

Ask one hundred people what it means to “be filled with the Spirit” and you’ll probably receive almost as many different answers. Unfortunately, for some people church background determines their answer more than Scripture. I include myself in this category, because for a period of time I believed being filled with the Spirit looked more like what I’d been told than what the Bible taught.

As we begin I’d like to ask you to try your best to look at what Scripture says as openly as possible.

In explaining this phrase, I’d like to break it up into two parts:

1. First, we’ll discuss what it doesn’t mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit
2. Second, we’ll discuss what it does mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit

As you can see, there are lots of parts. You’re welcome to ask any questions; however, if you ask a question that deals w/ a later topic, I’ll probably ask you to hold off.

### What It Does NOT Mean to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit (Part I) Speaking in Tongues

Consider the theme in Luke 1 of four different people being filled with the Spirit:

1. John the Baptist in Luke 1:15 for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.
2. Mary in Luke 1:35 And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.
3. Elizabeth in Luke 1:41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,
4. Zacharias in Luke 1:67 And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,

All of these people were filled with the Holy Spirit, but there’s no record of any of them speaking in tongues.

Were they grieving or quenching the Holy Spirit?

Of course not.

Even though two of them were moved to make dramatic declarations, but they weren’t spoken in tongues:

1. Mary’s Magnificat in Luke 1:46-55
2. Zacharias’ prophecy in Luke 1:68-79

The fifth Person filled with the Spirit is Jesus Himself, but there’s no instance of Him speaking in tongues.

Some would say there's no verse saying He didn't speak in tongues, but that's called "arguing from silence." We stand on what God's Word says, not on what it doesn't say.

## What It Does NOT Mean to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit (Part II) The Holy Spirit Indwelling Us

In the Old Testament, the Spirit would come upon saints, empowering them for service but not necessarily remaining with them:

- Samson - Judges 15:14
- Amasai - 1 Chronicles 12:18
- David - Psalm 51:11
- Ezekiel - Ezekiel 11:5
- The Holy Spirit left Saul and moved to David – 1 Sam 16:13-14

In the New Testament, Jesus told believers the Holy Spirit wouldn't just come upon them, but would indwell them...

**John 14:17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.**

The Holy Spirit indwells us at the moment of conversion. It is a one-time, instantaneous event when we put our faith in Christ and are regenerated and brought to life spiritually. At that moment the Holy Spirit makes our bodies His temple...

**1 Cor 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.**

As a note, other Scripture indicate the other Persons, making up the Triune nature of God, also dwell in us:

- God the Father - **1 John 4:15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him**
- God the Son - **Col 1:27 Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

## What It Does NOT Mean to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit (Part III) Having More of the Holy Spirit

This is similar to the previous point, but necessary, b/c some people teach you can have more or less of the Holy Spirit...

**Luke 11:13 Jesus said, "How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him."**

This looked forward to the availability of the Holy Spirit at conversion. The Holy Spirit is not reserved for Christians who are more mature than others. God is pleased to seal each believer with His Spirit (Ephesians 1:13, 4:30, 2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5).

As a result, you can never have more or less of the Holy Spirit than you have at the moment of conversion. When you're saved the Holy Spirit indwells you and you receive all of Him.

**John 3:34 John the Baptist said, "God does not give the Spirit by measure."**

God isn't stingy with some and extra generous with others. When people claim to have more of the Holy Spirit than others they're showing a pride and ignorance of Scripture. You either have the Holy Spirit or you don't.

Eddie Rasnake said, *"There is no place in Scripture that indicates we can receive more of the Holy Spirit. The real issue is the release of the already present Spirit to have free reign in our hearts. It isn't about us having more of Him, but of Him having more of us."*

### **What It Does NOT Mean to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit (Part IV) Baptism with the Holy Spirit**

I was saved in Calvary Chapel. I'm thankful that they preach the Gospel and teach expositionally. My verse-by-verse preaching largely comes from the foundation I received in Calvary Chapel.

With that said, they are more charismatic, and they teach that there's a supposed experience that takes place with the Holy Spirit after conversion. The idea is you're indwelt by the Spirit when you're saved, but baptized with Him later.

While the word baptism makes us think of water, it means, "immerse." It can refer to baptism in water, but it can also refer to:

- Immersion in suffering: **"They said to Him, 'We are able.' So Jesus said to them, 'You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized'" (Mark 10:39).**
- Immersion in Moses, because of Israel's unity with him in the wilderness: **"All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:2).**

The crucial words on this topic are found in **1 Cor 12:12-13**...please turn there...

**For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.**

Paul isn't referring to being baptized – or immersed – in water, but being baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ – or the church – at the moment of conversion.

Paul's favorite way of referring to believers' relationships with Jesus is that we're "in Christ." When Paul says we're "baptized into Christ Jesus" in **Rom 6:1-4** he means we're spiritually immersed in Him...

**Gal 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.**

This should make sense because we don't become part of the body of Christ through water baptism, but through faith in Christ. Water baptism is simply a physical demonstration of what has taken place spiritually as we identify with Jesus' death, burial and resurrection when we go under the water and come back up.

Paul's emphasis in **1 Corinthians 12:12-13** is on oneness (the word "one" occurs six times). There can be "one body" because we're all baptized by the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion and placed into the body of Christ.

If there was a later baptism that some received, but others didn't, there would have to be two bodies: one for believers who have been baptized with the Holy Spirit and one for those who haven't received that baptism yet, but...

**Eph 4:4-5 There is one body and one Spirit...one Lord, one faith, one baptism.**

Paul couldn't say this if some believers were baptized at conversion, but others were baptized later. The clear understanding is all believers receive one baptism by the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion.

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There's a big problem w/ believing being filled w/ the Spirit means being baptized by the Spirit...

When I believed the baptism with the Holy Spirit was an experience taking place after conversion I prayed for it numerous times, had people lay hands on me to receive it, and was left asking, "How do I know if I received it? Have I really received it? If not, why not?"

People feel like they aren't receiving something that God supposedly has for others. This can be very discouraging. They're left asking, "Is something wrong with me? Do I not have enough faith? Have I done something wrong? Does God not love me? Maybe I'm not really saved?"

**What It Does NOT Mean to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit (Part V) An Emotional Experience**

Some people believe being filled with the Holy Spirit refers to an emotional or mountaintop experience that takes place at some point in time, or that comes-and-goes throughout the

Christian life. You might feel it one day but not the next. This false belief leads to serious problems.

First, it encourages people to pursue something that isn't biblical...

John Napier said, *"The goal of the Christian life is not to gain the Spirit-filled experience; rather, the goal is to remain Spirit-filled. That should be the normal Christian life."*

Second, when people's beliefs are based on feelings and emotions more than the truth of Scripture it can lead to discouragement.

People can be left asking: "Why don't I feel like I did previously?"

They might even conclude Christianity isn't real, since they think it's made up of supposed feelings and emotions that they aren't experiencing.

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I don't have any verses to support this lesson, but that's why this is a lesson! There are no verses supporting the Holy Spirit providing emotional experiences.

The closest I can give you is Pentecost.

Jesus is the actual baptizer with the Holy Spirit...

**Matt 3:11 John the Baptist said, "I indeed baptize you with water...but He who is coming after me...will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."**

At Pentecost the people were confused asking, "What does this mean?" (**Acts 2:12**).

Peter explained Jesus ascended to heaven and "poured" out the Holy Spirit:

**Acts 2:33 "[Jesus] being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear."**

The people who received the Holy Spirit from Jesus spoke in tongues, and people accused them of being drunk. This is the closest I can think of to an emotional experience.

The reason this doesn't argue for an emotional experience is this is descriptive versus prescriptive. There's nothing in the epistles to make us think this should be expected. This is the birth of the church, which was one of the most dramatic moments in all of history; therefore, we shouldn't think it would be duplicated when people are saved.

**What It Does Mean to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit (Part I) The Holy Spirit Influences Us**

Here's one verse that has caused considerable confusion...

## **Eph 5:18 Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.**

It might sound odd to compare drunkenness with being filled with the Spirit, but it actually makes perfect sense if we consider that there's one thing both wine and the Holy Spirit do: influence!

People driving drunk are "driving under the influence."

Being filled with the Spirit is compared with wine, not because it feels like being intoxicated, but because the Holy Spirit also influences.

The Greek word for "be filled" is *pleroo*, which means, "keep on being filled," or "stay filled" w/ the Spirit. Paul is talking about something that should be ongoing in the lives of believers.

John MacArthur said, *"The filling of the Spirit is not some ecstatic or emotional experience, but a steady controlling of the life by obedience to the truth of God's Word."*

As already stated, you can't have more or less of the Holy Spirit. But you can have more or less of His influence over you.

## **What It Does Mean to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit (Part II) Submitting to the Holy Spirit**

How are we filled with, or influenced by, the Spirit? The answer is simple to understand, but difficult to live out. By yielding to Him. Obeying Him. Being filled with the Spirit is a day-to-day, even moment-by-moment surrendering of our lives to Christ.

Then we won't disobey this command...

## **Eph 4:30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**

This verse is often used by charismatics to defend the activity of the gifts of the Spirit. If you argue against charismatic views or any limitations on the gifts, you'll have this verse quoted to you.

But if you look at the context, you can see very clearly that it's discussing obedience

**Eph 4:25 Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. 26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give [g]lance to the devil. 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 AND DO NOT GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD, by whom you were sealed for**

the day of redemption. **31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, [i]clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.**

### What It Does Mean to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit (Part III) Exhibiting Godly Speech

If we look at the context, after Paul discusses being filled w/ the Spirit, he describes what it looks like..

**Eph 5:19 Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Being filled w/ the Spirit is about our speech, and why is that?

Jesus said...

**Matt 5:18 Those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart.**

What we say is a reflection of our hearts. What could be a better indication of whether we're filled with the Spirit than what comes out of our mouths?

**Jam 3:1-12** discusses the tongue, and it says we can tame everything in creation, but we can't tame our tongues: they're like wild fires burning out of control destroying everything in sight (vv. 6-8).

This is why in **Jam 3:2** he says, **"If someone could tame his tongue, he would be a perfect man."**

What does it look like practically to exhibit Spirit-filled speech?

**Eph 4:29** is a pretty good answer: **Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.**

### What It Does Mean to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit (Part IV) Producing the Fruit of the Spirit

Think for a moment about the word *fruit*: it refers to something produced:

- We call apples and oranges fruit, because they're produced from trees
- We call children "fruit of the womb," because they're produced from pregnancy.
- If you work hard for something, it's called the "fruit of your labor" because it's produced from your effort.

When we talk about the fruit of the Spirit, we're talking about what the Holy Spirit produces in our lives. People who are truly filled with the Spirit should produce an abundance of the fruit of the Spirit:

**Gal 5:22-23 The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.**

If you want to know when you're filled with the Spirit it's when you're producing the fruit of the Spirit. If people claim to be filled with the Spirit, there should be plenty of these fruit evident.

Unfortunately, some people claim to be filled with the Spirit, but their manifestations look more like the works of the flesh. Disorderly occurrences such as:

- Laughing in the Spirit
- Being slain or drunk in the Spirit
- Excessive crying, screaming, dancing, or violent shaking are a few of the supposed evidences of the Spirit's work in a person's life.

What these demonstrations do is make people ask, "Are [they] out of [their] mind?" (1 Corinthians 14:23).

### What It Does Mean to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit (Part V) Not Producing the Works of the Flesh

Conversely, the flesh is the opposite of the Spirit.

You don't hear this much, perhaps b/c it's not popular, b/c the Holy Spirit is the HOLY Spirit. He helps us live holy lives, and much of that means resisting sin. Says...

**Gal 5:16-17 Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another.**

If you're walking in the Spirit you're not walking in the flesh. Being filled with the Spirit means not producing the works of the flesh. If you meet people who say they're filled with the Spirit, their lives should be largely absent of the works listed in

**Gal 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like.**



The opposite of exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit is exhibiting the works of the flesh. If you want to know when you're not filled with the Spirit, it's when you're producing the works of the flesh.

### What It Does Mean to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit (Part VI) Looking Like Jesus

While other people were filled with the Spirit, Jesus was "FULL OF the Holy Spirit":

- **Luke 4:1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness**
- **Col 1:19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell**
- **Col 2:9 For it pleased the Father in [Jesus] all the fullness should dwell...in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.**

Jesus was the most Spirit-filled Person to walk the earth. He reveals what it looks like to be filled with the Spirit. Conversely, it would be impossible for people to engage in behavior unseen in Christ's life and claim it's part of being filled with the Spirit.