

LESSON EIGHT

What influences our lives

I thought that what the Lord had taught me about putting on the Heavenly garments was completed, but now He began to show me that He had only introduced me to how to wear them. There was a lot more He was going to teach me.

Yes, we have just read the chapter on being clothed from the heavenly realm, but one cannot clothe the negatives in our lives. We need to get rid of every negative piece of clothing that restricts us from living truly for Christ and hinders us in certain areas of our lives. How did these negative things come into our lives? Did we invite them in, or did they just come into us somehow and from somewhere? For many of us these negative things came into us either by circumstance or by influences, and we just continue wearing them.

We are also influenced by those around us. As children by our parents, at school by our teachers and at play by our friends. As we grow up we are influenced by our work colleagues, or those we meet in sport or in our neighbourhood.

These influences can be positive or negative, yet have a strong role in forming our character. These influences, one tends to receive as normal as being that close to us. We receive them, put them on and put them into practice, without even a thought as to any outcome of them.

When we become Christians though, we need to take a stricter view of where these influences actually come from. We will discover that some influences come from the Kingdom of Heaven and are helpful to us, whilst others that we have received and wear are not of good repute or helpful to us and that they actually come from the kingdom of darkness.

The Bible is very clear on discarding what is bad and turning from it and then seeking truth and righteousness in every area of our lives.

The fruits of the Holy Spirit operating through our lives shows the character of Jesus forming in our lives, but we must co-operate by receiving and embracing the Holy Spirit within us, and yielding ourselves to live out what He shows us in word and action in our everyday lives in His love. This does take time, even years, for the fruits to grow, form and show through our lives. Let us then yield for this growth to happen, even as fruit trees, that take a whole year to grow and produce their fruits. Trust and let God grow His fruits through your life as well.

“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit.” Matthew 12; 33

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is a product of the light of God flowing through us. We must therefore walk in the light. Light is righteousness whereas darkness is sin. If we sin, we kill the fruit.

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4; 3-4.

But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3; 16 - 18.

For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true) and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light.. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Ephesians 5; 8 - 14.

Darkness shuts down the Spirit, which also shuts down our mind. Light comes when we open up to God who opens our mind and enables us to think in a more easy, clear and orderly way. Now we are able to overcome all darkness because we are children of light. The fruit of the Spirit is the fruit of light.

Darkness is totally opposed to the light with absence of peace, our soul though is a light receiver giving us peace. It is therefore important to never minimise sin, or even think on it, but to get rid of it by exposing it to the light through repentance, causing it to flee. So light will shine upon us forevermore. Think a moment of a shuttle in space. While it's in space one can only see darkness around it. That is because there is nothing in space. Yet once the shuttle re-enters the atmosphere, the resistance of the air particles give off light. Now think of the person who is able to resist the temptation of sin, to now shine with the glory of God's light upon him.

To discern the positive from the negative influences in your life, it is useful to make a list.

First list of all the positive influences in your life and how they have affected you. These are things that have made you a better person and influenced you with the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. against such there is no law. Galatians 5; 22-23

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Philippians 4; 8

The other list would be of all the negative influences in your life and how they have affected you. These could be bad habits or things that have hindered you in life. They could be influenced or be from the desires of the flesh.

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Galatians 5; 19

These negative things cannot go to heaven, but will rather take us down into the kingdom of darkness. This is why we must address them and get rid of them so seriously. Let's make a list of them.

Once you have done that, rid yourself from the unwanted influences and grow in the positive influences. To do this one can look to the goal you wish to reach in your life. For instance, where do you want to spend eternity? Most people would choose Heaven, very few if any would choose hell. This is very fundamental yet very real. A useful way to do this, is with a chart. Lets use **Heaven as a goal**.

Present Situation.	Forces hindering.	Forces helping.	Steps to goal.
Goal			
Write them down.	How negative things have hindered you.	What Jesus has done. Situations helping.	Accept Jesus as Lord. Live as a Christian. Turn from negatives. Concentrate on positives.

This can help transform your life and prepare you to start wearing your heavenly clothing. You can also use this simple chart for other things like your goals within this life, helping you to plan, as to how to achieve them.

Life is a journey into eternal life, and to some, it may feel more like a roller coaster ride with the many ups and downs we go through. Sometimes these downs in life are caused through negative things of life just happening, and sometimes through wrong choices or through sin.

Looking at our lives is therefore very important, so that we can adjust them accordingly and head ourselves into the right direction. Whether we have been influenced by others, or through our fleshly desires, or directly from the Kingdom of darkness, we need to repent, forgive others as well as forgiving yourself. You may have believed a lie that was said against you when you were younger, or simply believed the lies of the enemy - i.e. that you have no calling on your life, or you are no good. Ask the Lord even now for His grace to empower you to fulfil the work He has chosen you to do for Him, no matter how great or small. There is something that the Lord has called each one of us to do for His Kingdom and we are all equal. Even "the least will be the greatest" and "the first will be last." Make a concrete decision to turn round from every negative influence and pursue His Kingdom and His righteousness. This will prepare you for your goal of eternity in Heaven.

1 Corinthians also explains the results of the resurrection of your body, which will become the result of giving up every negative thing within you and preparing yourself for the Heavenly Kingdom.

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being", the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the Earth, a man of dust; the second man is from Heaven.

1 Corinthians 15; 42-47

(Reading on in the Old King James Version, it reads)

As is the earthly, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have born the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, as a brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

And all this gives victory over death,

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 1Corinthians 51; 54 (King James Version)

Think a moment,

Decay will be replaced by glorious indestructibility.

Weakness will be replaced by power.

The natural will be replaced by the supernatural.

Mortality will be replaced by immortality.

Lord, I come to you now. Please search me for any negative rags from the Kingdom of darkness that I may still be wearing. (Spend some time on this and ask the Lord for His forgiveness and to free you from any negative garment you may still be wearing, and replace them for His Heavenly garments).

Thank you Lord for delivering me from every rag from the Kingdom of darkness and help me live in your Heavenly garments from now on.

Thank you Lord, Amen.