



Filled with the Spirit

Ephesians 5:15-20

Week 11 | Mar 18, 2018

Summary: Life is difficult, and most of the time there are no simple rules to guide us. We face tough problems, big decisions, or moral dilemmas where there is no clear or obvious path forward. How do I determine how to **live wisely, know the right opportunities to take, and find my purpose?** (Three problems drawn from Ephesians 5:15-17.) It's at these times that we need wisdom. Tim Keller says, "Wisdom is knowing what to do with the 80% of life where the moral rules don't apply."

Thankfully, we also have the Holy Spirit. *Do not get drunk with wine...but be filled with the Holy Spirit.* There is an interesting compare-and-contrast when it comes to spiritual fullness and drunkenness. In both situations, you are fueled by something other than yourself; you are moved by an "alien" power. But whereas drunkenness causes the loss of control, being filled with the Spirit yields the fruit of self-control, even while you're being empowered by God (Gal. 5:23). It's like the wind filling the sails of a ship: It's driven by an outside power, even while the captain steers it where he wants to go.

We learn how to appropriate Spiritual fullness in Ephesians 5:19-20. **Transformed speaking:** When the church gathers in worship, it speaks not only to God but to each other in its music, which drives God's truth deep into our hearts. **Transformed inner songs:** As we play a worshipful, inner soundtrack, we keep God's Spirit front-and-center in our hearts. **Transformed thanksgiving:** As we maintain an "attitude of gratitude" we hoist our sails to the Spirit and allow him to move us forward in hope.

Discussion:

1. Read Ephesians 5:15-20. Where do you need wisdom most in your life right now? What situation are you facing in which simple moral rules don't suffice?
2. When in your life have you experienced the greatest fullness of the Holy Spirit? Was there a day, an event, a season of life when you just knew that God was empowering you? Tell your story.
3. How can we even discern the Spirit's guidance or empowerment? Have you discovered any keys to sensing him in your life?
4. There is a lot in this passage about music and thanksgiving being keys to appropriating the Spirit's fullness. Why do you think Paul emphasizes this more than say, Bible study?
5. What role does music and worship play in your life? How could it play a healthier, more vital role? And what about thanksgiving? How could increase that to your spiritual benefit?

Being Filled with the Holy Spirit

Dr. Bill Bright was the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ (now "Cru"), which has been one of the largest and most effective evangelistic ministries in the world for over half a century. Many of our college students connect with Cru on their campuses, and two of our church's missionaries work with Cru on the global front. Probably no single influence in the growth of this ministry was greater than Dr. Bright's own practice of maintaining a fullness of the Spirit in his own life, and teaching the Spirit-filled life to his staff. Here is some of what Dr. Bright wrote about the Holy Spirit:

"If you are a Christian, the Holy Spirit already dwells within you. When you purchase a mechanical item that runs on battery power, frequently the notice "Batteries Not Included" is printed on the box. The Holy Spirit—your Source of power for living—is "included" when you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. Therefore, you do not need to invite the Spirit to come into your life. He did this when you became a Christian, and Jesus promised that He will never leave you.

"The moment you received Christ, the Holy Spirit not only came to indwell you and baptize you into the body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12:13, Paul explains, "We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body."

"There is but one indwelling of the Holy Spirit, one rebirth of the Holy Spirit, and one baptism of the Holy Spirit—all of which occur when you receive Christ. But being filled with the Holy Spirit, is not a once-and-for-all experience. There are many fillings, as is made clear in Ephesians 5:18. In the Greek language this command to be filled means to be constantly and continually filled, controlled and empowered with the Holy Spirit as a way of life.

"I cannot control myself and be controlled by the Holy Spirit at the same time. Christ cannot be in control if I am on the throne. So I must abdicate. This involves faith. As an expression of my will, in prayer, I surrender the throne of my life to Him, and by faith I draw upon His resources to live a holy and fruitful life.

"The command of Ephesians 5:18 is given to all believers to be filled, directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit, continually, every day of our lives. And the promise of 1 John 5:14, 15 is made to all believers that, when we pray according to God's will, He hears and answers us. If you claim the fullness of God's Spirit in prayer, He will hear and answer you. He *will* fill you. And in the process, you will "inhale" spiritually.

"Do not think that you have to have an emotional experience or that something dramatic must happen to you....The Holy Spirit is not given to you that you might have a great emotional experience, but that you might live a holy life and be a fruitful witness for Christ. So, whether or not you have an emotional experience is not the issue.

"There is no place in Scripture where you are told to pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit. You are filled by faith. However, since the object of your faith is God and His Word, I suggest that you pray to Him claiming the fullness of His Spirit as an expression of your faith in God's *command* and in His *promise*.

"Have you met God's conditions? Do you hunger and thirst after righteousness? Do you sincerely desire to be controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit? If so, I invite you to bow your head and pray this prayer of faith right now. Expect God to fill you. Without begging or pleading, just say:

"Dear Father, I need You. I hunger and thirst for a more vital relationship with You. I admit that I have been in control of my life. As a result, I have sinned against You. Thank You for forgiving my sins through Christ's death on the cross for me. I now confess and turn from my sins and surrender the control of my life to the Lord Jesus. By faith I invite You to fill me with the Holy Spirit as You *commanded* me to be filled. You *promised* to fill me if I ask according to Your will. I pray this in the authority of the name of Jesus Christ. To demonstrate my faith, I now thank You for filling me with Your Holy Spirit and for taking control of my life. Amen."

