Staying Awake, Thankful & Free

It is possible to be saved and still be spiritually asleep. It is possible to know God and still let the light in your life grow dim. This is not a message just for unbelievers. It is a direct challenge to every Christian who wants to walk in wisdom, stay filled with the Spirit, and thrive no matter what this world throws at them.

What Is the Difference Between Being Spiritually Alive and Spiritually Awake?

Being born again is not the finish line. A person who is spiritually sleeping looks a lot like a person who is spiritually dead. From a distance, you cannot always tell the difference.

Ephesians 5:14 speaks directly to believers: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." This was written to the church at Ephesus, and it applies just as much today. If you are sleeping spiritually, you are just as unproductive for the kingdom of God as someone who is spiritually dead.

The goal is not just to be alive. The goal is to be awake, alert, and walking in the light.

What Does It Mean to Walk in the Light as a Christian?

Ephesians 5:13 says, "But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light." You and I are called to be the light of the world. Light exposes. It uncovers what is hidden.

But there is a balance. Love covers, while light exposes. Walking as the light of the world without love turns into judgment and criticism. Walking in love without light lulls people into a spiritual sleep. Both ditches are dangerous.

Why Do So Many Christians End Up in a "Doctrinal Ditch"?

The body of Christ tends to drift to one extreme or the other. Some people are so focused on grace and love that they cover everything and never confront anything. Others are so focused on truth and light that they expose everything without compassion. Neither extreme gets you where you need to go.

Think of it like driving on a highway. The road has lanes, but on either side there is a ditch. People can be in a ditch and genuinely believe they are in a lane. They are moving, they feel confident, but they are stuck and going nowhere. The fullness of God's blessing comes when we stay in the middle of the road, holding both truth and love together.

How Do You Get More Light in Your Life?

Psalm 119:130 gives a clear answer: "The entrance of Your word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple." The more time you spend in the Word of God, the more light you carry. And the more light you have, the harder it is to sleep spiritually.

More light also means more discernment. In a world that is increasingly unstable and dark, discernment is not optional. When people drift from the light, their thinking becomes smaller, more confused, and more foolish. Romans 1:21 describes exactly what happens: "Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened."

The answer is simple but requires discipline. Open the Bible. Get in the Word with an expectation that you are going to receive more light.

What Does the Bible Say About Being Filled with the Holy Spirit?

Ephesians 5:17-18 connects wisdom and the Spirit directly: "Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit."

The phrase "be filled" is not a one-time event. The original language carries the meaning of being continuously filled. It is an ongoing posture, not a single moment. And the verses that follow show us exactly how that happens.

How Do You Stay Continuously Filled with the Spirit?

- Speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19)
- Making melody in your heart to the Lord
- Giving thanks always in all things to God the Father (Ephesians 5:20)
- Submitting to one another in the fear of God

These are not separate spiritual disciplines. They are all connected. They flow together as a lifestyle that keeps you full of the Spirit and walking in the will of God.

Is Thankfulness Really That Important to God?

First Thessalonians 5:18 says, "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." This is one of the clearest statements in all of Scripture about what God's will looks like for your daily life. Not thankfulness for everything, but thankfulness in everything. There is a difference.

You do not have to thank God for sickness, loss, or hardship. But you can thank Him in the middle of it. You can thank Him that He is with you, that He will bring you through, and that His promises still stand.

What Is the Connection Between Unthankfulness and Sin?

This is where things get very practical. Ephesians 5:3-5 lists fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness as things that should not even be named among believers. And then verse 4 says that instead of these things, there should be "giving thanks."

Unthankfulness and covetousness are twins. When you are not thankful for what you have, you are coveting what you do not have. And covetousness opens the door to all kinds of uncleanness.

Romans 1:21-24 traces the entire downward spiral of a society back to one root: they did not glorify God or give Him thanks. From there, their hearts became darkened, their thinking became futile, and they fell into deeper and deeper sin. The light went out, and everything that followed was a consequence of that darkness.

On the other side, thankfulness fills you up with righteousness. It keeps God in His rightful place as Lord of your life. It is the opposite of idolatry. When you give God thanks and praise, you are worshiping Him. When you stop, something else takes His place.

How Does Your Mouth Affect the Direction of Your Life?

The tongue is described as a rudder. It steers the ship. Where you are today is connected to what you have been saying. A mouth full of complaints, trash talk, and negativity will steer your life into a ditch. A mouth full of thanksgiving will steer you into the will of God.

Ephesians 5:4 draws a direct contrast between "coarse jesting" and "giving thanks." These are presented as opposites. One tears down. The other builds up. Thanksgiving charges you up spiritually in a way that emotional hype never can. Emotional manipulation might stir your feelings temporarily, but it breaks your Spirit. Thanksgiving builds from the inside out.

What Does Thankfulness Have to Do with Knowing God's Will?

Many people spend years searching for God's will for their life. But Scripture makes it plain. First Thessalonians 5:18 says giving thanks in everything is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. That is your starting point. That is step one.

When you are thankful, you are in the will of God. When you are in the will of God, you have confidence. When you have confidence, you have courage and strength. It is not complicated, but it does require a daily choice to open your mouth and give Him glory.

Life Application

This week, make a deliberate decision to become a person of thanksgiving. Not just on a holiday, but as a daily practice. Pay attention to what comes out of your mouth. Notice how often the people around you, and even you yourself, default to complaining, coveting, or speaking negatively. Then make the switch.

Every time you feel the pull toward anxiety, frustration, or covetousness, stop and give God thanks for something specific. Thank Him for what you have. Thank Him for His promises. Thank Him that He is with you in whatever you are walking through. Do this consistently throughout the week and watch what begins to shift in your Spirit.

Ask yourself these questions as you go:

- Am I spiritually awake, or have I been going through the motions of faith without real engagement?
- Where has my mouth been this week, and what direction has it been steering my life?
- Is there an area of my life where unthankfulness has opened the door to covetousness or uncleanness?
- Am I getting into the Word consistently enough to keep the light on in my life?
- Who around me needs to hear something full of thanksgiving instead of another complaint?

The days are evil, and the world is getting darker. But you do not have to drift with it. Get in the Word, stay filled with the Spirit, open your mouth in praise, and let thankfulness be the rudder that steers your life straight into the will of God.

Quotes

1. Without the Holy Spirit, we are spiritually ineffective.

2. A spiritually sleeping Christian is as productive as a dead one.

3. We need to be the light that exposes darkness while walking in the love that covers sins.

4. Light without love produces critical, judgmental Pharisees.

5. Love without light lulls people into spiritual slumber.

6. The spiritually alive should not act spiritually dead!

7. The greater your light, the greater your discernment.

8. The further a nation drifts from God's light, the deeper it sinks into foolishness.

9. God's Word illuminates the heart and enlightens the mind.

10. Get in the light and stay in the light!

11. Being filled with the Spirit is a continual experience.

12. No matter how bad things look, there's always reason to thank God.

13. Give thanks in everything, not for everything.

14. Appreciating what you have keeps you from coveting what you don't have.

15. Unthankfulness and covetousness are spiritual twins.

16. Stop coveting what you lack and start thanking God for what you have.

17. Thanksgiving strengthens you more than trash talk ever could.

18. Trash talk pumps you up emotionally but tears you down spiritually.

19. You are becoming what you've been saying.

20. Your tongue is the rudder that determines the direction of your life.

Verses

1. Ephesians 5:14

2. Ephesians 5:13

3. Psalm 119:130

4. Ephesians 5:15

5. Ephesians 5:16

6. Ephesians 5:17

7. Ephesians 5:18

8. Ephesians 5:19

9. Ephesians 5:20

10. 1 Thessalonians 5:18

11. Ephesians 5:2

12. Ephesians 5:3

13. Ephesians 5:4

14. Ephesians 5:5

15. Ephesians 5:8

16. Romans 1:18

17. Romans 1:21

18. Romans 1:22

19. Romans 1:23

20. Romans 1:24

21. Romans 1:25

22. Romans 1:26

Summary

Being saved and being spiritually awake are not the same thing. Ephesians 5 calls believers to stop going through the motions and start actively walking in the light, being filled with the Holy Spirit, and practicing genuine thankfulness. Thankfulness is not just a pleasant attitude; it is the will of God and a powerful spiritual weapon against covetousness and uncleanness. When believers consistently give thanks, they keep God in His rightful place, push out idolatry, and position themselves to receive more of what He has for them. The world is growing darker, and Christians are called to be the locomotive, not the caboose, leading with the light of God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit.