

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

May 10, 2026

Unpuzzled

“Filled with the Holy Spirit”

Ephesians 5:15-20

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“Now Hiring! Work From Home! Position requires strong ability to multitask. The successful applicant will be able to plan and prepare nutritious meals, while maintaining mountains of clean laundry. She can provide tutoring, nursing, counseling, and therapy sessions on an as-needed basis. In addition, applicants should be available for various event-planning activities, including birthday parties. The position involves staying up-to-date on all recommended practices of child development, including, but not limited to temper tantrums and adolescent awkwardness. Sleeping and eating not guaranteed for employees. Applicant must expect to work an average of 97 hours per week for 52 weeks per year. Pay range: \$0 to \$0 DOQ (Depending on Qualifications). Fringe benefits: priceless.

Sound familiar? Welcome to the life of a modern American mom. Yes, motherhood entails a list of responsibilities that could go on and on. According to a survey of 2,000 mothers raising school-aged children (ages 5 to 18), moms spend nearly 100 hours a week on parenting tasks — even if it means sacrificing sleep and “me time.” The poll found no fewer than 15 different hats a mom wears, from chef to financial advisor. It’s no wonder the job goes well beyond a 40-hour workweek! Where do moms carve out the extra time for this massive job? 53% of those surveyed reported sacrificing sleep for their children, while 47% regularly give up date nights, hobbies, and time with friends. The survey also found that mothers often zero in on their children’s needs more than on their own. 62% of mothers say they often eat on the run, 53% admit they struggle to eat nutritious foods because of the demands of their schedule. Researchers found such a job would pay a handsome six-figure salary: a whopping \$100,460 per year if moms were paid for their work as parents. And that’s despite the fact that 70% of the mothers surveyed still work a full- or part-time job to boot. After the immeasurable amount of selflessness shown by the typical mom, the survey found she’s left with less than an hour a day of “me time.” For 88% of moms surveyed, this time is often stolen from hours of shuteye, be it getting up early, staying up late, or both. And yet despite the number of sacrifices they make, more than two-thirds (69%) of mothers say they want to spend even more time tending to their children. But it is an impossible job that mothers *somehow* pull off. After all, how many jobs can claim to have fringe benefits that include cuddles, hugs, and the sense of satisfaction that comes from raising a healthy, happy human?”

Not only is being a mother in the 21st century challenging, to navigate life as a Christian in this world, one who lives wisely by understanding what God wants us to do and lives accordingly is ever so challenging. Here in Ephesians 5, God gives us direction on how we can walk in the light of Jesus even the deepest darkness of this world.

Ephesians 5:15-20

¹⁵ So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. ¹⁶ Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. ¹⁷ Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. ¹⁸ Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, ¹⁹ singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. ²⁰ And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

LEARN WHAT GOD WANTS US TO DO

The first key to not living like fools in this dark world but as those who are God's wise children of light is to ***Learn What God Wants Us to Do***. Here in *Ephesians 5*, the Apostle Paul is writing to the Christians in the churches throughout the region of Ephesus. Paul recognizes that the world they live in is lost as it is immersed in the darkness of sin. Paul reminds the Christians that before they believed in and followed Jesus, they were also lost in world's darkness. Paul says now that they have the light of Jesus within them, they are to live as children of light. They are not to participate in the evil deeds of those in darkness. Instead, living as children of light means they are diligently determining what pleases God and living accordingly. With that in mind Paul now says in *verses 15-17* they are living in evil days and as a result they are to be careful, to watch their steps in how they live in this world. It will not be easy to live as children of light who are striving to please God in everything we do while the world around us is living only for itself without regard for what pleases God.

We still live in a world today that is plunged into darkness. There are countless people today who could not care less what pleases God. So many only live according to what pleases themselves. There are countless voices in our world that have all kinds of conflicting values, morals, worldviews, and gods for which they live their lives. All these voices are clamoring for our attention, drawing us to live our lives in their ways. There is so much confusion in our world today about sexuality, about gender, money, relationships, love, about what is right and what is wrong, what is wise and what is foolish, because we are in a lost, dark, hurting, broken world. It is very difficult to hear God's voice in the midst of all these voices.

A guy goes ice fishing for the very first time. All of a sudden, he hears a voice. "There are no fish under the ice!" He ignores it and moves to another area, cuts a hole, and tosses his line in. Again, he hears the booming voice: "There are no fish under the ice!"

He nervously looks up and asks, “Lord? Is that you?” “No, this is the manager of the ice rink!” It is hard to discern God’s voice of truth in this world with many voices yelling their own truth.

Paul says there is only one way to live wisely in these difficult days and that is to determine how God wants us to live our lives. As God’s children of light in this hurting, broken, confused world that has lost its bearings in the darkness and confusion of sin, we are to diligently and continually pursue determining what exactly is God’s will, the truth of God. We are to do as *Romans 12:2* says, “*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*” Everything we believe and do is governed by what is God’s good, pleasing and perfect will. We can only determine God’s will is by daily running to God in prayer to submit our wills, our desires, our motives, our intentions, our thoughts, our appetites, our passions, our words, and our actions to line up with God’s. We can learn what God’s good, pleasing and perfect will is by daily listening to God speak to us what is true, what is right, what is best, what His will is for how we live our lives by opening our Bible, or what we call God’s Word.

AVOID DRUNKENNESS

Paul then gives us an example of what God wants us to do as children of God in this dark world and that is to ***Avoid Drunkenness***. Why did Paul choose drunkenness when there are so many other vices in the world then and today? An obvious reason is that just as today, drunkenness was a common problem that is often overlooked as being an almost harmless norm that many people in our world do. It is important to note that Paul is not condemning the drinking of alcohol. Paul is writing to the Christians in Ephesus with the assumption that they are drinking wine like just about everybody did in first century Judea. A careful reading of the Bible shows that the Bible does not prohibit drinking alcohol. The Bible as a whole teaches that while moderate consumption of alcohol is not inherently sinful and can even be enjoyed as a blessing, drunkenness is strictly forbidden. Scripture emphasizes moderation and self-control when drinking.

Shelby Abbott, who worked in ministry with college students for over 22 years saw firsthand more than he would like to the effects of the overconsumption of alcohol in the life of college students. He says the process of being sober to becoming drunk has three basic steps. The first step is that a person makes the conscious ***choice*** to drink alcohol. The second step is that a person gives her or his life over to the ***control*** of alcohol. That leads to the third step and that is a ***change*** of behavior, speech, and thoughts. The consequences of allowing ourselves to be under the influence of alcohol when we overindulge has all kinds of consequences that Paul admits can lead to ruining our lives. The Bible says the abuse of alcohol leads to us to make fools of ourselves as it leads to sorrow, physical ailments, impaired judgment, addiction, and social or spiritual decline. Alcohol, especially in excess, is hard on the human body and soul. God doesn’t want for us His children to suffer the consequences of overindulging

alcohol. The wise way to handle alcohol is to only drink it if we are able to do so without drunkenness. If for whatever reason we cannot drink without coming under the influence of alcohol, then do not drink at all.

BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

With this in mind, Paul says that instead of being filled with alcohol and consequently being under the influence of alcohol, as Christians we are to ***Be Filled with the Holy Spirit***. The same three steps I shared earlier of going from being sober to becoming drunk, interestingly, apply to being filled with the Holy Spirit.

The first step is to ***Choose to Follow Jesus*** and in so doing we are then filled with the Holy Spirit. When we become a Christian, God comes into our lives and makes His home in us through the Holy Spirit. *1 Corinthians 6:19* says, “*Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?*” Every Christian is a walking temple, or a sacred place where God makes His home in this world in us through the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit filling us up with His presence, God is now filling us with the light of His presence.

The next step of being filled with the Holy Spirit is that we then ***Turn Our Lives Over to the Control of the Holy Spirit***. When the Holy Spirit fills us with His presence, we give the Holy Spirit the key to every room of our lives and invite Him to come in and clean house, organize it as He knows best, and then to be in control of every thought, desire, passion, hunger, thirst, motive, intention, words, and actions of our lives. We give our entire lives without reservation over to being under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

As we do so we will experience the third step of being filled by the Holy Spirit, ***Change of Our Entire Lives***. The Holy Spirit changes our lives from the inside out so that as we are more and more under the influence of the Holy Spirit, our lives are changed to become more like Jesus. *Galatians 5:16-17*, “*16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.*” E. Stanley Jones, the notable 20th Century Methodist author and missionary to India once said, “Unless the Holy Spirit fills, the human spirit fails.” The Holy Spirit is the only one who can change our lives from the inside out as we cooperate with the Spirit’s work within us. E. Stanley Jones also said, “If the Holy Spirit can take over the subconscious with our consent and cooperation, then we have almighty Power working at the basis of our lives, then we can do anything we ought to do, go anywhere we ought to go, and be anything we ought to be.” The only way we can know God’s truth, follow God’s truth, love and live like Jesus, follow wherever God leads, overcome temptations and sin is through being filled with the all-influencing presence of the Holy Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit fills us with His presence, He then pushes out of our lives all that is contrary to God’s will and replaces it with His presence. UPI reported in April of last year that the owners of *Captain’s Quarters Riverside Grille* in Kentucky came up with a

radical, unique strategy to protect their restaurant from floodwaters. As the Ohio River floodwaters encroached, co-owner Andrew Masterson shared their plan of intentionally flooding the building with clean water to keep the dirty floodwaters out. In a Facebook Live video, Masterson demonstrated how, after they disconnected kitchen equipment and electrical panels, he and his team used sinks, faucets, and a well water pump to fill the restaurant with about 6 feet of fresh water. The method relies on maintaining a barrier of clean water to prevent the muddy floodwater from entering the building. Masterson believes that this strategy, if successful, could save the restaurant from costly cleanup. He said, "If this works, it will save us a lot of time and money in the future." *God wants to fill us up with His Spirit so that we're not overcome by the world's evil.* As Paul says here in Ephesians, as the Holy Spirit fills us with His presence and we surrender our lives over to the work of the Holy Spirit, we then worship God with our lives. We become people who live our lives with gratitude for how God has changed our lives. We then love like Jesus and have the fruit of the Spirit in our lives like Jesus did as we become people who live lives of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. As our lives come more and more under the control of the Holy Spirit we have the same values, morals, thoughts, interests, desires and speak and live our lives according to what God wants.

Every one of us throughout every day are consciously and unconsciously making decisions as to what we will allow to control our lives. That which we allow to control our lives will determine the direction of our lives. God's way is to make His home in us, then expel the darkness within us with His presence, heal us from the influence of the darkness in our lives, and then transform our lives to be more like Jesus.

2 Corinthians 13:14, "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

SUGGESTED RESOURCES: (Books marked with * are available to be checked-out in the Asbury Discipleship Resource Center)

- *The Holy Bible* (Several FREE copies are available in the DRC)
- *Unpuzzled*, J. D. Walt *
- *Knowing God*, J. I. Packer
- *The Gospel According to Jesus*, John MacArthur
- *The Peacemaker*, Ken Sande
- *Respectable Sins*, Jerry Bridges
- *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Donald S. Whitney
- *The Pursuit of Holiness*, Jerry Bridges
- *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship*, Peter Scazzero
- *The Pursuit of God*, A. W. Tozer
- *Forgotten God*, Francis Chan

Icebreaker Questions

1. What is one piece of advice or wisdom someone gave you that has helped guide your life?
2. Have you ever been in a situation where there were so many voices or opinions that it became difficult to know what was true or right?

Sermon Discussion Questions

1. Paul tells believers to “be careful how you live” in Ephesians 5:15. What are some practical ways Christians can live wisely in today’s culture?
2. The sermon emphasizes learning what God wants us to do through prayer and Scripture. What habits help you hear God’s voice more clearly amid the noise of the world?
3. Why do you think Paul contrasts drunkenness with being filled with the Holy Spirit? What does that comparison teach us about influence and control in our lives?
4. The sermon describes surrendering every “room” of our lives to the Holy Spirit. Are there areas of your life where you struggle to fully surrender control to God?
5. Galatians 5 speaks about walking by the Spirit and producing spiritual fruit. Which fruit of the Spirit do you most desire to grow in during this season of your life, and why?
6. What impacted you most from the sermon? How might you apply this week’s sermon to your life?
7. How might this group pray for you this week?