

How God Coaches You

by John Edmiston

Walking In the Spirit Series - 7 (A Ministry of Eternity Christian Fellowship)

Yesterday we found that the Holy Spirit is our 'paraclete' – that is our individual Coach who guides each of us into salvation and helps each of us to be transformed into the image of God's beloved Son:

Romans 8:29 ISV *For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 HCSB *(17) Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (18) We all, with unveiled faces, are reflecting the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

Now what does this coaching ministry look like in action? There are at least seven areas that the Holy Spirit coaches us into:

1. The Holy Spirit coaches the sinner into salvation by convicting the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8)
2. The Holy Spirit reveals Christ to the Christian (John 14:16,17,26, Ephesians 1:17)
3. The Holy Spirit sheds love abroad in the heart of the believer (Romans 5:5) and helps us to be strong in the inner man so we can know the love of God in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 3:14-21) and teaches us to love others also (1 Thessalonians 4:9).
4. The Holy Spirit imparts wisdom, balance, good judgment and a calm spirit of excellent discernment. (Ephesians 1:17, Colossians 1:9, James 3:17,18)
5. The Holy Spirit coaches us into Christian character and fruitfulness (Galatians 5:22,23) and helps us with our prayer life (Romans 8:26)
6. The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to endure life's trials, by comforting us, encouraging us and enabling us to endure patiently. (Colossians 1:11,12, 2 Timothy 1:7, 2 Corinthians 1:3-5)
7. The Holy Spirit imparts power for Christian witness (Acts 1:8) and grants gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His will (1 Corinthians 12:1-11)

But what does this coaching look like and what does it feel like? Is it a booming voice from Heaven? A subtle nudge? A feeling? An "Aha" moment of enlightenment? Well booming voices from Heaven are rather rare!

The coaching ministry of the Holy Spirit is generally a quiet, insistent, inner work of God that keeps on nudging us in a certain very positive direction. Sometimes we oppose it and 'go kicking and screaming' into salvation or into a ministry or calling of some sort. More often it is just something that grows within us, often just at or even below our level of consciousness and which gradually transforms us so that we start seeing the world differently, and then start feeling and reacting differently.

For instance if you pray for the gift of administration you may suddenly start to see how things should be put in order and how things can best be done as God downloads these things into your human spirit via the Holy Spirit.

Let's work two contrasting examples around the Christian calling to love one another:

Mr. Self-Sufficient takes the approach of "powerless religion" and self-help. This person gets out his Greek books and studies the meaning of 'agape love' and pores over the commentaries and all the self-help books. He can define love exactly and knows what love is and can preach a great sermon on love - but still cannot keep his temper when his wife annoys him. That is because his knowledge is mere human knowledge. Any intelligent person, Christian or non-Christian, can read the same books, and come to the same conclusions and even preach the same sermon. As someone who once briefly sat under a 'knowledgeable' but completely unsaved pastor I know that this is possible.

On the other hand Mercy the Christian realizes she cannot love unless God puts love within her heart. So she cries out for love. She asks God to teach her how to love. She knows she is bankrupt on her own. And the Holy Spirit starts shedding God's love abroad in her heart. She starts seeing the world with loving eyes. She starts understanding people's feelings and being of practical help. Love becomes a growing inner awareness within Mercy's life. Her perception subtly starts to change to be more loving, her desires start to be molded in a different direction and new loving attitudes and actions begin to emerge from within her.

Mercy now knows she is loved by God and she knows that she wants to love others. Sacrifice becomes easy and natural and selfishness seems increasingly horrid to her. She is appalled by cruelty and her patience with people grows every day. As she reads the Bible she sees countless commands to love and examples of love and she finds herself more and more able to put them into practice. Mercy also now finds herself more willing and able to follow the loving examples of those over her in the faith (Hebrews 13:7).

When she is unloving there is an inner prompting to apologize, to correct it and to do better next time. Every day, in many different ways, Mercy finds God the Holy Spirit alongside her teaching her how to love, how to be kind, how to show compassion and so on. In the ordinary days, the good days and especially on the tough days He is there showing her how to be a loving Christian in the midst of it all. Her knowledge is supernatural knowledge, spiritual knowledge, imparted directly to Mercy's spirit by God.

It is in our spirit that our deepest 'knowing' happens. The spirit is the lamp of our souls. Our spirit is where our true inner wisdom resides and it is where God teaches us to follow Christ in all humility and godliness.

Now these two approaches are like chalk and cheese. And you can't digest the chalk!

The person who is taught by God, who is led by the Holy Spirit, is like Mercy the Christian. They experience a daily tutoring in the things of God. Their spiritual eyes are opened and a new wisdom is given to them. They are instructed in the inner man and their Christian life grows out of deep internal changes in Who they are becoming (they are becoming like Christ).

All Christians need to take the path of Mercy the Christian. We need to give up religious striving and legalism and the efforts of mere human knowledge. Instead we need to completely cast ourselves on God, and to regularly pray and to seek His changes, His instructions and His blessings within us (Ephesians 1:3, Matthew 7:7, 6:33).

And by faith we need to listen to the anointing which He has poured out on us(1 John 2:20,27) and hearken to God's revelations through the Holy Spirit - which reveal all that God has for us (1 Corinthians 2:9-16).

Now most of this spiritual knowledge is 'unspectacular' and undramatic. It is about things such as how to be loving and kind, or how to evangelize, or how to be bold and courageous. Very few people get authentic revelations about the End Times. It is spiritual knowledge not because it is weird but because it is peaceful, good and heavenly (James 3:17) and because it is imparted spiritually (Ephesians 1:17,18).

Grace, Holiness & God As Coach

Grace is given to make us holy. Grace is not a license to sin any time we like. Grace is God's kindness to us so that we can keep on learning to follow Him. Grace (among many other things) involves God empowering us and teaching us inwardly as disciples, as learners from God, in the art of being a Christian.

When I was young we lived on a small steep hill which descended to a busy main road. One Christmas I received a bicycle and with a bit of pushing I rode it safely around the house. I then (mistakenly) decided to ride down the hill. But no one had told me how to put on the old-fashioned back-pedal brakes! The bicycle went quickly downhill until I was faced with the choice of the busy main road or a muddy ditch. I chose the ditch. Grace is your Heavenly Father pulling you out of the muddy ditch you have ended up in and teaching you how to ride your bicycle properly so you do not end up back in the ditch again!

There are many aspects to grace (and they often overlap in meaning)– for instance:

- a) The gracious removal of a legal fine or penalty. Forgiveness, wiping the slate clean.
- b) Grace as the practical working power of sanctification, cleansing and renewal
- c) Grace as a gift of ability strength, power or endurance.
- d) Grace as imparting spiritual gifts and miracles - 'charismata' (literally grace gifts)
- e) Grace as an attribute of God, His kindness to us, God's Riches At Christ's Expense
- f) The throne of grace – the experience of God's prayer answering power in time of need
- g) The special favor and blessing of God upon an individual life
- h) The grace that operates in us prior to salvation and leads us to be saved
- i) The grace of God's choosing us in Him before the foundation of the world

All these aspects of grace are centered in the love of God, in the character of God Himself and in His faithfulness to His covenant promises that are all Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus. Grace is not an impersonal spiritual force that is imparted by ritual or by association with holy artifacts. Grace is God Himself at work in our lives.

The first impression I got of grace (as a young Christian) was that it was just God wiping the slate clean after I had sinned. I would make a mistake, God would forgive, and then it was up to me to figure out how to do better next time and to get it right from that point on. God was the Heavenly Scorekeeper, and Christ made sure I never went negative, but I had to make all the plays, get all the runs and figure out how to play the game!

This was a very stressful view of God and of grace that eventually led to me being spiritually burned out. But what is the correct view of grace?

Romans 8:31-39 MKJV *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (32) Truly He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (33) Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who justifies. (34) Who is he condemning? It is Christ who has died, but rather also who is raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. (35) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) As it is written, "For Your sake we are killed all*

the day long. We are counted as sheep of slaughter." (37) But in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us. (38) For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (39) nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Along with Jesus God freely gives us 'all things' - that is God gives us everything we require to become sons and daughters of the living God. That includes His comfort, His coaching and inner tuition, His power and might, His insight and understanding, and many other things. We do not have to struggle on our own. God is not just the Divine Scorekeeper – He is right there with us, on the field, helping us with every play.

So what happens if you sin? As you repent, God forgives, as you ask for cleansing He cleanses (1 John 1:9) and as you ask for power to be holy and to resist future temptation Christ intercedes in the heavenlies (Romans 8:34) asking that you be strengthened with might in the inner man (Ephesians 3:14-21).

Grace involves the actual experience of God's unconditional love for you. God does not want you to go around feeling guilty all day (that is the Law). Instead God wants you to go around feeling loved by God every minute of the day. The above verses in Romans 8 plainly state that 'nothing can separate us from the love of Christ'. Sin was dealt with at the cross, and since then no power, principality or life circumstance can stop the flow of God's love towards you!

Indeed a good family that produces godly balanced successful children is always a family in which unconditional love abounds. It is a family where people are simply loved for who they are, no strings attached. On the other hand dysfunctional families are often grace-less, condemning, and harsh. In a similar vein God's love, which is God's grace, matures us into His image.

Romans 5:5 MKJV *And hope does not make us ashamed, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us.*

Ephesians 3:16-19 MKJV *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; (17) that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, (18) may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, (19) and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.*

John Edmiston

This Article – How God Coaches You is © Copyright AIBI-International 2009

This article may be freely reproduced for non-profit ministry purposes but may not be sold in any way and must be reproduced "as is" without alteration. Just e-mail us at johned@aibi.ph