**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, October 2, 2020**

Good afternoon!

While I was in the Navy I was assigned to the Azores, a group of islands in the Atlantic Ocean roughly 1000 miles west of mainland Portugal. While there, two of my friends suggested that we go horseback riding. They were both from the mid-west and enjoyed doing this, but being from Queens N.Y. I had never been on a horse before in my life. Well, in the end, I was willing to give it a try. After finding a place to rent some horses we began our trek across the island. We quickly realized that saying “giddy-up” was not effective due to the fact that the horses only understood Portuguese words. A nearby person seeing our problem called out “andele” the local word for "get a move on!" With that, the horses began to respond. When we got out into an open area, we began yelling andele, andele, and the horses broke into a full run. As we were approaching the end of the island, I began to get nervous and started yelling woe, woe, but my horse did not respond and I didn’t know the Portuguese word for stop! This was now a battle between me and the horse. Who will be in control! Believing that I had no other option, I decided to stop him, NY style! I grabbed his mane with my left hand and started hitting him with my right hand! This only made him run faster. Feeling like I had no choice at this point, it was time to eject from the horse, so I jumped off at about 35 mph. Long story short, next time I’ll take a cab!

When it comes to being led by the Holy Spirit, the single question that needs to be answered is “Who is in control?” When we speak of the fruit of the Spirit, we rarely look at the verses that lead up the list of the fruit in Galatians 5:22-23. Listen to how Paul sets up the context in Galatians 5:16-18 with the battle between the flesh and the Spirit, in a sense asking, “Who is in control?” But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.” Submission to the Holy Spirit is not something that can be forced upon us, (just like the horse I was trying to bring into submission). It must be chosen!

Two important points to fully experience the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

1. The fruit of the Spirit is a by-product of my submission to the control of the Holy Spirit! Paul just said that the Spirit and the flesh are in opposition to one another. Who is going to be in control? If the flesh, then it will result in the deeds of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). If the Spirit is in control, then the fruit of the Spirit is the result. (Galatians 5:22-23). Remember this is the Spirit’s fruit, not mine. He is the fruit producer; I am only the fruit bearer! In John 15:5 Jesus tells us “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” Notice the emphasis on being connected to the vine. The fruit is only a by-product of abiding in the vine! Our goal every day should not be based on our human effort to work harder at doing better to love, have joy, peace., patience...etc. Rather, what we need to do is submit to the Holy Spirit, the fruit producer, let Him take control and the natural by-product will be His fruit. You see humanly, we can only love to a certain point, be joyful with limits, etc. These are fleshly efforts. However, when we are faced with the need for more, before we respond, simply say Holy Spirit have your way with me and let me bear Your fruit through me!

2. Beware of the fake fruit! Growing up my mom had a bowl of fruit on the dining room table that looked great. However, it was fake fruit made out of some type of hard plastic. It looked like the real deal but in reality, it wasn’t. When it comes to the Holy Spirit’s fruit, what does fake fruit look like? Two of the most popular substitutes for real fruit are spiritual gifts and natural talents. Remember the church at Corinth? It was packed with gifted people but they were also disconnected from the sensitivity of the being led by the Spirit. They were led more by the flesh! Paul said in I Corinthians 3:1-3. And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh... are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? They were brethren, gifted, and talented but were fake fruit-focused! Fake fruit is not a measuring stick for spiritually! In Acts 6:3 when some servants were selected to serve, we do not read that they selected men who possessed talents, special abilities, and gifts, but rather men full of the Spirit! Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. Folks, gifts, and talents can be very profitable. They can help with being good at organizing a gospel meeting, writing books, and more, but no gift or talent is a proof of one being under the control and influence of the Holy Spirit! Who is in control of your life? Let’s submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit of God and He will produce the fruit in our lives that we bear! To God be the glory!

Blessings,

Mike