

Discipleship Lesson 20

The Filling of the Spirit

Key Memory Verse:

*And do not be drunk with wine, in which is
dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.*

Ephesians 5:18



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As you study this lesson you will understand why the following statements are **not true**.

1. To be filled with the Spirit you must speak in tongues.
2. To be filled with the Spirit you should have some emotional experience.
3. God only fills special Christians at unique times.
4. Once you are saved you can lose the Holy Spirit if you live sinfully.

What Does It Mean to Be Filled with the Spirit?

Wild horses are of little value until someone takes the time and energy to break them and control them. Once they are brought under control, they have a tremendous value. The same is true of us. God wants to gently break our stubborn, sinful will and guides through His Holy Spirit. When that happens, we have tremendous value for God's glory.

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to discover what it means to be filled with the Spirit and how to stay filled with the Spirit.

Introduction

Jesus wants every Christian to grow to spiritual maturity. He wants to transform you into a person with great spiritual character. But exactly how does Jesus transform your life? Does it happen overnight? Does it take place through some emotional experience? No, rather the Lord changes us through his Word and the power of the Holy Spirit on a daily basis.

"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18, NKJV).

The key to understanding how to be transformed by the Holy Spirit is found in Ephesians 5:17–21.

Satan loves to make your life worthless in the war to win the lost. God, on the other hand, wants to make your life a powerful testimony of His grace so that others can see His transforming power through your life. This lesson will help you learn to have victory over the habits of the flesh and live Spirit filled.

I. Understanding God's Will—Ephesians 5:17–18

A. God says He wants us to be wise or smart concerning His will in verse 17. He gives us two commands in verse 18. What are they?

1. _____
2. _____

B. The Bible makes it clear that drunkenness is a sin, not a disease, and will only bring us trouble (Proverbs 20:1, 23:19–21a, 23:29–35; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10).

1. What about social drinking? This is debated among many Christian groups, but verses like 1 Corinthians 6:12, 1 Corinthians 10:23, Philippians 1:9–10, and Galatians 5:13 should help us to want to guard our testimony in this area.
2. Some have taught that these two commands, the first a negative, and the second a positive, ought to be combined in some way. For example, some say the fullness of the Spirit is like spiritual intoxication. It is as if the believer is out of control under the influence of the Spirit.

Note: This verse is not comparing these two commands; it is offering them as contrasts to one another.

We know this because Paul adds that drunkenness is “dissipation,” which means debauchery, existing hopelessly out of control. Yet the Spirit-filled Christian is never to be out of control. On the contrary, one of the fruits of the Spirit is self-control, Galatians 5:23. So Paul is not linking these two commands; he is contrasting them.



Notes and Questions:

II. Understanding How to Be Filled with the Spirit—Ephesians 5:18

- A. First we must understand that every Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Read Romans 8:7, 9, 11; 1 Corinthians 6:18–20.

If you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit. You don't have to pray for Him to come into your life. All Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but all Christians are not filled or controlled with the Holy Spirit.

- B. The filling of the Holy Spirit involves two main disciplines.

1. **First, the surrender of your will.**

- a. What does Romans 12:1 say we are to do with our bodies?

- b. Read Romans 6:12–13 and answer the following questions:

What does sin want to do in you?

Who or what can you present or surrender your body to each day?

- c. Read Luke 9:23–24 and answer the following questions:

If you are going to follow Jesus, it begins with what?

Surrender is the same concept as “denying yourself.” This involves saying no to the sinful desires of your flesh.

- d. There are two major barriers that block our total surrender to God: fear and pride.

Antidote to fear—Can I trust God? Trust is an essential ingredient to surrender. You won't surrender to God unless you trust Him, but you can't trust Him until you know Him better. Fear keeps us from surrendering, *but love casts out all fear*. The more you realize how much God loves you, the easier surrender becomes. How do you know God loves you? (John 3:16)

Antidote to pride—Admitting our limitations. We don't want to admit that we are just creatures and not in charge of everything. It is the oldest temptation: "You'll be like God." That desire to have complete control is the cause of so much stress in our lives. Life is a struggle, but what most people don't realize is that our struggle, like Jacob's, is really a struggle with God. We want to be God, and there is no way we are going to win that struggle. We aren't God and never will be. We are humans. It is when we try to be God that we end up most like Satan, who desired the same thing.

- e. The most difficult area to surrender for most people is their money. Many have thought, *I want to live for God, but I also want to earn enough money to live comfortably and retire some day*. Retirement is not the goal of the surrendered life, because it competes with God for primary attention of our lives. Jesus said, "You cannot serve both God and money," and "Wherever your treasure is, your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21).

What areas do you need to surrender to the Holy Spirit's control—a sinful habit, stubborn attitude, fear of people's opinions, your free time to serve the Lord, tithing, other areas?

Notes and Questions

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2. The second discipline is being filled with God's Word (Colossians 3:16).

- a. To be filled with the Spirit is the same thing as to be filled with the Word of God. The Holy Spirit is the author of the Word and uses the Word to give you victory over the flesh and over the world.

This emphasizes that the filling of the Spirit is not some ecstatic or emotional experience.

You must feed the new man who lives within you in order for him to grow stronger and control your life.

What are you doing on a regular basis to put God's Word into your life?

- b. What does Galatians 5:16 say you must do to overcome sinful habits?
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Will that be easy to do? Galatians 5:17 _____

Why?

C. Four truths about the filling of the Spirit:

1. It is a command. Literally it says, "You be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).
2. It is for all Christians (Ephesians 5:1).
3. It will not happen if you have unconfessed sin in your life (Ephesians 5:3-12).
4. It is not a one-time act (Ephesians 5:18). *Be filled* literally could read *being kept filled* (John MacArthur).

Note: Discuss these four truths with your discipler.

D. The word *filled* implies control.

1. The word is used often in Scripture to describe people dominated by an emotion. For example:

John 16:6—What emotion filled their heart?

Luke 5:26—What emotion filled them?

Luke 6:11—What emotion filled them?

2. When a person is filled with the Holy Spirit he is under the control of the Holy Spirit, not out of control emotionally.

III. The Results of Being Spirit Filled—Ephesians 5:19–21

Remember, the filling of the Spirit is not a one-time act or some emotional high that carries you into continuous victory over the flesh. It is a daily walk of surrendering your selfish will and putting God's Word into your mind. When you practice these two disciplines, it begins to show in four areas of your life.

A. The filling of the Spirit affects your speaking. Read Ephesians 4:29.

1. What kind of speech should begin to stop, and what kind of speech should begin to be normal?
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2. What other kind of speech should stop? See Ephesians 4:31.
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3. Colossians 4:6—Your speech should always be with _____ seasoned with _____

B. The filling of the Spirit affects your _____
(Ephesians 5:19).

1. Nothing reveals what is in your heart as much as what we sing about.
 2. Remember, we are to direct our singing to whom? See Ephesians 5:19.
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3. If there is anything that ought to be different about a Christian, it ought to be our music (Psalm 96:1–2).

Notes and Questions



Notes and Questions:

C. The filling of the Spirit affects your giving _____
(Ephesians 5:20).

1. Possibly the single greatest act of personal worship that a Christian can render to God is being thankful, because true worship comes from a thankful heart that recognizes God as the source of everything. A thankful heart also sees beyond the difficult circumstances to the sovereignty of God.
2. How a believer gives thanks is a clear reflection of his or her spiritual maturity. **There are basically three levels of thanksgiving:**
 - a. After you are blessed
 - b. After you go through a trial
 - c. In the midst of the trial

Discuss with your discipler which level you are at most of the time with your family, your job, and adverse circumstances you face.

Name two people you need to say thanks to this week.

D. The filling of the Spirit affects your _____
(Ephesians 5:21).

Illustration—John 12:23–26

1. To whom do you have the hardest time submitting your will?

2. Name two things you have a hard time submitting your will to do?

E. Being filled with the Spirit is not an emotional experience. It has nothing to do with speaking in tongues. Rather, when the Holy Spirit is in control of your life, you will experience what fruits of the Spirit? See Galatians 5:22–23.

IV. Practical Application

A. Which one of the four results of being filled with the Spirit do you need to work on most, and what plan do you have to improve?

B. To be filled with the Spirit, what two disciplines do you need to practice, and how are you practicing these disciplines?

1. _____

2. _____

C. Name two important truths or principles that stood out to you from this lesson.

1. _____

2. _____

Notes and Questions:

