

Freedom, Not Folly: Choosing What Fills You

By Ellen Fox - A Standalone Study on Turning from Numbing to Lasting Fulfillment

Part 1: Not Numbed but Filled – God’s Invitation to Fullness

When life feels overwhelming—when you're weary, stressed, or empty—it's easy to seek escape through temporary comforts. For many, excessive alcohol use becomes a way to numb the pain. But that relief is fleeting and often leaves us more empty than before.

God offers us a different way. He invites us not to escape or numb our feelings but to find true and lasting fullness in Him. God invites us to turn toward Him—not to numb ourselves, but to be filled with His Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18 (ESV)

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.”

⑥ Reflect: Why do you think Paul contrasts drunkenness with being filled with the Spirit? What does this reveal about the kind of influence or presence God wants in your life?

Isaiah 55:1–2 (ESV)

“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters... Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?”

God invites us to Himself, not to things that leave us empty. True satisfaction and fulfillment are found only in God—the source of life and spiritual nourishment. Isaiah's words challenge us to consider where we invest our time, money, and affection. Are we being filled—or are we chasing what doesn't satisfy?

⑥ Reflect: Lord, help me recognize the lesser things I turn to when I feel empty. Teach me to come to You instead.

Psalms 16:11 (ESV)

“In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Lasting joy is found in God's presence. His nearness offers not just peace and favor—but power, fullness, and purpose. The joy God gives is not momentary or shallow; it's rooted in a relationship with Him.

John 4:14 (ESV)

“But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

Jesus satisfies our deepest thirst. In His conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, He revealed that our soul's craving isn't for what the world offers, but for the living water only He provides—His Spirit, His presence, His truth.

Galatians 5:22–23 (ESV)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace... self-control.”

A Spirit-filled life produces lasting fruit—especially self-control. We grow this fruit not by striving harder but by staying close to the Vine (John 15:5) and renewing our minds through God's truth. Romans 12:2 reminds us:

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...”

Key Thoughts

✝ **God doesn't shame our thirst; He satisfies it.**

Longing, desire, and need are not condemned—they're invitations. Our thirst is not a problem to hide or a weakness to fix, but a signal that points us to the true Source.

✝ **He invites us to be filled, not numbed.**

The world offers many ways to escape—substances, entertainment, busyness—but these leave us hollow. God offers presence, peace, joy, and purpose: a deep, lasting filling.

✝ **Freedom in Christ is not just about avoiding sin—it's about access.**

We no longer need to chase relief from “broken cisterns that hold no water” (Jeremiah 2:13). We're free to come—directly and continually—to the God who fills. The question isn't “Is this wrong?” but: “Is this life-giving?”

✝ Reflection Prompts

- Lord, what lesser things do I tend to reach for when I'm stressed or spiritually dry?

- What does 'being filled with the Spirit' look like in my everyday life—today?
- Show me how to create space for You to fill me daily, not just in crisis but in the ordinary.

† **Try This This Week**

****Spiritual Practice Challenge****

Each time you feel the urge to reach for a temporary comfort (social media, food, alcohol, entertainment), pause and pray:

“Holy Spirit, fill me. I need You more than this.”

Let that moment of longing become a moment of invitation.

† **Closing Reflection**

God isn't asking you to deny your needs—He's offering to meet them. What if this week wasn't about restraint, but about returning? Returning to the One who doesn't just relieve our emptiness, but fills it.

***“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.” – Matthew 5:6***

† **Closing Prayer**

Lord, I bring You my thirst, my fatigue, and the ways I've tried to fill myself apart from You. I confess that I sometimes seek numbing when You offer healing. Teach me to turn to You. Fill me with Your Spirit—not just in crisis, but in every moment. Satisfy me with Your presence, and make my life a wellspring of living water. In Jesus' name, amen.