



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Spirit-Filled — What it is. What it's Not!

Bible Reading: Ephesians 5:15-21 (Col. 3:16-17)

[Watch LIVESTREAM here at 10am](#)

[Join our post-sermon discussion on Zoom at 11am](#)

[Join our citKids Connect discussion at 11am](#)

The Spirit's filling in Ephesians (Eph. 5:18)

“...Be filled by the Spirit:¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, & spiritual songs, singing & making music...²⁰ giving thanks...to God the Father...²¹ submitting to one another...” (Eph. 5:18-21 CSB)

A. The Only Occurrence in Paul's Letters

1. “Eph. 5:18 is the only reference to being filled with the Spirit in the entire [NT writings of Paul] –A. Kostenberger

B. Ask: What does ‘Spirit-filled’ mean here, in Ephesians?

1. “The same author may well use a word differently in two quite different books...[e.g.,] terms in [Romans & Galatians] are

often used somewhat differently than in, say, Ephesians or Colossians.” — Craig Blomberg

2. “Be Filled by the Spirit”–“This command can be seen as the culmination of the entire book.” –Stephen Guthrie

‘Spirit-Filled’ — What it is Not...

A. Not filled in your ‘human spirit’

B. Not ‘getting drunk in the Spirit’

- C. Not 'overwhelmed by the Spirit,' losing self-control
 - 1. "Being filled with the Spirit is not the same as the 'baptism of the Spirit.' It is not being 'slain in the Spirit.' It is not being overwhelmed by a spiritual influence... It is not losing control of one's senses. It is not speaking in tongues. It is not an ecstatic, sensual, emotional experience..." –B. R. Stockton
- D. Not receiving the Holy Spirit
 - 1. "Being 'filled with the Spirit' is not the same as possessing or being indwelt by the Holy Spirit because he indwells every believer at the moment of salvation...All Christians are indwelt permanently by the Holy Spirit." –John MacArthur
- E. Not the 'Baptism of the Holy Spirit'
- F. Not the 'Second Blessing'
- G. Not 'tongue-speaking'
 - 1. "Being 'filled with the Holy Spirit' is not a dramatic, esoteric experience of suddenly being energized & spiritualized into a permanent state of advanced godliness by a second...blessing subsequent to salvation. Nor is it some temporary effect that results in ecstatic speech ['speaking in tongues'] or visions." –John MacArthur
- H. Not being 'slain in the Spirit'
 - I. Not an ecstatic, emotional experience
 - J. Not limited to a select few, elite, Christians
 - 1. "The verb is in the plural form...Both imperatives in Eph. 5:18...are universal...We are none of us to get drunk; we are all of us to be Spirit-filled. [It's]...not a privilege reserved for some, but a duty resting on all." –John Stott
- K. Not an individualistic, private pursuit of personal piety
 - 1. "To understand and apply this command individualistically is...to read against the context." –Mark Stirling
- L. Not an 'optional extra,' a suggestion—an imperative/command: "Be filled"
- M. Not a one-time or occasional event—present tense: "Be being filled..."
- N. Not reliant on our own initiative—It's "Be filled" (passive), not "fill yourself"
- O. Not God's reluctant response to our persistent pleading, repentance, penance, etc. (cf. Jn. 15:26; Rev. 22:1)
 - 1. "There's not a single reference in the NT that enjoins believers to ask to be filled with the Spirit." –A. Kostenberger

Spirit-Filled —What it is

- A. The Holy Spirit is the Agent/Mean &/or Substance/Content of the 'filling'
- B. An Imperative—a command; Present tense—continuous—"Be being filled," or "be being kept filled," passive
 - 1. Corporate—a plural verb. "The thrust of the passage is corporate, not merely individualistic..." –A. Kostenberger
- C. Passive—How Do We Obey a Passive Verb—'Be filled with the Spirit' (Eph. 5:18)?
 - 1. "The word for Spirit is breath or wind, thinking...of a sailboat is helpful...Without the wind, the sailboat goes nowhere. But by raising the sail, turning the boat...to catch the wind...it moves ahead...Lift the sail..." –Andrew Wilson
- D. By 'speaking, singing, making melody, thanking, submitting' (5:19-20), 'allowing Christ's Word to indwell' (Col. 3:16)

"The Church Filled as God's New Creation Temple (Eph. 2:19-22; 5:18-21)

- A. "Paul is essentially commanding them to become corporately, the unique temple of God, the dwelling place of God... Remaining filled...the Christian community is to engage in spiritual worship." –Abraham Kuruvilla

The Believers—a Corporate Priesthood, worship in/as God's Temple

- A. "Temple themes pervade Ephesians...the church filled with the Spirit is a group...of priests & Levites serving in sacred space." –John Dunne