

# Filled with the Spirit

Lesson 4 in "More Like Jesus"

Taken/revised from "The Holy Spirit in Me" on [www.john2031.com](http://www.john2031.com)

**Lesson Aim:** To understand the person and work of the Holy Spirit, and His part in the transformation process and our Christian life and service.

**Key Verses:** Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Eph. 5:18

## Be Filled

Eph. 5:18 instructs all believers to be filled with the Spirit. The tense of the verb there means to be continually filled. It is ongoing, not one-time.

God the Holy Spirit is one of the Trinity; with God the Father and God the Son. The Holy Spirit is God's presence or Agent in the world. He should always be viewed as one with the Father and the Son.

All Christians have the Spirit of God in some measure; otherwise we cannot be a child of God. (Rom. 8:8-10, see p14) The issue is the degree to which we are "filled," which is evidenced by the degree to which God, by His Spirit, controls our life.

## The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus

Several scriptures identify the "Spirit" as the Spirit of Jesus Himself.

Acts 16:7 - "When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to."

Gal. 4:6 - "Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.'"

Col. 1:27b-28 - "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. <sup>28</sup> He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ."

Philip: 1:19 - "for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance."

Note how Jesus and His Spirit are integrated in these scriptures:

John 7:37-39

John 14:20-26

## His Purpose

Why did Jesus come to earth? He came to make a way for us to receive God's love. He accomplished that by doing the Father's will in bearing our sins in His body on the cross so that we could have eternal life.

John 6:38 & 40 - For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. - - <sup>40</sup> For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day."

If we are full of the Spirit we will be joined with the purpose of God. Through us He will continue the redemptive work that Jesus began on earth so that "whosoever will, may come." That inescapable mandate rests upon all who confess Jesus as Savior and Lord and claim to be "Spirit filled."

## Inside Out

Being filled with the Spirit is something that happens inside of us. While there may be immediate outward signs, it isn't authentic if it hasn't happened on the inside.

Until our new birth we are full of ourselves. We want to run our lives and decide for ourselves what is good for us. When we are born again we surrender to God and relinquish our right to ourselves. We invite Him to be Lord and Master and we begin a new life under His control. We have made room for the Holy Spirit to come into our life.

Being full of the Spirit then, is an ongoing condition of openness to God and being filled and refilled.

### **The Results**

Both drunk people and those full of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) are controlled by what is inside them. Here is what happens when we are full of the Spirit of Jesus and controlled by Him:

**We will live holy lives**

Gal. 5:16-17 - So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

<sup>17</sup>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.

Rom. 8:8-10 - Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. <sup>9</sup> You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.

**We will bear the fruit of the Spirit, that is, the fruit of the presence of Jesus in us.**

Gal. 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

**We will be in unity with each other**

John 17:20-21 - "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I

am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

**We will be transformed. It can't be otherwise!**

II Cor. 3:17-18 – Lesson 1 theme verses.

Philip. 2:1-8 - The natural expression of Christ in us!

**We will be empowered for Christian service**

Acts 1:8 - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

I Cor. 12 – Read it all, note vv 1 and 4-6

<sup>1</sup>Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. <sup>4</sup> There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup> There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

As you consider the spiritual gifts, think of how enabling it would be to actually have knowledge and wisdom beyond your own; to have discernment about the spiritual conflict inside of one you are trying to help; and to pray for the sick under the direction of God and in the spirit of John 5:19.

Humbly invite God to instruct you. Open yourself to His rule and His power as you serve Him. Allow Him to lead you deeper and deeper into what it means to be "in Christ" and to be equipped with God's power as you go about His work. Be confident that as you seek God with a pure heart, He won't allow Satan to give you something bad. As Jesus said:

Matt. 7:9-11 - Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup> Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?

<sup>11</sup> If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

To be filled with the Spirit is to be *led* by the Spirit, and sometimes that includes a wilderness experience.

Matt. 4:1 - Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

When we are under the influence of God's presence, nothing really matters but Jesus. We will be single-minded, empowered, bold, humble, and willing to suffer and even die for the purposes of God

Acts 6:8 thru chap. 7 - Read it, and note:

6:8 - Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people.

7:55 - But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

7:60 - Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

### **The Problem**

The biggest place that we get into trouble with the fullness of the Spirit is that we fail to see the connection between His presence, and the eternal purposes of God. We miss the assumptive "and you will be" of Acts 1:8. We think it's all about us, but in reality it's all about *Him!*

Don't we often think of the work of the Spirit in earthly terms such as health, wealth, personal freedom and happiness; and gifts that make us look "spiritual."

God's purpose in putting His Spirit inside us is that He would thus rule our lives in a way that transforms us and; a) gives us fullness of life; b) shows the unsaved His goodness, to draw them to Himself, and; c) equips us for ministry to them.

### **Receiving the Holy Spirit**

It is sometimes said that to be fully committed is to have surrendered all of myself that I know, to all of God that I know. As God shows me more, I surrender more. And more. And more. There are 100 works of grace. Or 1000. It is an exhilarating pilgrimage, to hunger and thirst for God and to be filled, and filled and filled.

There are moments when God "turns the lights on" and gives us understanding about something that goes deep, and we yield ourselves to Him. We can develop a theology around that and label it "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit" in either the Pentecostal or Holiness sense, but we don't need to call it that. It may be an invigorating moment but it is only one of many encounters that God intends for us in a dynamic, ongoing walk with Him.

We receive what we believe to receive, and we can't believe until we understand; and we can't understand until God uncovers a truth or principle to us. It might be in our quiet time; while driving down the road; in worship; through the preaching of the Word; or wherever or however. It is unfortunate that these often become spiritual parking places instead of launching pads.

It is also unfortunate that preachers often misrepresent the meaning of these moments and give them a theological spin. Come to the altar and receive "it" and you will almost magically have holiness, freedom, joy, insight, power or whatever it is you need. Sorry, it doesn't work that way!

If we have basically been ignorant or fearful of the person and work of the Holy Spirit, it can be a very significant moment when our eyes and hearts are opened to the truth of Who He is and what He can do in us. And it can be a life-changing event if we have confessed our *sins* and received Jesus Christ as *Savior*, but then later confess our *sinfulness* and surrender to Him as *Lord*. Or when he uncovers to us the place of the spiritual gifts in the Christian's life, even today. Those moments are simply divine encounters in which we surrender further to the rule of God and become more of Him and less of us.

## Summing Up

Here are some key points that can lead us into the authentic Spirit-filled life and set us free from the destructive and divisive bickering that so often surrounds this topic. We must:

- 1) Know that the work of God is accomplished by the power of God flowing through those who are filled with the Presence of God. In order for that to happen, we need to be emptied of self. We can't be full of both self and Him. It's a lifelong process of becoming more like Jesus through increasingly understanding more about God and ourselves, and surrendering more and more to Him.
- 2) Seek to live a holy life. Invite and allow God to do deep works in you, knowing that sometimes it will be in leaps and bounds and other times tiny steps. Never ever believe that in a moment you are sanctified or empowered in a way that releases you from the need to continue to seek God and to be further purified and set apart unto Him and His purposes.
- 3) Know that the spiritual gifts are given to equip us for ministry. Don't even desire them, if you're not willing to take up your cross and become a disciple of Jesus, as in Mark 8:34-38. Ask God to teach you so that you are not uninformed (I Cor. 12:1), and to release in your life all that He has for you. (V11)
- 4) Know that love is the primary evidence of "God in us." Read I Cor. 13. As Jesus said in John 13:35, it is by our love for one another that the unsaved will know that we are His. The Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) is a far more reliable indicator of spiritual maturity than the gifts of the Spirit. Seek that, above all else.
- 5) Refuse to find your spiritual identity and security in your theological distinctives.

Find them instead in your relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and in your fellowship with other believers regardless of your agreement on these or other divisive, secondary issues.

## Prayer

God my Father, I surrender to you. Master, I relinquish control of my life to you.

Fill me with your Holy Spirit; the Spirit of Jesus. I hereby take yet another step in becoming more like Him by inviting His very Presence to fill me. I ask you to work the character of Jesus in me and to empower me for all that you set before me to do.

Remind me often that the Presence of Jesus in me is for your purposes and not my own. I am yours, more than I have ever been. Use me for your glory. Thank you, Jesus.

## Questions for Thought and Discussion

- 1) Is there anything in this lesson that is particularly insightful and helpful to you?
- 2) How would you describe God's purpose for our being "filled with the Spirit?"
- 3) Does one of the "Results" listed on p14-15 really stand out to you?
- 4) How would the Church in America be different if we embraced this lesson's definition of being full of the Spirit?