

Be Filled with the Spirit, Part 2

Scripture: Ephesians 5:18–19

Code: 1940

INTRODUCTION

A. Christ-consciousness

Living in the Spirit means living every moment as if you were actually standing in the presence of Christ. Having your thoughts controlled by Christ is the heart of the Spirit-filled life. God is not necessarily interested in future commitments. If a man's wife came to him and said, "Honey, do you love me?" he wouldn't respond by saying, "Why don't you check with me in a few weeks?" She's not interested in finding out in a few weeks. She wants to know now. God is the same way. He is wholly interested in what a Christian's life is like in the present. A believer's life is to be controlled by the Holy Spirit from beginning to end with no gaps in between.

Realize that you can never live your life in the future. When the future arrives, it is no longer the future but the present. Likewise you can never live in the past. You will always be in the present and it is the only moment that matters. Being filled with the Spirit means filling your life with the Word of God so that your thoughts are dominated by Christ.

B. Christlikeness

The apostle Paul described a wonderful by-product of being filled with the Spirit: "We all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). As you gaze at the glory of the Lord, which means to focus solely on Christ, you will be changed into His image by the Holy Spirit. Christ-consciousness leads to Christlikeness. As you are filled with the Holy Spirit you become increasingly more like Christ.

When you function in your own flesh, apart from the Holy Spirit, there will be no progress or maturity in your Christian life. The key to living the Christian life is to move toward Christlikeness as you are filled with the Holy Spirit. That is the only way a believer can experience true joy and victory.

REVIEW

I. THE CONTRAST (v. 18a)

II. THE COMMAND (v. 18b)

A. The Misconceptions of Being Filled with the Spirit

B. The Meaning of Being Filled with the Spirit

C. The Means of Being Filled with the Spirit

LESSON

D. The Metaphor of Being Filled with the Spirit

The filling of the Spirit is well illustrated by the metaphor of walking in Galatians 5:16-26. All you need to do in the Christian life is take one step at a time. Paul begins by saying, "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (v. 16). The Greek construction of the verse literally means, "Keep on walking in the Spirit."

1. The problem

The believer's only resource to override their evil desires and the temptations of Satan is to continue walking in the Spirit. I've heard so many people say, "The devil and his demons are after me! I must

get someone to get the demons out of me." The real issue is probably not the influence of Satan in their lives as much as an unwillingness to walk daily in the Spirit.

2. The pitfall

There is a war going on inside the believer. Paul explains, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other" (v. 17). The believer's flesh is the beachhead of sin. That's where Satan lands with his guns of temptation. Even though believers are new creatures in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17), there is still the inevitability of sin. Paul recognized that element of human nature in Rom. 7:15-17: "That which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me" (NASB).

a) The characteristics of the flesh The results of living in the flesh are devastating: "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousy, wrath, factions, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and the like ... they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). People whose lives are characterized by the works of the flesh are definitely not Christians.
b) The chastening of God When you walk in the flesh, you exhibit the characteristics of unbelievers and fall into God's chastening. Paul says, "If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (v. 18). The opposite is also true. If you are not walking in the Spirit, you are in danger of not being saved at all and therefore falling under the judgement of God's law. And God will deal out terrible retribution (2 Thess. 1:8). However if you continue to walk in the Spirit, you give evidence of true saving faith and escape the chastening hand of God. You must make the choice and if you choose to follow the flesh, you must also face the consequences.

3. The potential

The best way to deal with the lust of the flesh is simply to walk in the Spirit. If you are controlled by the Spirit of God and are Christ-conscious on a daily basis because you are feeding on His Word, you are not going to have a problem with the flesh. Your mind cannot occupy two Masters at the same time. You cannot be concentrating on Jesus Christ and at the same time concentrating on the lusts of your own flesh. You have to dispel the lust of the flesh in order for the Holy Spirit to control your life. Those who give in to the flesh take the path of least resistance. We must labor to study the Scriptures and spend time in prayer, or there will be an unwillingness to walk in the Spirit.

a) The specifics Paul says in Galatians 5:22-24, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." If you yield to the control of the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit will be produced and obedience will characterize your life. You will never fall under the condemnation of God's law because there is no penalty for righteous living! If you desire to live a happy, peaceful, and meaningful life, walk in the Spirit.
b) The summary Paul sums everything up in verse 25: "If we live in the Spirit [positionally], let us also walk in the Spirit [practically]." His argument in effect is, "What's the sense of living in the Spirit and walking in the flesh? If you've begun in the Spirit, and live in the Spirit, then walk daily in the Spirit!" God desires all His children to reach their potential bringing glory to Him by their obedience and fruitfulness. Paul is communicating the same thing in both Ephesians 5 and Galatians 5. Living in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, and being filled with the Spirit are all saying the same thing: God wants believers to be controlled by Him, not by themselves.

III. THE CONSEQUENCES (vv. 19-21)

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

These are the results or consequences of being filled with the Spirit: singing, saying thanks, and

submission. When God's Spirit controls us, He puts a song in our hearts and on our lips, give us a thankful spirit, and makes us willing to carry out the wishes of others. The first is inward, the second upward, and the third outward. The filling of the Holy Spirit makes us rightly related to ourselves, to God, and to others.

A. The Inward Result--Singing (v. 19)

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

The Spirit-filled life produces music. Whether he has a good voice or cannot carry a tune, the Spirit-filled Christian is a singing Christian. Nothing is more indicative of a fulfilled life, a contented soul, and a happy heart than the expression of song. With a tremendous theological truth like, "Be filled with the Spirit," you would think the first result would be to have faith that moves mountains, ecstatic spiritual experiences, or dynamic preaching ability. But the first result of being Spirit-filled is simply a joyful heart that wants to sing.

1. The cause

Singing is an expression of the emotion of the soul. If there is anything that ought to be different about Christians, it ought to be their music. Since music is the language of the soul, then the believer's music ought to be different from that of the world's.

a) Colossians 3:16--Paul said, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Spirit-filled singing always starts from the heart and is directed to the Lord.

b) James 5:13--James said, "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms." Singing is an expression of the joy of the Holy Spirit. Redemption gives man a new song.

2. The character

The word new is used in the Bible more times in relation to song than any other feature of salvation. As new creatures in Christ we have a new nature, a new life, a new birth, and a new song. When God redeems men, He gives them a distinctive song, more beautiful and pure than anything the world can produce. It is not a new in terms of chronology but in character and quality.

3. The connection

Every time the phrase "a new song" is mentioned in Scripture, it is connected with salvation. Salvation always produces a new song in the redeemed.

a) Psalm 33:1-5--The psalmist said, "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is befitting to the upright. Praise the Lord with the harp; sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise. For the word of the Lord is right, and all his works are done in truth. He loveth righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." b) Psalm 40:2-3--David said, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth." c) Psalm 96:1-2--The psalmist said, "Oh, sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; show forth his salvation from day to day." d) Psalm 98:1-2--The psalmist said, "Oh, sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvelous things; his right hand, and his holy arm, have gotten him the victory. The Lord hath made known his salvation." e) Psalm 144:9--David said, "I will sing a new song unto thee." f) Psalm 149:1--The psalmist said, "Sing unto the Lord a new song." g) Revelation 5:9--John observed the four living creatures and twenty-four elders singing "a new song, saying, Thou [the Lamb--Jesus Christ] art worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." This is one of the two places in the book of Revelation where angels are said to be singing. The first angelic choir was when God created the earth, for then the "morning stars [angels] sang together" (Job 38:7). That was before the fall of man. The next time we see them singing is when Jesus Christ comes to set up His Kingdom and regain paradise. The angels won't sing in the meantime because the new song is the song of the

redeemed, and angels don't experience redemption. They sing at the end because of the redemption of creation.^h) Exodus 15:1-2--Moses, in his song of redemption, said, "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation; he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him." After he finished singing, Moses' sister, Miriam, led the women in further singing and dancing (vv. 20-21).ⁱ) Judges 5:2-3--When the Lord delivered Israel from the Canaanites, Deborah and Barak sang, "Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves. Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes; I even I, will sing unto the Lord; I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel." That is the first duet recorded in Scripture and it was a duet of redemption explaining how God had spared His people.

4. The choristers

a) In the Old Testament(1) 1 Chronicles 23:5--David said, "Four thousand praised the Lord with the instruments which I made."(2) 1 Samuel 10:5--Samuel said to Saul, "Thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines; and it shall come to pass, when thou art come there to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a timbrel, and a high flute, and a harp before them."(3) 1 Chronicles 13:8--"David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets." Praise is fitting to God.(4) 1 Chronicles 16:4-6--David "appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord ... with psalteries and with harps ... with cymbals ... with trumpets continually before the the ark of the covenant of God."(5) Ezra 2:65--Ezra records that Governor Zerubbabel had "two hundred singing men and singing women."(6) Nehemiah 12:40-43--"So stood the two companies of them who gave thanks in the house of God ... with trumpets ... and the singers sang loud ... and rejoiced; for God had made them rejoice with great joy. And the women and the children rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off." This is what is known as antiphonal singing--different groups singing alternately.(7) Ezekiel 40:44-47--"Outside the inner gate were the chambers of the singers in the inner court."When Jesus ultimately returns to set up His millennial kingdom, the curse of man will be reversed and the angels will sing again. One of the first things He will do is construct a Temple. Within that Temple will be a huge choir loft for singing to the glory of God (Ezek. 40:44-47).b) In the New Testament(1) Matthew 26:30--Matthew records that right after the Last Supper, "when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives." The disciples got together with Jesus and sang before the crucifixion.(2) Acts 4:24--Luke said the early church "lifted up their voice to God with one accord." Acts 4:24-30 records what may be one of the first hymns of the early church.(3) Acts 16:25--While in prison for their faith, Paul and Silas "prayed, and sang praises unto God."(4) 1 Corinthians 14:15--In trying to correct the singing of the Corinthians Paul said, "I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." There has always been music with God's people.(5) Revelation 14:2-3--John said, "I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. And they sang, as it were, a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, who were redeemed from the earth." In the future will be a 144,000 voice choir with heavenly harpers for accompaniment.(6) Revelation 15:2-3--John recorded that those who will be victorious over the Beast (the Antichrist) have "the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." God loves music, both instrumental and vocal, that rightly reflects His glory.

Questions for Singing Saints

Question #1: To whom do we sing?

Answer: "Speaking to yourselves"

The primary audience for our singing is fellow believers, and ultimately the Lord. Music is never characterized in the Bible as being evangelistic. God may use the gospel content set to music to bring truth to the lost and thus lead them to Himself. Since the gospel message is so powerful, the open heart may receive it even though it comes with a melody, but that is not the original intent for music.

Songs without a clear or complete presentation of God's truth can be counterproductive by producing a feeling of well-being and contentment that is counterfeit to God's peace, and that serves to further insulate an unbeliever from the true, saving gospel. It is unfortunate when some well-meaning singers put their songs into the world's vernacular and dilute the message. What is meant to be evangelistic turns out to be only a water-downed message that saves no one. God's primary design for music is as the expression of a life controlled by the Holy Spirit. Music is to be used in corporate and individual worship.

Question #2: Where do our songs originate?

Answer: "In your heart"

The heart makes the voice sing and God's Spirit is what prompts the heart. If the heart isn't right, however, there will be no song (cf. Ps. 137:1-4). God isn't interested in songs from an unclean heart (Amos 5:23-24). Many sing for money and recognition, but not from a Spirit-controlled heart. Those are not the songs the Lord wants to hear. If you have an opportunity to sing a solo or play an instrument, but your heart is not filled with the Spirit of God, don't sing or play at all. The song of the redeemed is the new song of men and women controlled by the Spirit of God. God has given music a high priority because it is an expression of worship. Sacred music is totally different from secular music because the Spirit of God is so unique.

A. The Sound of Music

Those who don't know God have tried to come up with their own music but it only mirrors their evil. The pulsating rhythms of some native African music mimics the restless, superstitious passions of their culture and pagan religion. Much of the music in the Orient is dissonant and unresolved, going from nowhere to nowhere, with no beginning and no end--just as their religions go from cycle to cycle in endless repetitions of meaningless existence. Their music, like their destiny, is without resolution. The music of much of the Western world is seductive and suggestive, reflecting the immoral, lustful society that produces, sings, and enjoys it. And a good percentage of rock music, with its bombastic atonality and dissonance, mirrors people who reject both God and reason and float without orientation in a sea of relativity and unrestrained self-expression.

B. The Significance of Music

Many of the physical and emotional effects of modern music have allegedly been demonstrated scientifically. Dr. Howard Hansen, director of the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester has stated that "music can be soothing or invigorating, ennobling or vulgarizing, philosophical or orgiastic. It has the powers for evil as well as for good" (The American Journal of Psychiatry, vol. 99, p. 317). He notes that the further the tempo of the music is accelerated, the greater becomes the emotional tension, concluding that rhythmic tension is heightened by the increase in dynamic power.

I remember reading several years ago about a study of the effects of music on plants. The experiment was done on identical plants in an identical environment. Plants exposed to beautiful, soothing music thrived and turned toward the speaker. Plants exposed to hard rock music turned away from the speaker and within three days shriveled and died! Further experimentation indicated that the sound waves of the rock music had actually destroyed the plants' cells.

Whether rock music therefore has the ability to damage the human body or not, things of infinitely greater value have the potential of being destroyed--the hearts and souls of men and women who allow Satan an open door because of what things they put their affections in. When music--regardless of what style it is--is coupled with blasphemous, lewd lyrics, and suggestive body

movements, the brain is bypassed, emotions are mangled, and the conscience is hardened. The Greek philosopher Aristotle wisely observed that represents the passions of the soul, and if one listens to the wrong music he will become the wrong kind of person (Problemato, book xix).

C. The Style of Music

It is important to remember that it is impossible to generalize about a certain style of music. It is primarily what the music communicates that determines if it is evil. If a song advocates an ungodly life-style, then it would be wrong to allow its messages to shape your thinking. A Christian message might be communicated in a rock style, and an ungodly message might be communicated in a musical style that is more restrained. A particular style of music isn't automatically right or wrong. There are several principles to consider when selecting a style of music to listen to:

1. What is the lyrical content of the song? Are the words true? Do they paint a biblical picture of life or a distorted one?
2. Is the singer or songwriter's life characterized by flagrant opposition to God and His standards? If so, don't support such people by purchasing their recordings or programming your mind with their ungodliness.
3. Does the song draw you closer to the Lord or away from Him? Does it wake sinful thoughts or actions in you? Does it make you conscious of the Savior or only the singer?

Scripture's admonition that "all things be done properly and in an orderly manner" (1 Cor. 14:40, NASB) applies to music as well as to everything else. The book of Proverbs says to "keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it [flow] the issues of life" (4:23). Philippians 4:8 is helpful to keep in mind when determining the value of any musical piece: "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things" (NASB).

Focusing on the Facts

1. Living in the Spirit means living every moment as if you were standing in the _____ of Jesus Christ.
2. True or False: Being filled with the Spirit means filling your life with the Word of God so that your thoughts are dominated by Christ.
3. What is the key to living the Christian life?
4. How does Galatians 5:16-26 illustrate living in the Spirit?
5. The believer's flesh is the _____ of sin.
6. What are the results of living in the flesh? What can we conclude about those whose lives are characterized by the works of the flesh?
7. What is the best way to deal with the lust of the flesh?
8. What must we do to avoid giving in to the flesh?
9. What is the inward result of being filled with the Spirit?
10. True or False: Nothing is more indicative of a fulfilled life, a contented soul, and a happy heart than the expression of song.
11. If there is anything that ought to be different about Christians, it ought to be their _____.
12. What is characteristic of the phrase "a new song" in Scripture?
13. Who is the primary audience for singing saints? How is music to be used?
14. Where does the music of the believer originate? Explain your answer.
15. What principles can be used to evaluate certain styles of music?
16. What verse in Philippians helps in determining the value of a particular piece of music?

Pondering the Principles

1. The best way to fight sin is to be controlled by the Holy Spirit on a daily basis. That involves a moment-by-moment walk with Christ. The apostle Paul said, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and

ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). Are you endeavoring on a daily basis to be controlled by the Spirit of God? Do you truly hate sin and its effects? If not, confess your attitude to God and ask Him to cause you to walk daily in the Spirit.

2. Do you listen to music? Why or why not? What type or style of music do you listen to and why? As was mentioned in the chapter, there several principles to consider when selecting a certain style of music to listen to. Reread those principles and then evaluate the music you now listen to. Finish your study by memorizing Philippians 4:8 and begin to evaluate all your future musical tastes in light of that verse.

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