

“BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT”

OBJECTIVE- Study the scriptures to look at the importance and purpose of believers being filled with the Spirit of God. To examine why being baptized in the Holy Spirit is just as relevant as being baptized in water and fire.

KEY SCRIPTURES: ACTS 1:4/ACTS 1:8/EPHESIANS 5:17-18/ACTS 10:38/ACTS 10:44-46

As the presence of God is real, so also is the power of God real.

When a severe storm goes through our area, we lose power. We have lost electricity. Even through the storms of life we may not have electricity, but we don't lose power from on High.



We live in a day of increasing energy shortages. The world has ever-increasing energy demands in the face of ever-decreasing energy supplies. Power outages are becoming more frequent. The cost of heating or cooling our homes and driving our cars continues to escalate. And with all the global warming talk, the search is on for clean, renewable energy sources. Under these conditions, it would be

utterly inconceivable if a great number of people had access to a free and readily available source of energy but failed to use it.

And yet, many Christians seemingly do this very thing regarding the Christian life. God has provided us an inexhaustible, free, readily available source of power to live the Christian life. And yet many Christians do not use the power that God has given to overcome temptation and sin. Christian families fall apart because the family members manifest the deeds of the flesh, instead of allowing the Holy Spirit to produce His fruit in their daily relationships. Many Christian workers burn out serving the Lord because they do not avail themselves of the power that God offers through His indwelling Holy Spirit.

And so, the subject of our study, the Spirit-filled life, is vital for every Christian to understand and practice. As often has been said, the Christian life is not difficult; but it is impossible, apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said ([John 15:5b](#)), “apart from Me you can do nothing.” But in the same context, He repeatedly promised to send the Holy Spirit to live in us as the divine Helper ([John 14:16-17](#), 26; 15:26; 16:13). So, the Christian life must be the Spirit-filled life. To walk wisely, to redeem the time in these evil days, to understand the will of the Lord and live considering it, we must be filled with the Spirit.

To live wisely in evil days, you must live continually under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Paul draws a rather startling contrast, which also has some points of comparison ([Ephesians. 5:18](#)): “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” Some have argued that since the Greek text did not utilize capital letters, Paul meant, “be filled in [your human] spirit.” But the same Greek phrase “in [or with] the Spirit,” occurs four other times in Ephesians, and each time it refers clearly to the Holy Spirit (2:18, 22; 3:5; 6:18). Paul was probably thinking of the accusation leveled against the believers who were filled with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, that they were

drunk with wine ([Acts 2:13](#)). So, Paul means that rather than be filled with wine, to be under its influence, Christians should be filled with the Holy Spirit, so as to be under His influence. The Spirit is the One who empowers and works in and through us, but we must trust Him to work ([Philippians 2:12-13](#)).

Question 1: what is the filling of the Holy Spirit?

Because of much confusion in our day, I must first spell out what it is and then clarify what it is not:

A. WHAT IT IS:

(1). TO BE FILLED WITH SPIRIT IS TO LIVE WITH EVERY CONSCIOUS AREA OF YOUR LIFE YIELDED TO HOLY SPIRIT'S CONTROL.

Just as the person filled with wine is under the influence or control of the wine, so the person filled with the Spirit is under the Spirit's control. Furthermore, Paul is talking here primarily about a condition of increasing spiritual maturity, not about a momentary experience. Martyn Lloyd-Jones states (*Life in the Spirit* [Baker], p. 49), "This is not a critical experience, this is a state or a condition in which we are to live always, permanently." He goes on to point out that because Paul commands it, we are not to be passive as we wait for some experience. Rather, it is something that we must obey. The present tense of the verb indicates an ongoing condition, so that the person may be characterized as "full of the Holy Spirit."

For example, [Luke 4:1](#) describes Jesus as "full of the Holy Spirit." In [Acts 6:3](#), the apostles direct the early church to select "seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom," to help with the need of serving the widows. One of the men, Stephen, is described (6:5) as "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit." Later ([Acts 11:24](#)), Barnabas is described as "a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith."

So, the phrase, "full of the Holy Spirit," describes a person who habitually lives with every area of his life under the control of the

Spirit. He is not a self-willed man, but a Spirit-controlled man. The fullness of the Spirit does not mean that he once had a dramatic experience, but rather that he has consistently walked with his life yielded to the Holy Spirit, so that the fruit of the Spirit characterizes his life.

(2). TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT IS TO LIVE WITH THE WORD OF GOD PERMEATING EVERY AREA OF YOUR LIFE.

Ephesians 5:18 is obviously parallel with Colossians 3:16. Both texts are followed by joyful singing, thankfulness to God, and instructions about wives and husbands, children and parents, and slaves and masters. But in Colossians 3:16, rather than saying, “be filled with the Spirit,” Paul says, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you.”

If to be filled with the Word is equal in result to being filled with the Spirit, then it should be clear that the Word-filled Christian is the Spirit-filled Christian. As the Word of Christ dwells in us richly, controls all our ways, as we walk in obedience to the Word, the Spirit of God fills, dominates, and controls us to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, to be a Spirit-filled Christian, you must be growing in your understanding and application of God’s Word.

(3). TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT INVOLVES AN EVER-DEEPENING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH THE SPIRIT.

We need to remember that the Holy Spirit is a Person, not a force. To be filled with the Spirit is not a mechanical formula that you go through, where you “pull the Holy Spirit lever” and all the goodies come pouring out. Rather, it is a relationship with the Triune God through His indwelling Spirit.

This relationship is ever-deepening, which means that there is a difference between a newer Spirit-filled believer and a more mature Spirit-filled believer. Both are filled, but the mature saint is more filled

than the young believer is. There are degrees of filling that correspond with degrees of spiritual understanding and surrender. As you grow in the Word, the Spirit reveals new areas that you need to surrender to His control. So, your capacity for being filled with the Spirit expands over time.

(4). TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT INCLUDES SPECIAL TIMES OF GOD GRANTING EXTRAORDINARY POWER FOR SERVICE.

In [Acts 2:4](#), we read that all that were gathered in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost were filled with the Spirit. Peter went on to preach to the crowd, resulting in over 3,000 conversions. But then [Acts 4:8](#), without any indication that Peter has lost his previous filling with the Spirit, we read that he was filled again just before he spoke to another crowd. It was a special anointing for a special task. Later, when Peter and John gathered with the church to report about their arrest, after they all had prayed, they all were filled with the Spirit, so that they began to speak the word of God with boldness [\(4:31\)](#). You see the same thing with Paul: he was filled with the Spirit just after his conversion when Ananias spoke with him ([Acts 9:17](#)). Some years later, on the first missionary journey when he had to confront Elymas the magician, he was filled with the Holy Spirit for that event [\(13:9\)](#).

Much like the transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament, when there are occasions when there are special circumstances in our life God manifest through the power of The Holy Spirit.

Therefore, we are led by the Spirit as well as empowered by the Spirit.