

Lesson 10: The Best Evidence of the Spirit: An Attitude of Gratitude

Text: Ephesians 5:18-21

Theme: This lesson reveals the single most defining characteristic of the Spirit-filled Christian: a spirit of gratitude to God.

Introduction: The fruit of the Spirit as well as the gifts of the Spirit are visible evidences of the Holy Spirit's work in a believer's life. There is still another clue to the working of the Holy Spirit – an attitude of gratitude. Notice that gratitude and victory in the Christian life are linked together in I Cor 15:57 & II Cor 2:14. It is not natural to be grateful. We have so many natural reasons to complain, but we have a supernatural reason to be grateful – the working of the Holy Spirit. We should not be grateful only on seasonal occasions like Thanksgiving. Gratitude is a yearlong responsibility.

- I. A Spirit-Filled Christian is Controlled by the Spirit – and Gratitude Results (Eph 5:18-21: The five participles (ending with “-ing”) are actions which characterize a Spirit-filled person.)
 - A. Worshipping (*Speaking, singing, making melody*)
 1. When it comes time to worship, do **you** participate?
 2. Are you like the Psalmist (Ps. 42:4) who misses the times of worship & praise?
 - B. Submitting (Sign of Spirit-filling because it is against the flesh.)
 - C. Giving Thanks
 1. Do you realize what God has done for you?
 2. What kind of people do we like to be around?
- II. A Spirit-Filled Christian is Committed to the **Word** of God – and Gratitude Remains
 - A. Notice the Parallel Passages:
 1. Colossians 3:16-17 – Being filled with the Word results in gratitude.
 2. Ephesians 5:18-21 – Being filled with the Spirit results in gratitude.
 - B. The Holy Spirit and the Bible go together. “The Bible is the Holy Spirit's toolbox!”
- III. A Spirit-Filled Christian is Characterized by Peace – and Gratitude results
 - A. When you are at **peace** with God, you have cause to rejoice (Col 3:15).
 - B. At times in Paul's writing, he will break away from his teaching to take some time for praise! (Example: II Cor 2:14 stopped narrative to take time for praise then went back to narrative in 7:5; See also Phil 1:3-11)
- IV. A Spirit-Filled Christian is Constantly in Prayer – and Gratitude Results

- A. Different types of prayers should be accompanied by thanksgiving (**Phil** 4:6).
- B. Examples:
 1. Thank you for what I am praising you for.
 2. Thank you for this need so I can see God at work.
 3. Thank you for my friend and how God will be faithful to care for them.
- V. A Spirit-Filled Christian is Concerned with the Will of God – and Gratitude Results
 - A. The Will of God Concerning Gratitude is Clear (I Thess 5:18).
 1. Gratitude is **always** God's will.
 2. Ingratitude is a sign of a degenerate heart (Rom 1:21) & society (II Tim 3:1-5).
 3. Ingratitude keeps terrible company (II Tim 3:1-5).
 - B. The Will of God Concerning Gratitude is Comprehensive
 1. We are to be thankful in all things (Eph 5:20; Col 3:17).
 2. **Paul** was a thankful man even though he “was stoned at Lystra, driven out of Thessalonica, rejected by the Athenians, jailed by the Philippians, apprehended by the Caesareans, taken to Rome as a prisoner, shipwrecked on the way, released from prison, then sent back to prison, placed in a dungeon in Rome, and finally martyred for his faith.” (cf. II Cor 11: 22-33; II Cor 6:4-10 & 7:4)
 3. We need the spirit to recognize that we are “more than conquerors” even in the midst of great distresses (Rom 8:31-37).

Conclusion: In Africa, there is a little berry known as a taste berry. It changes your taste so that everything tastes sweet and pleasant. Gratitude is like the taste berry; it makes even the sour things in life sweet!

Application

1. Do you follow Psalm 92:1-2?
2. Start to keep a Journal of Gratefulness.
3. Where do you find comfort in the midst of trouble (II Cor 1:3-4)?

Don't miss the next lesson: *Spirit-Controlled Church Members: Submitting to One Another.*

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