

Be Filled with the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 5:15-21

I. “My view... other’s views”

A. A spirit of tolerance and grace.

B. Gamaliel—Acts 5:38-39

1. If it comes from man it will be revealed.

2. If it comes from God it will prevail.

II. Misconceptions regarding the “filling” of the Holy Spirit.

A. Experiences, confusion, total control, when, where and how, etc.

B. It is less about us receiving the Holy Spirit and more about the Spirit receiving us!

III. What does it mean to be filled by the Holy Spirit?

A. To “be filled” means to be controlled or monopolized by.

1. “Monopolized”— exclusive control over something or someone.

B. To be controlled by the Spirit, we must be “yielded”.

1. The Holy Spirit monopolizes us and we are yielded to Him.

IV. The apostle Paul’s contrasting example.

A. Do not be drunk (controlled) by wine.

1. His point is not for us to abstain from alcohol; it is for us not to be controlled by any substance (or anything) other than the Holy Spirit.

2. To do so is “debauchery” or “dissipation”—“*Prodigality*”: *reckless extravagance, wastefulness, and the imprudent use of resources, often associated with moral waywardness and rebellion.*

B. Be filled (controlled) by the Holy Spirit.

1. Wine is a substance, the Holy Spirit is a person.

2. Greek grammar helps!

a. The verb “be filled” is a “*present passive imperative*”

- b. *“Present verb”* = ongoing, doesn’t end, perpetual.
- c. *“Passive verb”* = It is being done to you.
- d. *“Imperative”* = A command, not a choice.

And do not get drunk with wine for that is dissipation (reckless, wasteful, imprudent)
ALWAYS (Don’t EVER stop) **LET** (Yield) **THE HOLY SPIRIT CONTROL YOU** (He does it).

The level of your yielding to the Holy Spirit and the embracing of the things and work of the Holy Spirit will determine the level of satisfaction you will have with your Christian walk.

V. Three distinctions of the Holy Spirit (distinct from the “Filling of the Holy Spirit”.

- A. The “sealing of the Holy Spirit”—Ephesians 1:13-14
- B. The “Baptism of the Holy Spirit”—1 Corinthians 12:13-14
- C. The “Indwelling of the Holy Spirit”—1 Corinthians 6:19-20
 - 1. One sealing...One baptism...One indwelling... many fillings.

VI. Evidence AND means of being filled by the Holy Spirit (Vs. 19-21).

- A. Corporate and personal worship (V.19).
- B. A heart of gratitude (V. 20).
- C. Submitting to one another (V.21).
 - 1. To each other (V.21).
 - 2. Wives to husbands (V.22)
 - 3. Husbands to Jesus Christ (and to your wife!) (V.25).
 - 4. Children to parents (6:1)
 - 5. Slaves to Masters—Employees to Employers (6:5).
 - 6. Masters and Employers to God (6:9).

You can’t be a Spirit filled Christian if you are not submissive—being submissive is the attitude of self-denial.

Be Filled with the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 5:15-21

We're learning about the Holy Spirit... each week we've been looking at passages in the Bible to teach us... we began looking at John 14 where we saw the Holy Spirit is the promised "helper" that Jesus first promised to His disciples the night before He went to the cross...and would then be the Helper for all Christians since...

Not just one that will lend us a hand sometimes... but the One... God, Holy Spirit, third person of the Trinity... a helper that is continuously available and active in our lives... A helper "*of the same kind*" as Jesus Christ.... A permanent helper ... a reliable and exclusive helper...residing in all of us who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ.

We went to the book of Acts, especially the first three chapters to see the main agenda of the Holy Spirit is transformation... it is the work of the Holy Spirit that transforms a weak sinner into a person with Christ likeness... we went to the original 12, 11 disciples to see the radical change from before they received the Holy Spirit to that day at Pentecost where they received the Holy Spirit...

Last week we went to the book of Romans...especially Romans chapter 8 to see that what prevents us from living a completely victorious life in Christ is our sin... we as Christians have the Holy Spirit dwelling permanently inside of us... but we also still have sin in our flesh... so a battle is raging within us...

It is through the power of the Holy Spirit we can resist the flesh... we've really covered much in three weeks... but we still have questions don't we?... each one of us is still struggling with this idea of walking in the Spirit... some of you may be even a little more confused because of some terms like Indwelling, Baptism of, the sealing and filling of the Holy Spirit...

Now, we are told to **be filled with the Holy Spirit**...the apostle Paul tells us that... sounds great... how's that work?... we don't have to go far to find many different understandings of what that means... within a twenty-mile radius of where we are right now are Christian congregations that differ in their views on what being filled with the Holy Spirit means.

There was a time, not really all that long ago I thought it was my job to correct everyone who had a different view than I do...my view that I think is *the* "Biblical" view...there is a different view on just about every doctrine in the Bible... I would have a lot of correcting!

It's taken awhile but I have landed in a place I would call grace...I've mentioned this before... When I went to Israel with 24 pastors a few years ago, I didn't know that 22 of them were Pentecostal... I learned they were Pentecostal when we all met in the basement conference room

of the hotel to pray together in the morning... I was late and they had started praying... and dancing... and screaming... and calling on the Holy Spirit to “*Come down and fill them!*”... speaking languages, or tongues I’d never heard...for them, to be filled with the Holy Spirit was to speak in tongues.... I’m sure the hotel was six inches off the ground!

Just about all that activity was not in my theological understanding... It certainly wasn’t my understanding of what the “filling of the Holy Spirit” is... I got to know these men over the next eight days... great guys... passionate about Jesus Christ and the word... who am I to correct them to MY view that I’m so very convinced of?

Some of you may have similar views as they have... some of you may be even more stiff than me when it comes to the works of the Holy Spirit... the advice I received from a great old sage was... *Whatever your frame of reference is...be gracious and tolerant.*

[that is not to say we should be tolerant and “accept” any and everything that comes out from “Christians”...]

Take some advice from the greatly respected Jewish Pharisee Gamaliel in Acts 5... who gave counsel to his fellow Jews who were “upset” with the apostles who were getting too affective in their preaching, turning the world upside down... especially their Jewish world...

Gamaliel stands up before them and says this... Acts 5:38-39

So in the present case, I also say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown;³⁹ but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or you may even be found fighting against God.”

Isn’t that great?... if someone else’s view is wrong... made up by men... don’t worry, it will be revealed... but maybe...just maybe, they’re right, it is of God... if that is the case...God’s truth will prevail!... so on the minor issues... grace and tolerance.

Having said all that... let’s try to be biblical in our view on the “filling of the Holy Spirit”

So, using God’s word... what about this “filling of the Holy Spirit”?...what is it?... how do we get it?... what happens when we do?... it might help to begin with what being filled with the Spirit is not.... These are some misconceptions that I see as not founded in God’s Word.

“Being filled with the Spirit means having an intense emotional experience.”

A person can experience strong emotions—joy, tears, excitement, peace—but emotions aren’t the measure of whether someone is filled with the Spirit.

Someone can quietly and faithfully follow Christ without having dramatic emotional experiences.

“Being filled with the Spirit means speaking in tongues.”

Even if you believe in the continuation of the spiritual gifts...The Spirit gives different gifts to different believers

“Being filled with the Spirit means receiving the Holy Spirit for the first time.”

“Being filled with the Spirit means God takes control of you like a puppet.”

The Spirit doesn't erase your personality, intellect, or will. Instead, He **transforms and empowers you** to willingly follow God.

“Being filled with the Spirit is mainly about supernatural experiences.”

The New Testament certainly contains supernatural manifestations of the Spirit—prophecy, tongues, healings, miracles...But Jesus also emphasized **fruit**. Galatians 5:22–23 describes the fruit of the Spirit as: **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control....** Close to this”

“Being filled with the Spirit is about chasing an experience.”

This may be the biggest misconception...The goal of Christianity isn't **“How can I have the most powerful spiritual experience?”**...The goal is **Christ**.

The Holy Spirit's work is fundamentally to point us toward Jesus, transform us into His likeness, empower us to live faithfully, and enable us to love God and others. A helpful way to think about it is:

Being filled with the Spirit isn't primarily about feeling more spiritual; it's about becoming more surrendered to God and increasingly reflecting Christ.

Two other misconceptions I think are very prevalent today among some Christian circles...

1. Some believe that when we become a Christian, we do not automatically receive the Holy Spirit... that somehow we must “acquire” Him...salvation and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are two independent events and it is possible for a believer to end up not getting filled with the Spirit.

Not true... The same author, Paul the same book we're looking at this morning... Ephesians... that tells us to be filled with the Holy Spirit tells us in Ephesians 1:13... **In Him Jesus Christ you also, after listening to the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed the moment of salvation...you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.**

The moment you receive your salvation... you are sealed in Jesus Christ along with the Holy Spirit...so when Paul says **be filled with the Holy Spirit...** it is not Paul telling us to search and strive to find the Holy Spirit, grab Him and get Him inside of you... you couldn't do that if you tried.

2. Some believe that the Holy Spirit that is in our lives is “incremental” ...in other words, when we are saved, we receive a “portion” of the Holy Spirit... and it is up to us to receive more of Him...that will be determined by how much you want to Holy Spirit and how hard you try to “experience” the Holy Spirit.

So... what does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?... here’s a thought... perhaps what Paul is going to tell us is that this is less about us *receiving* the Holy Spirit and more about **the Spirit receiving us!**...not having more of Him...(if you are a saved believer you have all of Him) But Him having more of us!

So much of what people claim regarding being “Spirit filled” is subjective... open to one’s interpretation... subjectiveness is hard to refute or even accept... *...The Holy Spirit did this , He did that, He spoke to me, He took control of me...*How do you argue with what someone claims they experienced?

But there is a very *objective* [expressing or dealing with facts or conditions as perceived without distortion by personal feelings, prejudices, or interpretations] So there is a very *objective* roadmap to being filled with the Holy Spirit... not influenced by personal feelings or opinions...but the Word of God.

1. What does it mean to be Spirit filled
2. How can you be Spirit filled.
3. Examples of being Spirit filled from Scripture.

Read verse 18

We can simplify the confusion over what “filled” means if we use the words “controlled” or “monopolized” ... Monopolize comes from monopoly, which isn't just a great board game, but actually means "**exclusive control over something or someone.**"

So to be filled with the Holy Spirit is being controlled by the Holy Spirit... having the Holy Spirit have exclusive control, monopolized....in your thoughts...your words...your actions...even in your emotions...another word vital to this idea of filled is the part we have to do and that is to be “yielded”... yielded to the monopoly the Spirit wants over you.

The Holy Spirit monopolizes us and we are yielded to Him....He won’t monopolize us unless we yield to Him.... Paul contrast this monopoly with being drunk with wine... having a glass of wine is one thing... getting drunk with wine is yielding yourself to the control of a substance... something outside of you...in this case... wine...

Understand verse 18 is not about abstinence from alcohol... it’s all about being controlled by a substance or anything else that is NOT the Holy Spirit... but alcohol is the perfect example...

listen to this excerpt from a study published in a Stanford medical journal on alcohol consumption:

People drink alcohol primarily to experience relaxation, pleasure, social connection, and relief from stress or negative emotions.

*Alcohol affects the brain's chemistry almost immediately. It enhances the activity of GABA, the brain's main inhibitory neurotransmitter;--**GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid) is the brain's primary inhibitory neurotransmitter, which slows down nerve cell activity and produces a calming effect on the nervous system....***

*While suppressing glutamate, the primary excitatory neurotransmitter. This combination creates a mild anesthetic effect, reducing anxiety and **self-monitoring**. Alcohol also activates the reward system, triggering opioid receptors and releasing dopamine, which reinforces pleasurable experiences **and encourages repeated drinking...**if I'm thinking correctly... repeated drinking leads to..... drunkenness...there's science to this!*

You don't have anything to do with what alcohol does to you outside of pouring it down your throat... it takes over and does the rest.

Now... don't get drunk with that... wine a substance... my translation says **that's dissipation...** some of your translations say **debauchery**...King James says **wherein is excess**...the idea getting drunk is "wastefulness"... literally the term is **prodigality** ...Prodigality in the Bible refers to *reckless extravagance, wastefulness, and the imprudent use of resources, often associated with moral waywardness and rebellion....*think—the Prodigal son.

Don't do that!... wine is a substance... and the more of that substance you have the less control you have over yourself.... Instead... be filled with the Holy Spirit... not a "substance" that affects the brain... **but a person that transforms the heart....** you can't have part of a person, you have the whole person... the more you let that person control your life... the more you are in control.

Now I'm going to ask you to dive deeper than you may want to for a few minutes... this is one of those times when understanding Greek grammar sheds an enormous amount of light on the meaning of the verse... I think you'll be glad for this:

If you were to take the absolute literal Greek translation here it would be more like **Be, being, BE!**... the verb **Be filled** is what is called a "**present passive imperative**"...explain!

Be – Start

BEING – Don't ever stop

BE – Not a choice, a command!

A *present* verb, or a *present active* verb means it's ongoing... it doesn't end... it just keeps on going... day after day, moment after moment... you need to keep having this happen... a "*passive verb*" means **it is being done TO YOU**... so... this is something that is going on and on...present active AND it is happening TO YOU.

In other words... you can't fill yourself... it is happening to you... God is filling you...but there is one more part to this... it is a *present passive IMPERATIVE*... an imperative is a command... it is not a suggestion, some advice you can accept or reject... it is a command....that is something YOU must do...what is it that you do in this?...YIELD

The verse could be read like this... **and do not get drunk with wine for that is dissipation**

And do not get drunk with wine for that is dissipation... ALWAYS LET THE HOLY SPIRIT CONTROL YOU...THAT'S AN ORDER!!... This is to all Christians... God, the Holy Spirit does the work... we yield to Him... we participate... we allow Him to take over our lives.

All this is so important... **being "yielded"** is key to experiencing the Spirit filled life... AND... you must be filled with the Holy Spirit if you are going to live the Christian life... it is essential for your Christian walk... the reason many of you are having such difficulty living the way God wants you to live is because you are not yielding to the Holy Spirit....YOU are still trying to control everything.

Hence... you are not being controlled by the Holy Spirit...you are being controlled by other things...this is what Paul was getting at in Galatians 5:16 **But I say walk** (live, be controlled, let the Holy Spirit monopolize you...be radical about it... BE PREOCCUPIED with the Holy Spirit's work in your life.) **and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.**

The level of your preoccupation (NOT AT THE EXPENCE OF THE OTHER TWO!) **of the Holy Spirit and the things and work of the Holy Spirit will determine the level of satisfaction you will have with your Christian walk.**

Think about it this way... be so filled up with the things of the Spirit...be so preoccupied with Him that you have no room for the things of the flesh...

- When you wake up in the morning
- A conscious awareness of Him throughout your day in all you do
- Constant prayer...He is on the forefront of you mind.

Let's clarify some terms:

Three distinctions of the activity of the Holy Spirit... it is important to understand what "filling" of the Holy Spirit is and is not... there's confusion;

1. The filling of the Holy Spirit is NOT the sealing of the Holy Spirit...Ephesians 1:13-14

In Him, you also, after listening to the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were **sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise**,¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, unto the redemption of *God's own possession*, to the praise of His glory.

The sealing of the Holy Spirit is the promise and the pledge... it means you are God's... He's not going anywhere and He's not going to let you go... you are God's possession, He will be faithful in His promises to you... you are "sealed" in Him... so if you have a bad day and you blow it... if you sin... and enjoyed it... You're still His... He's not letting you go....Sealed...it's the promise... it is a one time thing.

2. Baptism of the Holy Spirit—also a one time thing...1 Corinthians 12:13-14 **For also by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For also the body is not one member, but many.**

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is that work whereby the Spirit of God places the believer into union with Christ and into union with other believers in the body of Christ at the moment of salvation.... You become a part of the universal church of Jesus Christ....happens once.

Some traditions say you need to be baptized over and over again... no... once... and **it is not something you do... God does** it after you profess faith in Jesus Christ... you can't put yourself into the body of Christ...

3. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit—also a one time event...the Holy Spirit comes into you at the moment of salvation and He stays there... He doesn't come and go... the Holy Spirit takes up **permanent residence** in the body of a believer in Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you were bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

He's living IN YOU... that should affect how you live... what you do with your body...one time thing... He is in you... remember last week?... **He is in you, the One with the power that raised Jesus from the grave!**

Now... He is in you if you are a Christian... the power is in you... but He's not going to **do anything** unless you are filled with the Holy Spirit...all three of those are not presented in Scripture as *present passive imperatives*.... Only **be filled with the Holy Spirit** is.... Being filled requires your involvement.

One filling...One baptism...One indwelling... many fillings.

If you are tired of how impotent your spiritual life is... how dry you feel spiritually... how God seems so distant... sin is so strong...you need to become a passionate “yielder”.... If you are a believer and want to be more and more like Jesus... “yield” to the One who lives in You.

D.L. Moody was going to hold a very large evangelistic service... what Moody is so famous for... Preaching the gospel and many people coming to Christ... so he was about to have this big service in England... there was a pre-service meeting with several local pastors... one pastor got up and said “*why do we need this Mr. Moody guy... he’s uneducated and inexperienced... what do we need him for?*”

Then he got real cheeky and said *does he think he’s got a monopoly on the Holy Spirit?*...another pastor responded to this pastor’s critical spirit...this is how it was written: *a wiser pastor rose and said “no, but the Holy Spirit sure has a monopoly on Mr. Moody.*

That’s it!...does the Holy Spirit have a monopoly on you?... your thoughts, your words... your actions... what you do... what you say... what you don’t say... your relationships... your marriage... your dreams... how you treat your children...your friends... your *enemies*?

Be filled with the Holy Spirit... what does that look like?... is there any evidence if a life monopolized by the Spirit?... Paul gives us a few evidences right here:

Read 5:19-21

If you are Spirit filled... you will look like what’s in these three verses...these are also the means of being filled by the Holy Spirit...these are ways the Holy Spirit works in our lives and fills us up... {EXPOUND...**Evidence and means**} hear this... these are things that when you do them you are revealing the Holy Spirit has filled your life.. AND when you do these things, He fills you up!!!

1. Corporate and personal worship

Verse 19

When we gather together... like we are right now...and we sing... we are singing to God...IF YOUR SINGING IS TRUE WORSHIP... in other words,...most of you are singing, but are all of you worshipping?... you are not singing because it makes YOU feel better, or because you like the songs... or because this is what you do in church...you are singing because it elevates God to the highest.

If that is what you are doing... that is both evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit AND a means by which we get filled...

The singing of Scriptural truth from Scripture... there is a parallel passage to this one in Colossians 3:16 where Paul explains to the Colossians how to live the Spirit filled life... He writes...

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with gratefulness in your hearts to God.

See the pattern?... filling your life up with God's Word... **let the word of Christ richly dwell in you...** you do this with others!... **admonishing one another...** to encourage, to implore... **one another...** build each other up as we worship to the Lord together...

Worshipping God together... with the body of Christ is both evidence of being Spirit filled AND the means to be Spirit filled... do you see that?...I've had people comment about the music we do...

"Why do we even need to sing?"

"Why do we sing hymns... they're so old"

"I come late so I don't have to sing"

Is singing just a warm up for the sermon?...is it the opening act to give us all time to get to our seats?... hear this... singing in worship is obedience to God... we just read it!

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with gratefulness in your hearts to God.

Singing is a part of worship... **if** you view singing as worship... and when you sing you truly are worshipping... I think it is evidence of being Spirit filled... when you are filled with the Holy Spirit... your life is melodious....

2. A heart of gratitude

Read verse 20

One of the greatest signs of being filled with the Holy Spirit is a life of gratitude...a perpetual grumbler is NOT one being filled by the Spirit...and again... one whose life is marked by a life of gratitude is revealing being controlled by the Holy Spirit, but also, one who has gratitude is a means of being filled.

3. His filling leads us to submit to one another.

Read verse 21

Submission is essential for the Christian... what is it?... it is humility... it is denial of the self... it's yielding... we quench the Spirit when we aren't submissive...non-submissiveness is rebellion against God... it is telling Him... *I'm doing it MY way!...I know best!*

We are at our better when we come together to worship... we are better when we fellowship with each other... we are better in our marriages and our families... in our friendships... at work... at school when we are submissive...

Who are we submissive to?

V. 21—to one another in the church

5:22—Wives to their husbands

This is a most abused verse in the Bible...it is a shame that most Bibles separate verse 21 from 22...and some dominant male types don't read verse 21 but they love verse 22 **wives be submissive to your husbands...** they missed the command to be **submissive to one another...**

I don't agree with Jack Haford on everything but I sure like his story about a married couple who attended a "marriage seminar" taught by one of the "dominant male types" who was determined to show that Scripture teaches that the man is IN CHARGE of the home... [not saying the husband is not the head of the household...I'm talking about an attitude of superiority and dominance of the wife and family]

It was the kind of terrible teaching on submission that turns women into lowly doormats... well... this husband absolutely loved it... He never heard anything like it in his entire life... he soaked it in...his wife however sat there fuming as she listened.

When they left the meeting, driving home, the husband feeling drunk with power said to his wife *"Well, what did you think about that?"* ...His wife didn't say a word... he said *"I thought it was great!"*

When they arrived home, she got out and silently followed him into the house...once inside he slammed the door and said *"Wait right there...just stand right there"*... she starred at him... *I've been thinking about what that guy said tonight and I want you to know that from now on that's the way it's going to be around here...got it? That's the way things are going to be run in this house!*

And having said that... he didn't see her for two weeks... after two weeks *he could start to see her just a little out of one eye.*

Read verses 22-25

Implied—Husbands subject yourself to Christ...a husband who subjects himself to Christ.... And loves his wife like Christ loved the church... submission of the wife shouldn't be a problem.

6:1 Children to parents

6:5 Slaves to masters or employee to employer

6:9 Masters and employers to God

A submissive heart is not about us... it is about God, Christ, Holy Spirit....others....one of the greatest evidence of being Spirit filled is being submissive... one of the most flattering things for the Christian is to be treated like a servant... does that rub you wrong?

A submissive heart says *it's not about me.. it's not about you...it's about Him...* This may rub you wrong... **but I don't think you can't be a Spirit filled Christian is you are not submissive**...being submissive is the attitude of self-denial... the denial of self... which again is the evidence and the means of being filled. We quench the Spirit when we are not submissive.

*Spirit of the Living God,
Fall afresh on me,
Break me, melt me, mold me, fill me.
Spirit of the Living God,
Fall afresh on me.*

Be glorified in the fellowship and worship I have with others...

Be seen and heard in my melodious heart

Be observed in my thankfulness, my gratitude.

Be honored in my submissive spirit.