us. God never works apart from His nature. In the same way when we were born again God puts His nature in us. And no guidance from God can be against or contrary to the nature of God put into our lives. If we would sense and yield to the nature and the seed of God placed in our lives we will always be directed into the right path and do the right thing at the right time.

As we have said before Gal. 5 is talking about the leading of the Spirit although we always have used the fruit of the Spirit to just teach about the character of Jesus. But Paul didn't stop at the developing the character of Jesus in our lives through the nine fruit of the Spirit. He goes to illustrate how the nine fruit of the Spirit helps us to be sensitive to the leading of the Spirit in our Christian walk.

Gal. 5:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for those are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are plain; immortality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealous, anger, selfishness, dissention, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit let us also walk

by the Spirit. Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another.

We have said before in verse 22 to 23 that the nine fruit of the Spirit can be divided into three categories just like the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit. We have stated how love, joy and peace are related to the revelation gifts of the Holy Spirit because love, joy and peace put us in a position to receive revelation from God. If you don't walk in love, joy and peace God is not going to reveal His will in your life. We must walk in love, joy and peace and then He will reveal His will in our life.

The second group that we have which is longsuffering, kindness and goodness are a class by themselves. And they relate to the power gifts. Last week we related how Paul through perseverance that is longsuffering worked out the gifts and the signs of an apostle in his life. Quoting II Cor. 12 that the power gifting in our lives is found through perseverance which relates to longsuffering. And we have also related how in Acts 10: 38 how God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and He went about doing good. There you have goodness. And we have tied up how doing good has to do with the power gifts of the Holy Spirit. The power gifts of the Holy Spirit are gifts that do some thing. And for some thing to be done we need to have longsuffering, kindness and goodness. An act of the Holy Spirit is always in kindness. That is why when the Holy Spirit moves and kindness and goodness are not present it is not of God. We need to learn how that the second group of the fruit of the Spirit relates to the power gifts.

Now the revelation gifts reveal some thing: the power gifts do some thing; the vocal gifts say some thing. And the first grouping of the fruit of the Spirit love, joy and peace is the revelation of the will of God.

The second grouping is the performance of the will of God. When we perform God's will and don't sense a flow of goodness in your life definitely it's not of God's will. Some times you can have God's will revealed to you but if you don't do it correctly or if you don't sense it is a good thing or if you sense trouble, then you know that the performance of God's will is out of synchrony.

The last grouping is in the area of faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. And that last grouping relates to the vocal gifts because the test of our faithfulness, the test of our gentleness, the test of our self-control begins in the control of the tongue. If you cannot control your tongue you can never control your actions. If you cannot control your tongue you can never be meek and humble. If you cannot control your tongue you can never demonstrate faithfulness. The last grouping is related to the vocal gifts.

Now third grouping, which relates to the vocal gifts in saying something, is what I call the proclamation of God's will. Why is proclamation important? It is important to know the way God reveals and carries out His will on this planet. God always say it and then He does it. The control of this planet earth revolves around the power of the spoken Word. That's how God has organized this world.

The first grouping of the fruit of the Spirit love, joy and peace relates to our relationship with God in the revelation of His will.

The second grouping of the fruit of the Spirit of longsuffering, kindness and goodness has to do with our relationship to the people around us as we perform God's will.

The third grouping of the fruit of the Spirit of faithfulness, gentleness and self-control relates to the circumstances around us as we proclaim His will. It. We all know that the will of God cannot be determined by circumstances. The sons of God are not controlled by circumstances. They control the circumstances. The storms do not determine where they go or what they do because it is they who stop the storms. But little lambs in God who had not grown to be sheep yet sometimes are rocked to and fro by the circumstances of life. The people of this world are controlled by circumstances. But the people of God are not supposed to be controlled by circumstances. They are the ones that control the circumstances around them. That makes a great difference.

In order to achieve that we need to rise up to the level of authority that God wants us to. And you can check throughout the bible from Genesis to Revelation that God controls the circumstances. He doesn't allow circumstances to control Him. And the people of God control the circumstances. They are not controlled by the circumstances. When there is a drought those who are weak and do not know God perish in the drought. But those who know God like Elijah went through the famine unscathed. Those who knew God had provisions even in the wilderness. They are not controlled by the circumstances. They change and they control the circumstances. And the control of circumstances relates to the spoken Word.

Last week I ended with a little story of the chimpanzee. After the service a few people asked me about the book. It seems they were quite interested in the chimpanzee book. We are talking about when we do God's will we need to enjoy what God tells us to do and we should sense goodness flowing in us. The account that I gave is from a little paperback book entitled "Mother Nature's Greatest Hits, The top forty wonders of the animal world" published by World Wildlife Fund. And there is a section on artistic apes. Let me repeat about these apes and I was sharing about goodness. How do we know when to do some thing? It's when we sense the goodness that flow through and we perform it best and we do it well. The only animal that has been observed to create objects that can pass as artistic at least to the uninformed viewer are the apes. Captives chimpanzees not only enjoy applying paint to canvas but can become somewhat obsessed with that activity. They ponder long over the placement of brush strokes. They fly into rages if their materials are taken away from them before they feel that their work is finished. If a session is interrupted and the primate painter is given back his or her material at a later time, work will resume where it was left off until the painting is completed to the ape's satisfaction. Once the painting is finished the ape is happy about the way the piece looks he or she will refuse to apply any further brush stroke and can become very nasty if urged to do so. In other words he thinks it's finished.

One of the strangest similarities between ape and human creativity is the negative effect that rewards have on the production. Just as human artist some times lose their creative sparks when fame or fortune come their way, ape painters will become jaded if their efforts are consistently rewarded by gifts of fruit. Once the

connection between painting and material benefits are made, all the fun seems to go out of the process. It's just like human beings. If you are doing something you really enjoy doing it, you do it well. But if you are doing that some thing to get some thing else you may just quickly finish it just to get the reward. And you don't really enjoy it.

I am talking about the higher quality of life that God gives to us that when we do some thing we should really enjoy it. When we are doing God's will we should really enjoy it whether it is digging ditches, preaching to ten thousands, praying for the sick, or doing a little needle work like Dorcas to help some poor people. If God really called us to do something and had guided us to do some thing we would enjoy it. There will be that goodness in you flowing. You would have the pleasure and the feel of goodness in the performance of His will.

Now in the third category called the proclaiming of God's will relates to faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. It relates to control over our circumstances. There is a difference when a person is faithful and then he speaks the word of faith. There is a difference between saying some thing and decreeing some thing. All is determined by whether we are faithful or faithless. When Jesus was with the apostles He was talking to them about He was going to be betrayed, crucified and then resurrected and that every one of them will scatter and flee. Then Peter spoke up and said in Luke 22:33 *"Lord I am ready to go with you to prison and to death."* Now that looks like a very brave statement. But he knows not what he said. A lot of time some of us learned the faith message and we speak to the mountain. The mountain echo back and nothing happened. They say to the mountain, "Remove from here to there." And the echo comes back, "Remove from here to there." And we got ourselves removed. They wonder why the circumstances don't change. It is conditioned upon the fact that unless you are full of faith you can speak words of faith. And in many lives they are not full of faith. If you are an empty teapot, you can't pour out tea. We could take an empty teapot and no matter how much you try to pour there will be no tea coming out. You have to be full of it before you can give it out.

A lot of people are not full of faith and they are trying to give it out. We have to be meditating on God's Word. The Word of God has to be changed into the constituent

of faith in our lives before they can come forth. The Word is just raw material. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word. We need to keep hearing the Word until faith arises and a revelation comes into our lives before we can speak the Word of God.

And so the first quality among the third category is being faithful. As we have said that the first of the least in the three groupings is always the major one. Like love, joy, peace, love is the major one. Long suffering, kindness and goodness, longsuffering is the major force. Faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, faithfulness is the key force. Faithfulness may be understood here as having words full of faith. How does someone become full of faith? Take the Word of God and start practicing it on small little areas. This is why if some of you have a minor problem of sickness or disease, a little cold or a little headache or flu, and if for these small, small things you still depend on any other things but not on God's Word, one day when a more serious sickness or problem strikes you, you won't have faith for it. The vast majority of people don't exercise faith over a cold. But when they are struck with cancer they start seeking for faith. They have not been exercising their faith muscles. And they expect their faith muscles to work when they are in need. That's not how things go in the bible. All the people who are full of faith were faithful. And it takes time to build up that faith into faithfulness. And then you become full of faith.

Lets look at some who are faithful and become full of faith. Acts 6:8 Here is the phrase that is an adjective that describes the noun Stephen. It says in verse 8 *And Stephen, full of grace (faith as in this bible) and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.* Many people would like to be that. They would like to be full of faith. Obviously everything he did and everything that he said contained power. And he was full of faith. The question is how did he get that? The bible tells us in Acts 6 verse 3 the apostles had a need to look for people who would serve the widows. Not emptying the hospital beds yet, not preaching to hundred thousand of people yet, not healing, casting out devils, not making the lame to walk and the blind to see, but it says just to serve the poor little widows.

Verse 3 *Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the*

Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word."

But before the selection of the deacons the apostles laid down the conditions for their selection. They must be of good reputation, they must have the Holy Ghost in their lives and they must be full of wisdom. In other words the apostles wanted faithful and steady people, who were already serving faithfully before there were considered for the position of deacons. And they looked among them and they found in verse 5 *And what they said pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.* Now these seven people were already faithful. They were serving without a title; without any official recognition. After their span of faithfulness God started working in their lives mightily. Among them recorded was Stephen a man full of faith.

Now the same apostle Paul said in the book of II Timothy chapter two verse 2. *And what you have heard from me before many witness entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."* Commit the things that I give to you faithful people. And these faithful people will be able to carry the same power of the spoken Word and teach other people. Now in our society we measure faithfulness based on the ability to serve under a cause or a person consistently without stopping until told to stop. If faith relates to the Word of God, faithfulness relates to a person, a principle or a cause. You are faithful to a person or an organization or a cause. When it comes to where the rubber hits the road faithfulness becomes loyalty to a person or an organization. There are far too many lone rangers riding about on their horses wearing masks, wearing a hat, carrying their gun, without their Tonto and trying to do something for God. But when it comes to be faithful they cannot be found. All the men in the bible who became great people first learned to serve under other people. Think about Moses - he served under his father Jethro for forty years just as a cattle herdsman. Think about Joshua. He served under Moses for forty years.

Think about Elisha - he served for between eight to ten years under Elijah. Think about the disciples of Jesus. Three years they learned to serve the Lord. Think about Timothy who served Paul. Think about Paul and how he served with Barnabas. Unless we learn how to be faithful we will never be full of faith. The test of whether

we have the ability to be faithful is your loyalty to a person or to a cause. Some times we excuse ourselves. Nobody is perfect, doesn't mean that you serve nobody. No organization is perfect, so what? Nothing is perfect except Jesus. If nobody in the world is perfect including yourself and no organization in the world is perfect, and you try to start your own organization do you think you will be perfect? Faithfulness was a requirement to serve under imperfect conditions, not perfect condition. And that's what begins to give a person authority to speak powerful words.

Think about Joshua a mere man anointed by God who could speak to the sun and said, "Sun stop where you are," and to the moon, "Stay where you are," and the heaven obeyed his voice. He was a man who learned to serve for forty years as a mere servant to Moses.

Elisha's words were powerful. At his word resurrection power flows. He received the double portion of Elijah's anointing and did twice the miracles and healings that Elijah did. But for eight to ten years he served pouring water over Elijah's hands for washing.

Let me explain greatness can only come by great faith. There is no way we can rise up in life without faith. Great achievement comes by great faith. Greatness comes by great servanthood. If you want to be great you learn to be a servant. It's important that when the circumstances come upon our lives and we have the opportunity to be servant then we start that way. There are many people who would like to change their circumstances. But there is a strange paradox. Let me illustrate the worse case scenario. Think about some one who has power over work and circumstances. If the sun is too hot, he could just command the sun to cool down and it would cool down. When he gets angry with somebody he says, "Let fire consume you." Obviously we don't want such an individual. He is too powerful, and abuses his power too easily. Before God gives such authority the reverse must take place in his life. In life there must be a reversal. The greater God is going to use you the greater you are going to be put through testing. The harder the steel is going to be, the greater the hammering the steel has to go through. I read one article on how they made those Japanese swords. Their swords must be sharp and strong and be of fine

steel that at one blow it could cut off somebody's head. The greater the steel the greater the suffering the steel must go through. It is proportional in this life. There is some thing in this life that is like a spring. When you pull down one part the other part goes up. It's like an energy spring. The higher you want it to go this part must go lower. For you to be popular and be loved by people, you have to first go through the test of being unpopular. There is no escape that is part of the test of God in our life. The greater God wants to use you, the greater the suffering you must go through first. The suffering must come before the glory. It is God's pattern and method.

Therefore, before God gives you great faith to speak to circumstances God puts you through areas where you learn and you suffer under those circumstances. You learn to be faithful under every circumstance. Sometimes you learn to be faithful under certain circumstances. But you learn to be faithful under all circumstances and then later God gives you power over all circumstances. You learn to be faithful under some circumstances God gives you power over some circumstances. Then when a person had gone through the test then God puts the person up and begin to give the person authority with words. He goes about and sees the sun beating down his back but he has learned to be a servant. He doesn't simply stop the sun anyhow he wants any more although the power is there. Then he goes to a circumstance where he needs rain. He doesn't simply call the rain anyhow he wants because he has learned to be a servant. The authority becomes bridled and under control by God.

Jesus had the power to turn stones into bread. Why didn't He do it? It is not because He didn't have the power. If Jesus hasn't got the power and the whole thing was a show then the temptation was not real. A temptation is only real when you actually have the power to do it. But He has for thirty years learned to serve under earthly parents. If you think it is not easy to serve an organization or person think about Jesus perfect Son of God, son of man, serving as a carpenter and in the home of Joseph and Mary for thirty years. Being misunderstood by His parents who couldn't understand the level of His spirituality. Jesus was far ahead in His spirit and in His mind than any in His generation. But Jesus served faithfully. He never utters a word of complaint. And when the time came He had great power and authority. Faithfulness must come first before you are full of faith.

Before we have power over circumstances we must have the endurance under the circumstances. That is why a lot of people would like to take control over circumstances. But sometimes you hear their words they are like Peter speaking more from his head than from his heart. Saying things that he never would be able to carry out. It is very strange. The only people who have power over the storms are people who have persevered under the storms. And they need not stop the storm because they had the endurance to go through the storm. The only people who had the power to stop the storm are the people who endure the storm. And the people who would like to stop the storm are the people who don't have the power or the endurance to go through the storm.

So why does God do it that way? It is for us to learn great servanthood. When you have the power to endure the storm you don't simply go and stop every storm. You become under submission to God and you will do it only when He tells you to. Not for your own stomach or food turning stone into bread. Not for your own little vegetable garden. But you will do it because it is a part of God's will to help others. God doesn't give you the power to stop the lion's mouth until He gives you the endurance to go through the lion's den. God doesn't give you the power to stop the fire that was consuming you and burning you until He gives you the endurance to go through the fire. The three Jewish boys Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego said to Nebuchadnezzar even they should die, they would not bow to any idol. They were committed and faithful to God. They were faithful unto death. And when you have that kind of endurance, you would have the attitude, "If I have to die by fire, let me die." Then God saves you and stops the fire from consuming you. The only people who had power over fire are those who are able to go through the fire.

It's important when we look at the will of God in our lives and guidance from God, there are a lot of times we are asking God's guidance to bring us out of circumstances or trying to take authority over circumstances that we haven't learned the lessons yet. And we are asking God to take us out of the situation, out of those trials, when those trials were trying to build the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

Let me explain again turn to Romans 5. There is no other way you can get character

except by tribulation. He doesn't send you sickness and disease for the blood of Jesus has redeemed you from sicknesses and diseases. But you have circumstances to endure that build the fruit of the Spirit in your life. And when they are built in you that's when the authority is there. Think about storms; the storm is blowing the windows are shattering and those around you say, "Stop the storm." You learn to endure. Throughout the storm you worship God. You thank God for His love, His protection. And finally storm after storm come, trial after trial come, until in the end no trial can shake you any more. No storm could ruffle your hair any more. No criticism can hurt you any more. No wrong words could hurt you any more. You have become very strong. And that same strength that you earned and you learned and you harnessed through your trial is the same strength that God will use. When one day the need is there and somebody else is going through the storm and he said to you, "Brother pray for me." You had gone through the storm and learned the great strength under such trying storms and you began to pray. When you pray while the wind is howling and the windows are shattering the storm obeys you. Because that storm has learned who is the master. When the storm cannot ruffle your hair the storm has learned who is the master. That's why faithfulness precedes full of faith. We get full of faith through first being faithful.

Let me read Jesus' words in the book of Matthew chapter 24:45 onwards *Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time.* It's the faithful servant the master makes. Then the other one in verse 48 the evil servant who is not faithful. In the end the faithful one gets rewarded. Let me encourage you Jesus is looking for faithfulness in our lives. Chapter 25:14 *For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled account with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward bringing five talents more, saying, "Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over little.*

I will make you ruler over many things. Did you notice that the authority to rule

comes from the authority to submit? He submitted first. He learns first. And that same energy that gives him power to submit is the same energy that gives him powers to rule.

I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master. And he also who had the two talents came forward saying, "Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little. (I will make you ruler over many things.) I will set you over much, enter into the joy of your master.

You find the three grouping there faithful, good and joy relates to love.

Verse 24 *He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, (now what was his problem. His problem was because he couldn't be faithful to the master because of his conception of the master. Isn't it strange that out of three servants, two think He is a good master, one thinks He is a bad master. Sometimes you are in a good church; ninety nine percent think it's a good church one percent think it's a bad church. You can go to any church and you can find people who think that it is not the best church. You go to Benny Hinn's church in Orlando you find some people there who think that is not the kind of church it should be. Lets not fool ourselves. If people cannot be loyal to any church they can never be loyal to any church. We learn loyalty with people and not as a hermit hiding on a mountain. Find a church that helps you. It may not be perfect but stick to it. Even if there are problems that come and go, even if there are misunderstandings that come and go, stick to that place because the only way you learn how to love and have the character of Jesus is by sticking together. If you keep running from place to place and every small little incident you are the problem and in the end it is you who loses out. It is you. Learn to be faithful in any thing that God ask you to do.)*

reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; (here is the key thing)

so I was afraid, (afraid of what? Afraid of the master? No, let me tell you what he was afraid of: losing his talent. He doesn't dare to invest it. He had never learned to sow in his life.)

and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours. He actually gave back to the master everything. He actually hasn't lost anything. But why was the master displeased? Here is the key if you remain the same it is failure. If in the Christian life you remain the same you are already a failure. We grow from glory to glory; faith to faith. And a lot of people like to be the same. If we stop we die, we failed. The Word must go on until the whole world is reached. We must press on until the gospel reached the nations of the world. We must never be satisfied with past success. We learn how to put it aside and press on for more until our last breath we must serve our Lord Jesus Christ and move on.

Verse 27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. The one who had the most still get the most. And Jesus makes this statement here in verse 29 For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance, but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is the key to being full of faith.

The other two, gentleness and meekness are related. We see gentleness in Galatians chapter 6:1 *Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.* Do you notice that it is the spirit of gentleness that will help you speak the right words? As I say again the last three groupings of the fruit of the Spirit relate to the proclaiming of God's Word through circumstances. And it is when you are in self-control that you can speak the right word. It is when meekness and gentleness has come. And meekness is a quality of being able to endure and take all circumstances quietly and meekly. Jesus says, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." When you think about meekness you think about people who are scolded and just took it meekly. Meekness is a quality of endurance. Not necessary a quality of being overcoming. Yet the same quality of endurance is the same quality of overcoming.

As for self-control, in the book of Proverbs it says that he who cannot rule over his own spirit or his own temper cannot rule over a city. But he who rules over his own temper or spirit he can rule over a city. This is the same principle. Think again if you can't control your temper you can't control other people. If you can control your own temper then you can control other people. It is the same way when it comes back to self-control. And of course these two qualities are related back to faithfulness.

Faithfulness, meekness and gentleness and self-control are qualities of endurance. Jesus did say talk to those who overcome, but if you look at what He means in Revelation 2 and 3, they actually overcome by endurance. And having endured they are now given authority to rule. The authority of endurance and the authority of overcoming are the same. When you have endured you have overcome. When you have overcome you can speak words of authority and you will rule over circumstances in your life. And the will of God in your life will not be hindered by circumstances because no circumstances can now face up to your endurance. And you have such power and authority that some times when circumstances try to rise all you have to do is speak the word of faith and the storms are calmed, the mountains are moved, the valleys are smoothened up. Such is the power that God gives you to proclaim His will.