

The Book Of Romans
True Spiritual Leadership 3
Session 8

Romans 1:8-16 (NASB)

⁸ *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.*

⁹ *For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you,*

¹⁰ *always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.*

¹¹ *For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;*

¹² *that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.*

¹³ *I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.*

¹⁴ *I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.*

¹⁵ *So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.*

¹⁶ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

In our last study we talked about how many serve from many motives, and many of the motives are simply external, and no matter how orthodox or helpful to other people the service might be, unless it is done out of a sincere desire to please and glorify God, it is not spiritual nor acceptable to Him.

In these verses we just read, Paul gives us a suggested ten marks of true spiritual service:

A thankful spirit (v8)

A concerned spirit (v9)

A willing and submissive spirit (v10b)

A loving spirit (v11)

And these we talked about last time together, so let's talk about the next three tonight,

A humble spirit (12)

A fruitful spirit (v13)

An obedient spirit (v14)

An eager spirit (v15)

And the 10th, a bold spirit mentioned in verse 16a

A HUMBLE SPIRIT

Romans 1:12 (NASB)

¹² *that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.*

Lest his readers think that he had in mind a one way blessing, Paul assures them that a visit would be to his benefit as well as theirs.

Although he was a highly gifted and greatly used apostle, having received revealed truth directly from God, Paul never thought that he was above being spiritually edified by other believers.

The truly thankful, concerned, willing, submissive, and loving spirit is also a humble spirit.

The person with such a spirit never has a feeling of spiritual superiority, and never lords it over those he serves in Christ's name.

There is none so void of gifts in the Church of Christ that they cannot in some measure contribute to our spiritual progress.

Ill will and pride, however, prevent our deriving such benefit from one another.

Peter warned elders not to lord it over those given to their care but rather to be examples for them;

1 Peter 5:1-4 (NASB)

¹ *Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,*

² *shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;*

³ *nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.*

⁴ *And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.*

Then he went on to advise both older and younger men to clothe themselves with humility;

1 Peter 5:5 (NASB)

⁵ *You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.*

Paul was one of the greatest theologians who ever lived, and yet he was also one of the most humble men of all. He was blessed beyond measure, yet he had no spiritual pride or intellectual arrogance.

Because he had not attained spiritual perfection but genuinely pursued it, he was eager to be spiritually helped by all the believers in the Roman church, young as well as old, mature as well as immature.

It is unfortunate not only that many learned and gifted leaders in the church think they are above learning from or being helped by younger and less experienced believers but also unfortunate that less experienced believers often feel they have nothing to offer their leaders. That culture or that environment is often cultivated by the leaders themselves.

When he was about to board a ship to India to begin missionary service there, some of William Carey's friends asked if he really wanted to go through with his plans.

Expressing his great desire for their support in prayer, he is said to have replied, "I will go down into the pit itself if you will hold the rope" (S. Pearce Carey, William Carey [London: The Carey Press, 1934], pp. 117-118).

A FRUITFUL SPIRIT

Romans 1:13 (NASB)

¹³ *I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.*

Paul often used a phrase such as **I do not want you to be unaware** as a means of calling attention to something of great importance that he was about to say.

He used it to introduce his teaching about such things as the mystery of God's calling Gentiles to salvation

Romans 11:25 (NASB)

²⁵ *For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;*

Or the teaching of spiritual gifts:

1 Corinthians 12:1 (NASB)

¹ *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.*

Or the second coming of Christ;

1 Thessalonians 4:13 (NASB)

¹³ *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.*

Here he uses it to introduce his determined plan to visit the saints at Rome,

Romans 1:13 (NASB)

¹³ *often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far)*

He assures his readers that as far as his own plans were concerned, he would have come to them long beforehand had he not **been prevented** from doing so.

His intent was not to make a social call but to **obtain some fruit among** the believers in Rome, **even as among the rest of the Gentiles** to whom he ministered.

Paul's ministry was an unending quest for spiritual fruit.

His preaching, teaching, and writing were not ends in themselves.

The purpose of all true ministry for God is to bear fruit in His name and with His power and for His glory.

John 15:16a (NASB)

¹⁶ *"You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain,*

In regard to spiritual life, the Bible uses the term fruit in three ways.

In one way, it is used as a metaphor for the attitudes that characterize the Spirit led believer. The nine fold, "fruit of the Spirit," Paul says is, *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*" (Gal 5:22-23)

In a second way, spiritual fruit refers to action;

Romans 6:22 (NASB)

²² *But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, (fruit) resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.*

That is holy living.

The active fruit of a Christian's lips is praise

Hebrews 13:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ *Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.*

And the active fruit of his hands is giving;

Philippians 4:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ *for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.*

¹⁷ *Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit (profit is literally fruit) which increases to your account.*

The third way, spiritual fruit involves addition, the increase of converts to Christ and the increase of their spiritual growth in Him.

Paul spoke of Epaphroditus as being the first convert [lit, first fruit] to Christ from Asia”

Romans 16:5 (NASB)

⁵ *also greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epaphroditus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.*

Among the Romans, the fruit Paul longed for was of the third kind, addition. It included both new converts and maturing converts.

They were spiritual fruit in the broadest sense of being the product of the gospel’s power in men’s lives, both to save and to sanctify.

The apostle wanted to be used to help the Roman church grow through new converts and grow in sanctification, which includes growth in service to Christ.

When some years later, he wrote to the Philippian church from Rome, he was able to give greetings even from believers within, “Caesar’s household”. Most believe these were the converts he himself led to Christ saving grace.

As we have already said, in the name of the Lord’s work some people strive for prestige or acceptance or money, or crowds or influence

But a Christian who serves from the heart and whose spiritual service is genuine strives only to be used of the Lord to bear fruit for Him.

The Christian who settles for less is one who serves only externally.

Nothing is more encouraging to pastors, Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, and other Christian workers than to see spiritual results in the lives of those to whom they minister.

Nothing is more deeply rewarding than the lasting joy of leading others to Christ or helping them grow in the Lord.

AN OBEDIENT SPIRIT

Romans 1:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ *I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.*

Paul continues to show us his attitudes and reasons for ministry, explaining that he did not preach and teach the gospel because of personal reasons or because the calling seemed attractive, but because he was **under obligation**.

1 Corinthians 9:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ *For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.*

¹⁷ *For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.*

Now what is revealed here is that he is serving in the spirit, with all the attributes of the Spirit, yet the motivation behind his service is that of being under obligation.

Although he loved the Roman Christians and wanted to visit them, he was sovereignly appointed to this ministry long before he had a personal desire for it.

Every sincere pastor and Christian worker knows there are times when ministry is its own reward. When study, preparation, teaching, and shepherding are exhilarating in themselves.

There are other times when the work does not seem very attractive, and yet you still study, prepare, teach, and shepherd because you are under obligation to God and to those you are serving.

Christ is our Lord and we are His servants; and it is a poor servant who serves only when he feels like it.

Paul was under obligation in at least two ways.

First, he was under **obligation** to God on behalf of the Gentiles.

Because God had appointed him as a unique apostle to the Gentiles

Romans 1:1-5 (NASB)

¹ *Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,*

² *which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures,*

³ *concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,*

⁴ *who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,*

⁵ *through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake,*

Acts 9:13-15 (NASB)

¹³ *But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem;*

¹⁴ *and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."*

¹⁵ *But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;*

He was under a unique and divine obligation to minister the gospel to them.

Secondly, he had an **obligation**, or debt, to the Roman believers directly, because of their spiritual need.

That is the kind of obligation a person has to someone whose house is on fire or who is drowning.

When someone is in great danger and we are able to help, we are automatically and immediately under obligation to do what we can to save them.

Because unbelieving Gentiles, like unbelieving Jews, face spiritual death, Paul was obligated to help rescue them through the gospel.

Greeks and barbarians, wise and foolish.

Greeks were referencing the learned, the **barbarians** the unlearned.

Or in a broader sense the Greek and the non-greek.

Paul is saying that he has a responsibility to the educated and the uneducated, the sophisticated and the simple, the privileged and the underprivileged.

His obligation was to all. Paul was no respecter of persons

The Gospel is a great equalizer, because every human being is equally lost without it, and equally saved by it.

The first person Jesus revealed Himself to as the Messiah was an adulterous woman who had a number of husbands and was living with a man who was not her husband.

Not only that, but she was a Samaritan, a member of a race greatly despised by Jews.

Yet Jesus drew her to Himself in loving compassion, and she was used to bring many of her fellow Samaritans to faith in the Messiah. (John 4:7-42)

True Spiritual Leadership will find as one of its attributes to be an obedient spirit to the obligation for which we were called.