

Small Group Guide

Being Filled With the Spirit: Our Part in God's Work

Overview

This week's sermon explored what it means to be genuinely filled with the Holy Spirit, and challenged the idea that we can passively wait for God to do all the work in us. Using the story of Samson's birth in Judges 13, passages from Ephesians 4, and Philippians 2, the sermon called us to recognize that being filled with the Spirit requires active participation, deliberate choices, and a willingness to submit our will to God's.

Key Takeaways

- God does not rob us of our will when He gives us His Spirit. We still make daily choices that either draw us closer to Him or push Him away.
 - Being filled with the Spirit is not a passive experience we wait for. It requires us to actively make room for God through obedience, right speech, humility, and unity with Christ.
 - When we choose behaviors, attitudes, and words that are contrary to God's character, we grieve the Holy Spirit. Our choices have real consequences for our relationship with God.
 - Jesus is our ultimate example of humility and obedience. He submitted to the Father at great personal cost, and we are called to follow that same pattern.
 - Obedience is how we work out our salvation. As Philippians 2:12-13 teaches, God works in us, but we are called to actively participate in that process.
 - The closer we draw to God individually, the more unified, patient, and loving we become with one another in the church.
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Discussion Questions

Opening

1. Think about a time in your life when you genuinely felt close to God and spiritually alert. What was happening in your life during that season? What do you think contributed to that closeness?
 2. Have you ever found yourself passively waiting for God to change you or direct you, without taking any steps yourself? What did that look like?
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Digging Into the Sermon

3. The sermon used the story of Manoah and his wife in Judges 13 as a starting point. Manoah prayed for God to send the angel back because he did not know how to raise the child he had been promised. Have you ever felt unqualified or unprepared for something God seemed to be calling you to? How did you respond?
4. The sermon made the point that God does not forcefully fill us with His Spirit without our cooperation. Do you agree with that? Why or why not? What does that say about the nature of our relationship with God?
5. Ephesians 4:17-32 lists specific behaviors that grieve the Holy Spirit, including lying, uncontrolled anger, laziness, unwholesome talk, bitterness, and a lack of forgiveness. Which of these do you think is most commonly overlooked or excused among Christians today? Which one do you personally find most difficult to address?
6. The sermon described how we can slowly lose our sensitivity to the Spirit when we are hurt by others, when we harden our hearts, or when we drift back into old habits. Have you experienced that kind of gradual drift? What helped you recognize it or turn back?
7. Philippians 2:1-4 calls us to value others above ourselves and to pursue unity in spirit and mind. The sermon acknowledged how difficult this is, even in families and close relationships. What makes pursuing that kind of unity so hard? What helps make it possible?
8. The sermon described Jesus as the perfect example of humility and obedience, choosing to submit to the Father at enormous personal cost. How does reflecting on that example change the way you think about your own acts of obedience, especially the ones that are costly or uncomfortable?
9. The sermon asked, "What are you willing to let it cost you?" when it comes to maintaining unity with God. What is something in your life right now that may be costing

you closeness with God, even if it seems small?

10. Philippians 2:12-13 says to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. The sermon suggested this fear is not simply reverence, but also the awe of realizing God may use us in ways we do not feel ready for. Does that idea excite you, frighten you, or both? Why?
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Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice this week:

- **Audit your inputs.** Pay attention this week to what you are watching, listening to, and talking about. Notice how those things affect your attitude, your words, and your sensitivity to God. Make one intentional adjustment.
 - **Identify one old habit to lay down.** Think honestly about one behavior, attitude, or pattern from your life before Christ, or from a season of spiritual drift, that you have allowed to linger. Pray specifically about that this week and share it with a trusted person in your group for accountability.
 - **Practice putting others first.** Choose one specific person in your life this week and look for a practical way to put their interests above your own. It does not have to be dramatic. It just has to be intentional.
 - **Memorize Colossians 1:17.** The communion reflection this week pointed to this verse as a source of stability when life feels out of control. Write it down and return to it throughout the week.
 - **Pray for greater filling.** Each morning this week, before doing anything else, ask God specifically to fill you with His Spirit and to show you what that requires of you that day.
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Closing Reflection

The sermon reminded us that God is not withholding His Spirit from us. He is calling us toward it. The question is whether we are willing to make the choices, do the work, and pay the cost of drawing close enough to Him that His Spirit has room to grow in us.

Take a moment before closing to ask each person in the group: What is one thing from this sermon that you want to carry with you into this week?

Closing Prayer

Close your time together by praying as a group. Ask God to reveal the areas in each person's life where old habits, hardened attitudes, or passive faith may be limiting the Spirit's work. Ask for courage to make the choices that draw you closer to Him, and for the humility to value others above yourselves as Christ valued us above Himself.