

FILLING OF THE SPIRIT

What does it mean to be "filled with the Holy Spirit?" Ephesians 5:17-21

- I. Context of the filling.

The context of the admonition of Ephesians 5:18 has to do with practical behavior. When "filled with the Spirit" a Christian will have a song in his/her heart (19), a thankful attitude (20) and deference toward others (21). It will affect the relationships of husband and wife (22-33), parent and child (6:1-4) and employer and employee (6:5-9).
- II. Command of the filling.

The verb "be filled" in Ephesians 5:18 is in an imperative mood. It is not an option of the Christian life; it is obligatory.
- III. Compass of the filling.

The verb "be filled" in Ephesians 5:18 is plural in number -- "you all." This is not something for "super-saints" but for all Christians.
- IV. Comparison of the filling.

A comparison is made in Ephesians 5:18 between getting drunk and being filled with the Spirit. Note the similar comparison in Luke 1:15 and Acts 2:4,13. "Do not be under the influence of alcoholic spirits, but be under the influence of the Holy Spirit."
- V. Concept of the filling.

The basic concept of "filling" in Ephesians 5:18 is that of control. "Do not be controlled (captivated, motivated, activated) by the alcoholic spirits, but be controlled (captivated, motivated, activated) by the Holy Spirit."
- VI. Consignor of the filling.

The verb "be filled" in Ephesians 5:18 is in the passive voice, meaning that the subject ("you all") of the verb is being acted upon by another. The Spirit of God is acting upon us. This does not mean that we are merely passive agents.
- VII. Content of the filling.

The Holy Spirit is both the supplier and the substance supplied; the Giver and the Gift. The filling of the Holy Spirit is not our having more of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit having more of us!
- VIII. Continuity of the filling.

The verb "be filled" in Ephesians 5:18 is a present tense. "Keep being filled with the Spirit." This is not a static, once-and-for-all experience, but the dynamic continuity of the Spirit's control. It is possible to be being filled by the Holy Spirit at one moment in time and not the next.
- IX. Connotations of the filling.

The use of the word "fill" and "Spirit" within the New Testament allows for different connotations.

 - A. Progressive possession. Verb *pleroo* - "the action of filling up."
Acts 13:52; Eph. 5:18
 - B. Pattern of permanence. Adjective *pleres* - "full."
Luke 4:1; Acts 6:3; 7:55; 11:24

- C. Productive power. Verb *pimplemi* or *pletho* - "action that looks toward specific results," particularly verbal witness.
Luke 1:15,41,67; Acts 2:4; 4:8,31; 9:17; 13:9
- X. Contradictions of the filling.
- A. Resisting the Spirit - Acts 7:51
 - B. Quenching the Spirit - I Thess. 5:19
 - C. Grieving the Spirit - Eph. 4:30
 - D. Lying to the Spirit - Acts 5:3
 - E. Testing the Spirit - Acts 5:9
 - F. Defiling temple of the Spirit - I Cor. 6:19
 - G. Insulting the Spirit - Heb. 10:29
 - H. Blaspheming the Spirit - Matt. 12:31,32
- XI. Contrast of the filling.
- A. Born of the Spirit - John 3:5,6,8
 - B. Indwelling of the Spirit - Rom. 8:11; II Tim. 1:14
 - C. Gift of the Spirit - Acts 2:38; Rom. 5:5
 - D. Seal of the Spirit - II Cor. 1:21,22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30
 - E. Anointing of the Spirit - II Cor. 1:21; I John 2:20,27
 - F. Baptism of the Spirit - Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5;11:16; I Cor. 12:13
 - G. Filling of the Spirit - Eph. 5:18
- XII. Commencement of the filling.
The intent of God is that the filling of the Holy Spirit should commence as soon as the Spirit of Christ comes to dwell in us at regeneration. Many Christians are untaught concerning God's functional intent in mankind. Some, therefore, refer to a "second work of grace" subsequent to regeneration.
- XIII. Conditions of the filling.
In like manner as we received the Spirit of Christ, we are to be filled with the Spirit and walk in the Spirit -- by faith, our receptivity of His activity - Col. 2:6
- XIV. Consciousness of the filling.
- A. Conscious of sinfulness - Isa. 6:1-5
 - B. Conscious of Christ's adequacy - II Cor. 3:5
 - C. Consciousness of what Christ is doing is sometimes hidden - Rom. 11:33
- XV. Consequences of the filling.
- A. Character. The "fruit of the Spirit" is the character of Christ - Gal. 5:22,23
 - B. Ministry. The "gifts of the Spirit" are but the empowerment by which the Life of Jesus Christ overflows in ministry unto others - Rom. 12:3-8; I Cor. 12:4-31
- XVI. Consummation of the filling.
The process of being filled with the Spirit is completed only when we pass into heavenly glory - Phil. 3:12-14