

Study 9. Three Kinds of People

Becoming a Disciple Series

Warm-up Question: Share a favorite story about one of your grandparents.

What You Are is What You Will Reproduce

The father of Jonathan Edwards was a minister, and his mother was the daughter of a clergyman. Among their descendants were fourteen presidents of colleges, more than one hundred college professors, more than one hundred lawyers, thirty judges, sixty physicians, more than a hundred clergymen, missionaries and theology professors, and about sixty authors. There is scarcely any great American industry that has not had one of his family among its chief promoters. Such is the product of one American Christian Family, reared under the most favorable conditions. The contrast is presented in the Jukes family, which could not be made to study and would not work, and is said to have cost the state of New York a million dollars. Their entire record is one of pauperism and crime, insanity and imbecility. Among their twelve hundred known descendants, three hundred and ten were professional paupers, four hundred and forty were physically wrecked by their own wickedness, sixty were habitual thieves, one hundred and thirty were convicted criminals, fifty five were victims of impurity, only twenty learned a trade (and ten of those learned it in a state prison), and this notorious family produced seven murderers.¹

One can teach what one knows, but we can only reproduce what we are. Jesus commanded us to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19), but we cannot do that until we are disciples ourselves. The fruit of an apple is not just more apples but more trees. With seven billion people on planet Earth, we need to produce spiritual orchards and not just apples. I am only one, but if I can give my life as a seed, I want to be a seed that will grow orchards, just like my Master modeled to me. What we are is what we will reproduce. He said in another place,

“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, Let me take the speck out of your eye, when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye (Matthew 7:3-5).

We that belong to Christ often want to see visible fruit from our lives right away, but God’s beginning purpose is more internal than external. It’s a bit like the Chinese Bamboo tree, for when the bamboo sprout is planted in the ground; nothing is seen to be happening for four to five years (and sometimes more). No matter how much care and attention to detail that one gives to it, there is no outward manifestation until sometime in the fifth year. When it breaks ground, all of a sudden, in six weeks it can grow to be ninety feet high. World Book Encyclopedia records that one bamboo tree can grow three feet in a single twenty-four hour period.² The training of Jesus toward His disciples was for them to have attitudes that modeled to others, what He had

¹ As told by J. Oswald Sanders in the book *Spiritual Clinic*, published by Moody Press, 1958.

² Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, Zondervan Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI. Page 394.

modeled to them. Often we cannot see the internal work that God is doing in the lives of those to whom we minister. Then suddenly there is a burst of growth that often surprises the leader. Continue to model to others what Jesus has been teaching and leave the results to God. We can only model to others what we are; otherwise, we are just hypocrites, stage actors on the play of life. We must look at the internal fruit of the tree of our lives and make sure that ‘our tree’ has been made good by the Spirit’s work is dying to self and being alive to Christ.

³³“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of (Matthew 12:33-34).

Three Kinds of People

¹⁴The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. ¹⁵The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, ¹⁶for, “Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:14-16).

- 1) Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians two and three, about three kinds of people, the person without the Spirit, the spiritual man, and the fleshly man. The words used, *the person without the Spirit*, is a translation of the Greek word, *psuchikos*; it identifies the unregenerate sensual person, one who is governed by natural instincts and has no desire or sensitivity to the things of God. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; he is enslaved to his passions and the things of this world. Such a person is not aware of God at work in the world and does not accept or discern spiritual things. Human reasoning or emotions motivate him.
- 2) The spiritual man is contrasted with the man without the Spirit in verse fifteen. The Greek word used is *pneumatikos*. This word is used to describe one who is spiritually minded and awake to the things of God. He thinks the thoughts of God and is led and motivated by the Spirit of God. This man has been born-again of God’s Spirit and wants to please God more than self. The seed of the Word of God has been understood, valued and has germinated in his life—he is growing as a Christian. Jesus talked about this kind of person in the Parable of the Sower as a person who hears the word of God and puts it into practice in his life:

But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown” (Matthew 13:23).

When Jesus talked about the difference in the yield of the crop, what do you think it could represent?

What stops a person from investing himself to the level where he will receive 100-fold fruit.

There are varying degrees of fruitfulness in the spiritual man's life depending on how much of his inner life is under the control of the Spirit. It is not about how much of the Spirit of God a man (or woman) has; but rather, it is more about how much control of the person's life the Spirit has. There has to be a level of obedience to the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The spiritual man at the point of his will chooses to obey God rather than his emotional or physical inclinations. The more of the seed of the Word of God he hears and puts into practice the more fruitful he will become. He who is genuinely abandoned to God will bear hundredfold fruit.

- 3) There is a further distinction amongst believers that Paul mentions. In writing to these people that attend the Corinthian church, Paul calls them brothers. We note that they are Christians; otherwise, he would not call them brothers. He calls them worldly (1 Corinthians 3:1-2) as opposed to spiritual. The Greek word is *sarkikos*, from *sarx* which means flesh, body, that which pertains to the flesh or body. Upon conversion and regeneration, the Spirit of God comes into the person's life, and he or she is born-again and come into the Kingdom of God. The problem though is that the new believer still retains the sinful nature with its evil inclinations (Galatians 5:16-18). As believers, the Lord is working on us to overcome those evil inclinations by the power of the Spirit of God residing in us. This is not a work done in a day but an ongoing work of the Spirit to renew our mind and restore our soul.

¹Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still **worldly**—mere infants in Christ. ²I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. ³You are still **worldly**. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? ⁴For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings? ⁵What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. ⁷So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. ⁹For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. ¹⁰By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. ¹¹For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. ¹⁴If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. ¹⁵If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames (1 Corinthians 3:1-15).

Paul is answering a letter from the Corinthians and pointing out four things that concern him as to the health of the Church.

What four things can you see in the passage we have read that concerns Paul?

- 1) They are worldly and "infants in Christ."

- 2) They were still on “milk” and could not be given solid food (meat).
- 3) They were nursing unconfessed sin, jealousy and quarreling (verse 3).
- 4) They were walking like mere human beings (verse 4).

When Paul says to the Corinthian church that he could only give them milk, what do you think he is meaning? (verse 2). What would be solid food?

We Are All Called to Build

¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (Ephesians 4:15-16).

⁴For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function: ⁵so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully (Romans 12:4-8).

A Disciple is to be self-controlled.

³Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵**to be self-controlled** and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. ⁶Similarly, encourage the young men to be **self-controlled**. ⁷In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness ⁸and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us (Titus 2:3-8).

Prayer: Father, we ask that all those who are believers will see that each of us is called to reach beyond ourselves to those that are without Christ. Grant us the power to live for You and testify to all You have done. Help us to be flexible, available and teachable. Amen!

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