

Ephesians 5:18-21 Answers Be Filled with the Spirit

Introduction: ESV **John 7:37-39** . . . "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive . . .

Overview: Ephesians 4:17 began a new section about the total transformation we have in Christ. Like an old coat, we are to take off the old man and put on the new man. This new section is about renewal. It runs from 4:17 all the way to 6:9. Paul first gave general renewal admonitions to everyone (4:17-5:21), followed by renewal admonitions to specific groups (husbands, wives, fathers, children, slaves, masters). Today's lesson falls within the general admonitions for everyone.

******What exhortations did Paul give in this last paragraph of Ephesians 5 (5:15-21)?** Paul urged his readers to walk wisely, to make the best use of time, to understand what the will of the Lord is and to be filled with the Spirit. Last week we studied the first three of these. Today we will zero in on being filled with the Spirit.

What is the first command in 5:18? Do not be drunk with wine.

Joke: There is an old joke that goes like this, "Bob is a great guy, but he does have just one fault: he does cuss when he gets drunk. But that's his only fault." Oh wait! Based on Ephesians 5:18, old Bob has two problems!

Fact: It is God's will that you not get drunk.

1. What does it mean to be drunk (5:18)? A common definition is "affected by alcohol to the extent of losing control of one's faculties or behavior".

The Greek word for "drunk" (5:18) is *methusko*. Homer used this same word in describing the stretching of a bull's hide; he wrote that in order to make it more elastic it must be soaked (*methusko*) with fat. Applied to alcohol, *methusko* refers to a person who is soaked with wine, i.e., soused (Wuest, p. 127).

What reason was given for not being drunk with wine (5:18)? It leads to debauchery ("dissipation", NASV).

2. What is debauchery (5:18)? In English it means bad or immoral behavior that involves sex, drugs alcohol, etc. It is from *asotia* (literally, not saved). It was used in Luke 15:18 to describe the conduct of the prodigal son. The word primarily denotes wastefulness (*NIC*, p. 125). Thus, the NASV's "dissipation" may be best.

What is the second command in 5:18? Rather than being drunk with wine we are to be filled with the Spirit.

Fact: It is absolutely, unmistakably God's will for you to be Spirit filled.

Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit is the 3rd Person of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is not an "it" but rather a "he". All three members of the Trinity are co-equal and co-eternal.

3. How does being drunk with wine help us understand what it means to be filled with the Spirit (5:18)? A person drunk with wine is controlled by the wine, is influenced by the wine. A person filled with the Spirit will be influenced by the Spirit, under the control of the Spirit.

More Examples: A person said to be filled with rage is under the control/influence of anger. A person filled with fear is often immobilized by the fear. So too a person filled with the Spirit is moved by the Spirit, captivated by the Spirit.

Contrast: Being drunk with wine leaves a man passive, with no control over his senses. In contrast, being full in Spirit doesn't mean losing one's self control. It is voluntarily yielding to the Spirit's desires, to voluntarily let the Spirit control our thoughts, feelings, words and actions.

4. "Filled" is in the middle voice, meaning, "allow yourselves to be filled with the Spirit." How can a person obey the command to be filled with the Spirit (5:18)? See 4:30, *Galatians 5:16* & *1 Thessalonians 5:19*. Paul does not specify exactly how to be filled with the Spirit. That "be filled" (5:18) is in the middle voice shows that we have a choice in the matter; we must cooperate with the Spirit (*ICC*, p. 161). Since all believers already have the Holy Spirit residing within them, to be filled with the Spirit we simply listen to the Spirit's voice within, being sensitive to his promptings, and obey what He says. It seems reasonable that on our part there should be confession of sin and a surrendering of our time, talent and emotions. It would also seem good to die to selfishness (*MacArthur*, p. 252). To be filled with something means there is no room for other things.

ESV **Ephesians 4:30** . . . do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God

ESV **1 Thessalonians 5:19** Do not quench the Spirit.

ESV **Galatians 5:16** . . . walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

5. What parallel to being filled with the Spirit (5:18-6:9) does Paul lay out in Colossians 3:16-4:1? Being filled with the Spirit is parallel to letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly. Obviously the two ideas are similar and one helps explain the meaning of the other. To be filled with the Spirit is to let the Word of Christ infuse every part of our beings, to let it/Him control our thoughts and being (*McArthur*, p. 252).

6. Is being filled with the Spirit a onetime event or an ongoing process (5:18)? “Filled” is a present imperative, which carries the idea of “keep on being filled with the Spirit.” It is not a onetime event but rather should be an on-going state of being.

7. What is the difference between the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 1:5) and the filling of the spirit (5:18)? See *John 16:17*. The baptism of the Spirit occurred at Pentecost and was when the promised Holy Spirit came to dwell in those in the church. Every time a person is born again, he is grafted into that Spirit baptism and the Holy Spirit comes into that person’s life. Every believer is possessed by a ghost: The Holy Ghost! Baptism in the Spirit is salvific. The Holy Spirit seals us for our final redemption and He imparts to us spiritual gifts for service.

ESV **John 16:7** . . . it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

8. Based on 5:19-20, what are some evidences of being filled with the Spirit (5:17)? See *1 Thessalonians 5:18*, *Galatians 5:22-23*. Those filled with the spirit will have a song in their hearts (adoration to God), will be thankful to God (appreciation for circumstances) and will express an attitude of submission to others as specified in 5:29-6:4 (accommodation to people; dealt with next week).

Further evidence of being Spirit filled:

ESV **Galatians 5:22-23** . . . the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control . . .

Grammatical Structure (5:18-21): There are two commands (imperatives) here: **1)** do not get drunk but rather **2)** be filled with the Spirit. These two commands are followed by four present participles which define the result of being filled with the Spirit: addressing, singing, giving thanks and submitting.

— Addressing & Singing —

What is the first evidence that a person is filled with the Spirit (5:19)? Evidence of being full of the Spirit is the desire to sing spiritual songs!

Example: Paul and Silas sang praises to Jesus while in jail in Philippi (Acts 16:25).

9. In what sense are we to sing to “one another” (5:19)? Some of our singing is to be addressed to each other. We are to sing encouraging songs to each other about God’s greatness and attributes.

Word Studies (5:19): “Psalms” is from *psalmos* and fundamentally refers to a striking, a twanging, specifically the striking of the chords of a musical instrument. Biblically, it is a pious song, a psalm, a song of praise of God (Thayer, p. 675). “Hymns” is from *humnos* and in Classical Greek meant a song in praise of gods, heroes or conquerors. From a Christian perspective it means a song of praise. “Songs” is from *odé* (basis for ode, a rhymed lyric) and is a general term for a song whether of praise (Thayer, p. 637).

10. What did Paul mean when he wrote that you are to make melodies “with your heart” (5:19)? This speaks of motivation. What’s down in the well comes up in the bucket! Our hearts are to be in tune with our songs!

Do you have a song in your heart (5:19)? If not, why not?

— Giving Thanks —

According to 5:20, what is another result of being full of the Spirit? Those led by the Spirit will have an attitude of gratitude! That this is a present participle suggests this is to be an on-going state of being.

Truth: It is proper to give thanks to God. He is our Father and has given us many blessings: abundant and pure water, dirty dishes (the Ethiopians would love to have dirty dishes), special people in our lives who have molded shaped and blessed us, eternal life, a mansion in heaven, peace surpassing understanding, divine love, joy, a wonderful spouse, healthy obedient kids, true loyal friends, the crown of life, the Savior Jesus who meets all our needs.

How often should we give thanks (5:20)? We are to give thanks perpetually (“always”, 5:20), even for sorrowful things. Paul spent two years here in Ephesus and was then run out of town by a riot. He wrote this letter from a prison. We all have our problems. Yet we must remember God’s providence; with God even the bad becomes good. We do not know or control why things happen, but we can control how we react. We thank God not for cancer or betrayal, but in spite of it. God can use even evil for good.

ESV 1 Thessalonians 5:18 . . . give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

What are we to give thanks for (5:20)? We are to give thanks for *everything*.

11. How it is that we are to always give thanks for everything, even bad things (5:20)?

Giving thanks is possible because we do it “in the name of Jesus Christ” (5:20). We have no strength, but we are to offer thanks in Jesus. We give thanks in the Spirit, through the Son to the Father. Praising God in bad circumstances is the result of being filled with the Spirit (Eadie, p. 405).

ESV Romans 8:28 . . . we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

ESV James 1:2-3 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet **trials** of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

Do you always give thanks for everything (5:20)?

Truth: Giving thanks is pleasurable. *Do you want joy and happiness?* Then develop an attitude of gratitude. It is no accident that gladness (5:19) and gratitude (5:20) are linked together. Unhappy people are not thankful people. If things made people happy, then those who have the most would be the happiest. The fact is that gratitude makes you happy. Learn to praise the Lord. What to be happy? Be humbly grateful. (Sermon outline of “P”s by Adrian Rogers, Bellevue Baptist Church, “The Grace of Gratitude”).

In 5:21, what final evidence of being filled with the Spirit is given? Those filled with the Spirit will have a general attitude of submission to one another. The Greek for submitting is *hupotasso* and was originally military term. *Hupo* means under (as in hypodermic or hypothermia) or and *tasso* means to arrange; thus, to arrange under (in ranks). Imagine a military organizational chart. The word really does mean to submit. We are to prefer one another in love, we are to serve one another.

ESV **Galatians 5:13** . . . but through love serve one another.

ESV **Ephesians 4:2** . . . bearing with one another in love . . .

This general attitude of considerate submission toward each other does not obliterate other, more specifically defined, areas of submission. Whereas we are to have a general attitude of submission each to the other, there is still to be submission of the church to its elders (Heb 13:17), wives to husbands (Ep 5:22) and children are to obey their parents. Christian slaves were still to obey their Christian masters (Ep 6:5). The particulars of submission will be the topic of the next lesson!

So What?

12. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? 5:18.

God’s Will for Your Life: John McArthur examined all the places in the New Testament that made a clear statement regarding God’s will for His people, such as here in Ephesians 5:18. He said it is God’s will that you be **s**aved, **s**anctified, **S**pirit filled, **s**ubmissive to authority and **s**aying thanks for all circumstances. Why should God reveal to you His particular will for your life (such as where to work or who to marry) if you are not already obeying His known will written in black ink or white paper? If you line up your eye with the rear site on a gun and the front site and the target, then bullet will go where you want it to go. So too with God’s will; obey God’s will in the five areas McArthur pointed out and you will be directed into the rest of God’s will for your life. You can’t miss it! He will give you the desires of your heart (meaning He will make you want the things He wants you to have!).

13. What are the signs of being filled with the Spirit? 5:19-21.

14. Using 5:18-21 as a litmus test, are you filled with the Spirit? If not, what can you do about it?

**** = ask this question before reading the text aloud. This is put people's minds in gear and them something to look for as the text is read. It causes focus.

Teacher's note: These lessons are based on the ESV and are designed for 45 minute sessions. If you can hand out or email out each lesson's questions a week in advance it will encourage people to think about the passage during the week. Coving each question in class will give importance to the questions and give incentive for the class to spend time preparing for the discussion.

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