

# The Spirit and His Filling

Ephesians 5:15-21

## 1. Introduction.

- a. Where we've been.
  - i. There tends to be a separation made between being "Spirit-filled" and "Word-centered."
  - ii. The work of the Spirit can never be separated from the presence of the Word. The Spirit always works through His Word.
- b. A lot of thoughts exist on the nature of Spirit-filling.
- c. Spirit-filling is a vital component of the Christian faith.
  - i. Spirit-filling is necessary for holiness.
  - ii. Without Spirit-filling a person will remain stagnant in their faith.
- d. The purpose of Spirit-filling is worship. To be filled by the Spirit is to exalt Christ with your life.

## 2. But be filled by the Spirit!

- a. The context of the command.
  - i. The command to be filled by the Spirit (v.18) is the third in a series of three double-commands. Each double command gives both a negative and positive command.
  - ii. The main point of the passage is found in v.15 – "Therefore, be careful how you walk." The series of three double commands fall under this overarching command. In other words, they fill out for us how a careful Christian walk will look.
    1. What Paul means by this overarching command is that Christians must be incredibly intentional with how they pursue their Christian walk. One of the most detrimental things a Christian can do is become lazy and passive about their walk before the Lord.

2. A worthy walk means you're conforming more into what it means to be an "imitator of God (5:1)." To be an imitator of God is the goal, and the evidence you're walking with care. To walk with care, then, is to be intentional and careful with respect to the following three double-commands.
- iii. Three double commands for how to walk with care.
    1. Walk not as unwise, but as wise.
    2. Walk not as a fool, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
    3. Do not be drunk with wine, but be filled by the Spirit.
      - a. These three commands are typical of Paul's tactic for putting off sin and pursuing a life of holiness. It is his put off/put on technique. You must put off disobedience, then replace it with obedience.
      - b. Since this is the case, two implications ensue about the command to be filled by the Spirit.
        - i. Spirit-filling has to do with a worthy walk. In other words, it has to do with holiness.
        - ii. Because it falls under the larger command of walking with intentionality and care, Spirit-filling is not an experience where you empty yourself, but a reality in which you engage the full faculty of the mind.
        - iii. The two previous double-commands spoke of both wisdom and understanding. As such, Spirit-filling is not a call to abandon wisdom and knowledge, but to put wisdom and knowledge into practice.
- b. The command.
    - i. The mystery religions in the pagan culture often pursued alcohol for spiritual experiences. They thought that through the inebriation of the mind they were somehow fellowshiping with deity. Paul is using this pagan reality to contrast Christianity from the rest of the world.

- ii. The command to “be filled by the Spirit” is a *present/passive/imperative*.
    - 1. *Present*—We’re to be in a continuous, ongoing state of being filled.
    - 2. *Passive*—We’re to allow the Spirit to do something to us. We must yield to His work.
    - 3. *Imperative*—This is a command we must obey.
  - iii. The Greek term for “filling,” here, is not a static filling, but a filling that creates energy and movement. There is power behind this filling.
  - iv. It’s the difference between a glass that is statically filled with water, and wind that powerfully fills the sails of a sailboat to move it along the water.
  - v. This is why if you’re not filled by the Spirit, you won’t grow in sanctification. The work of the Spirit fills us and causes movement in our walk.
- c. How to recognize the filling of the Spirit (5:19-6:9).
- i. It’s important to begin by understanding that the filling of the Spirit is not an experiential moment, but a process (C.f., 2Cor. 3:17-18).
  - ii. A Spirit-filled person sings (5:19).
  - iii. A Spirit-filled person is given to thanks (5:20).
  - iv. A Spirit-filled person is in subjection (5:21-6:9).
    - 1. Spirit-filled wives submit to their husbands (5:22-24).
    - 2. Spirit-filled husbands love their wives (5:25-33).
    - 3. Spirit-filled children obey their parents (6:1-3).
    - 4. Spirit-filled fathers bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (6:4).
    - 5. Spirit-filled servants work obediently unto Christ (6:5-8).

6. Spirit-filled masters treat their servants with fairness and equity (6:9).
- v. The Spirit-filled life always works itself out in community. None of these spirit-filled results are merely for the benefit of the one being filled. Rather, a person is filled by the Spirit so they might primarily serve others.
- d. How to “be filled by the Spirit.”
  - i. We are not filled “with” the Spirit, but “by” the Spirit.
    1. We already have the fullness of the Spirit dwelling among us (Cf., Rom. 8:9, 11; 1Cor. 3:16; Gal. 4:6; 2Tim. 1:4; et. al.).
    2. In this sense, the Spirit is not what we’re filled with. For we already possess the fullness of His presence and person. Rather, He’s the One Who’s doing the filling.
    3. If the Spirit is the one doing the filling, then the natural question is to ask what the Spirit is filling us with.
  - ii. Colossians 3:16-4:1.
    1. There is a sister passage in Colossians that helps us understand what the Spirit fills us with.
    2. In Col 3:16-4:1, we have the same structure, content, and results we see in Eph. 5:18-6:9. Moreover, both passages are governed by the same verbal form (i.e., present/passive/imperative). As a result, this helps us understand that as we’re filled with the Spirit-breathed Word, we are to yield to all that’s been written. In other words, to be Spirit-filled is to yield to the call of Scripture. This results in a life of biblical obedience.

### 3. Conclusion:

- a. This is why we seek to be Word-centered.
- b. We must always remember that knowledge does not equal maturity. We must also submit to that knowledge with our lives. Refusing to yield our lives to the truth of Scripture is one and the same as refusing to be filled by the Spirit. We must be faithful.