

PNEUMATOLOGY (87)

Legalistic people cannot ever be Spirit filled spiritual people because God's Spirit is stifled by a legalism that is not conforming to God's work in this age. The Holy Spirit desires to produce a conformity to New Testament Grace Age truth and when a believer gets caught up in a system not consistent with this, no Holy Spirit-produced conformity and spirituality is possible.

QUESTION #12 – What may we anticipate in our own lives when the Holy Spirit is producing and developing a real spirituality in our lives?

First, we must observe what we may not expect—we may not expect perfection. It is very evident that the most spiritual people who ever lived were people who did not reach a state of being perfect. For example, the Apostle Paul identified himself in the present tense not long before he died as being the “foremost” of sinners. In other words, as remarkable and as spiritual as Paul was, he was still a sinner and still had some moments of sinful failure. God made provision for a spirituality that is not perfect in I John 1:9. It is the will of God that believers remain spiritual even when sinful and the key is immediate confession. In other words, when a spiritual Christian sins, he will immediately go to God and confess it and maintain fellowship and communion with God. Such action is the mark of one spiritual.

The Christian life is metaphorically likened in the New Testament to a race (I Corinthians 9:24-27; II Tim. 2:5), a warfare (Ephesians 6:11-18; II Tim. 2:3-4), and a walk (Gal. 5:16). If we combine these pictures, we may conclude that when the Holy Spirit is producing a true spirituality in our lives we will see victory in our daily lives.

Now we know from the New Testament that we have three main enemies of which we are in constant conflict: 1) The world; 2) The flesh; and 3) The devil. All three present us with an unceasing and relentless conflict designed to pull us away from God and pull us into ways which are evil. When we are walking or living in the power of God's Spirit, that is a moment-by-moment dependency on Him, we can expect to realize victory over these foes.

Foe #1 - The world.

The word “world” literally in Greek is cosmos. The word is just the opposite of chaos because it refers to an ordered system. The term, when used in regard to the foe against us, refers to that organized system which includes education, philosophies and religions, which is governed by an evil mastermind called the “prince of this world”—Satan (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). When one is being controlled by the Spirit, one will not be in a friendship with this world (James 4:4). This does not mean we do not live in the world or that we don't get along with people in the world or that we cannot have fun in the world; what it means is that we will be led by God's Spirit not to fall for or to love the empty and vain enticements—whether education, philosophies, religions or amusements which are inconsistent with the Word of God. Worldliness is not to be equated with enjoying life in the world. We have every right to enjoy life in this world. Dr. Chafer writes: “How misleading is the theory that to be spiritual one must abandon play, diversion and helpful amusement! Such a conception of spirituality is born of a morbid human conscience. It is foreign to the Word of God.

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It is a device of Satan to make the blessings of God seem abhorrent to young people who are overflowing with physical life and energy. It is to be regretted that there are those who in blindness are so emphasizing the negatives of Christian truth as to create the impression that spirituality is opposed to joy, liberty and naturalness of expression in thought and life when such are in the Spirit. Spirituality is not pious pose. It is not merely a 'Thou shalt not,' 'Thou Shalt.' It flings open the doors into eternal blessedness, energies and resources to God. It is a serious thing to remove the element of relaxation and play from any life. We cannot be normal physically, mentally or spiritually, if we neglect this vital factor of human life. God has provided so well that our joy can be full" (Vol. 6, p. 181).

When a believer is called "worldly," most times the people doing the calling don't even understand what they are talking about or the remedy which needs to be offered. By biblical standards, worldliness, as it relates to a believer, is one who is empty of true spirituality and is on a search for a life of meaning and fulfillment in one or more of the delusionary areas created in this world by the mastermind Satan. What has really happened to a "worldly Christian" is that the blessings and power of the Spirit have ceased flowing to and through that believer and frankly, that believer is absolutely miserable. When the believer is spiritual, victory will be experienced. One may get sidetracked for a moment, but not for long. God's Spirit will be so alive and vibrant in the spiritual believer's life that he will quickly spot the empty path and not only not love it, but hate it.

Foe #2 - The Flesh.

For sake of discussion, we may understand the term flesh as that part of our nature which is prone to sin. There is no human on earth that recognizes this reality more than the godly, spiritual believer. It is the spiritual believer who truly becomes aware of a fleshly nature, which he hates, which has a disposition to sin and do that which is evil. Perhaps the greatest text which deals with the fleshly sin nature in the life of a spiritual believer is Rom. 7:15-8:4. It is very evident that even the most spiritual of believers does not have the power, in and of himself, to gain victory over the flesh. But when we examine Galatians 5:16-17, we learn that victory over the flesh is only possible when we rely upon the Holy Spirit. This certainly coincides with what we seen in Romans. In Romans 7:25 we learn that in order for one to have victory over the flesh one must have the saving work of Jesus Christ. In Romans 8:2 we learn that in order for one to have victory over the flesh, one must have the Holy Spirit. From this context we observe five realities:

1. Every believer does have an old fleshly nature.
2. Every believer is called upon to wage a war against that old fleshly nature.
3. Every believer has received Christ, who died, meeting the required judgments against the flesh. (Gal. 5:24)
4. Every believer has the indwelling Spirit, equipping him with power to be victorious over the flesh.
5. Every believer who has victory will only do so by relying upon the Spirit and not his flesh.

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When a believer is spiritual he will experience victory over his flesh. The Spirit of God will be leading that believer to a continual lifestyle which is not controlled or governed by the fleshly things which are against God's Word and will.

Foe #3 - The devil.

Satan is very real and he wages a very real war against the believer. Peter said to believers, "your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (I Pet. 5:8). We are called to "resist him" standing "firm in our faith" (I Pet. 1:9) and we are called to "Be strong **in the Lord**" (Eph. 6:10). There can be no question that Satan realizes that God's Spirit lives in the believer and therefore he is out to shoot his fiery darts at the believer and if a believer is spiritual, his assault will be fierce.

It is important to realize that God has given us armor to withstand any satanic attack and it is not a flesh and blood armor (Eph. 6:11-17). Since we do not know precisely how Satan will attack for he is scheming, the spiritual believer can expect that his resistance by use of these weapons will eventually cause him to flee. The believer who is spiritual will see victory not in the sense of escaping warfare, but in the sense of withstanding the warfare with a love for God, His Word, truth, righteousness, and prayer.

When we are experiencing victory over these foes, we will also be experiencing a Spirit filled life.

In other words, on the negative side we have victory over enemies or we defeat enemies, but on the positive side the Spirit of God manifests Himself through us in several ways:

Positive Manifestation #1 - The Spirit of God will manifest Himself through the fruit of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22-23

There are nine superhuman qualities that cannot be produced by any human ability which are clearly a manifestation of the Spirit of God. They are: 1) Love; 2) Joy; 3) Peace; 4) Patience; 5) Kindness; 6) Goodness; 7) Faithfulness; 8) Gentleness; and 9) Self-Control.

Now the word "fruit" is singular, not plural. What this means is that these nine graces form an indivisible whole. As Dr. Chafer observed, "The Holy Spirit will not produce a few of these and not all of them. If any are present, all will actually be present" (Vol. 6, p. 201). Following the outline of Dr. Chafer, we would like to present a synopsis of each manifestation:

Fruit Manifestation #1 - The manifestation of love.

If ever there is a manifestation misunderstood, it is this one. Love is the antithesis of hate, so the Christian who is manifesting this love "will love what God loves and hate what God hates" (*Ibid.*, p. 203). When a believer hates what God hates, he is supernaturally manifesting Spirit love. Now this particular fruit manifestation will evidence itself in several ways:

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1) It will be a love that has a heart for lost people in the world. John 3:16; I John 2:2

True evangelistic zeal, or soul-winning passion is not produced by human exhortation or manipulation, it is produced by the Spirit of God. The passion will be to present the truth of Jesus Christ and His cross work to others so that men might be saved. When you have this desire, it is God's Spirit producing this in you.

2) It will be a love that is exclusive of the world and its system. I John 2:15-16

One who manifests this love will hate the world's system which moves people away from the truth of God.

3) It will be a love that is inclusive in the church. I John 4:12

Those who are manifesting true spirit love will have a heart to love those brothers and sisters in the church, especially the local church (I John 3:16-17). When one is more concerned about others in another church, that one is not manifesting the fruit of the Spirit.

4) It will be a love that includes a love for Israel. Jer. 31:3; Rom. 9:1-4

5) It will be a love that is willing to make sacrifices for others. I John 3:16

6) It will be a love that is pure. Romans 12:9

God loves what is pure. Dr. Chafer writes: "However, love, means, among other things, capacity to be indignant and to react in judgment upon that which is opposed to it unlawfully" (p. 205).

7) It will be a love that has a passion for God's Word. Psalm 119:97

Now let us clearly remember, these things cannot be achieved by human effort but can only be produced by the Holy Spirit of God. When the Spirit is producing this love through a body of believers, there will be an attractiveness to the world that will magnetically draw them in (John 17:21-23). This is true individually in our personal lives and true collectively in our church life.

Fruit Manifestation #2 - The manifestation of joy. John 15:11; I John 1:4; I Pet. 1:8

The joy being discussed here is not something that can be human produced or even increased or decreased by human will. This is a joy that the Spirit of God produces in the heart of the believer which supernaturally enables one to manifest a joy in the Lord, even when experiencing suffering or sorrow. It is the nature of God to be both sad and glad at the same time and it is the Holy Spirit who produces this same type of joy in the believer.