

Having begun a short topical series on the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, we have been considering the work of the Spirit upon a Christian individual—thus far we've seen two things—the Spirit's work of conversion and indwelling. Simply put, the Spirit regenerates the soul, converts it (gives it repentance and faith), and indwells it.

That brings us to the filling of the Holy Spirit—while the indwelling of the Spirit takes place only once, the filling of the Spirit, takes place every day. To be Spirit-filled, as we shall see, is not only a privilege for all Christians, but a command. Being Spirit-filled isn't something reserved for certain Christians but is expected for every Christian.

Ephesians 5:18 contains two parts—a negative (and do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation) and a positive (but be filled with the Spirit).

- I. A Negative Command
- II. A Positive Command

### I. A Negative

1. Most of you are aware, that the book of Ephesians divides into two equal halves—chapters 1-3 describe who we are in Christ, and chapters 4-6 describe what we are to do for Christ.
2. Chapter 4:1 – 5:21 describe church-life, chapter 5:22 – 6:9 describe home-life, and chapter 6:10-24 describe our warfare.
3. Thus, our text 5:18, comes at the end of generic duties necessary for all Christians as we interact within the church.
4. V18—"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation"—the word rendered "dissipation" literally refers to a life without restraint.
5. It's for this reason the KJV renders the phrase "do not be drunk with wine, wherein is excess"—that is, excess or lack of restraint.
6. There's no certainty as to why Paul provides this warning—it's possible the pagan priests intermingled drunkenness with their worship.
7. But either way, his command is clear and straightforward—Christians are not to drink alcohol so as to get drunk.
8. That is, they are not to be controlled by alcohol because it leads to a life without self-control or proper restraint.
9. Those who are drunk or intoxicated are vulnerable or open to all manner of sin—it leaves a person unprotected.
10. Thus, the apostle's command not to be drunk with wine, is a clear call for moderation with regards to alcoholic use.

### II. A Positive

1. Paul isn't content with providing a negative, but he then provides a positive command—"but be filled with the Spirit."
2. Thus, at this point I want to consider two things about the filling of the Holy Spirit: (1) its meaning, and (2) its evidences.
3. (1) Its meaning—the Greek word rendered "be filled" literally means "to fill up," "make full," or "make complete."
4. What it fundamentally means to be filled with the Spirit can be gleaned by comparing it with the previous negative.
5. V18—"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit"—in other words, there is an important similarity between the two.

6. Those who are filled with wine are influenced by the wine, and those filled with the Spirit are influenced by the Spirit.
7. John Stott—"A person who is drunk, we say, is 'under the influence' of alcohol; and certainly a Spirit-filled Christian is under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit."
8. Acts 5:3—"But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself?"
9. Notice Ananias is described as being "filled with Satan"—that is, he was controlled or under the influence of Satan.
10. Notice the result of being filled with Satan—"why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit"—because he was filled with the father of lies, the result was that he lied.
11. In other words—there is a direct connection between the one who fills us, and the way in which we live or act.
12. If Satan fills us we lie, if the Holy Spirit fills us we live holy—filling necessarily influences or impacts our behavior.
13. John Stott—"If excessive alcohol dehumanizes, turning a human being into a beast, the fullness of the Spirit makes us more human, for He makes us like Christ."
14. Thus, to be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit—it's to be under the divine influence of the Spirit.
15. Technically speaking, we are not being filled with the Spirit, as much as the Spirit is filling us with His grace.
16. This is why Scripture speaks of the Spirit's ministry in terms water because the Spirit refreshes and revives the soul.
17. Thus, we read that the Spirit was poured out at the Day of Pentecost, that is, He filled the hearts of the disciples.
18. Or better yet, He filled their hearts with grace—He filled their hearts with water to revive and new wine to gladden.
19. Thus, we often read about the Holy Spirit filling the disciples with joy and faith, or, we could say, filling them with Himself.
20. Acts 6:5—"And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit" Acts 11:24—"For he was a good man (Barnabas), full of the Holy Spirit and of faith."
21. To be filled with the Spirit is the same thing as being filled with faith—or, those full of the Spirit are full of faith.
22. Acts 13:52—"And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit"—to filled with the Spirit is to be filled with joy.
23. Thus, to be filled with the Spirit doesn't mean you have more of the Spirit, but you have more of His reviving ministry.
24. Or, perhaps another way of putting it would be—it's not that we have more of the Spirit but that He has more of us.
25. And so, in summary, to be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be filled with or controlled by His gracious influences.
26. Now, before I move on to suggest a few things about this filling, let me briefly provide a necessary clarification.
27. At times you might hear Christians speak about being "drunk in the Spirit"—let me suggest this is not proper terminology.
28. The idea of being drunk suggests the lack of self-control, whereas being filled with the Spirit promotes self-control.
29. Scripture nowhere exhorts us to be drunk in the Spirit, but it does command us to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
30. Thus, at this point I want to suggest three things about this filling: (a) it's a command, (b) it's a continual command, (c) it's something done to us and not by us.
31. (a) It's a command—"be filled with the Spirit"—this is an imperative—it's not a suggestion but a solemn command.

32. As a result, not to be filled with the Spirit is a violation of this command—perhaps I can put it rather graphic—failure to be filled with the Spirit is just as much a sin as being excessively filled with wine.
33. Now, this also suggests that NOT to be filled with the Spirit means you remain under the influence of the flesh.
34. If you are not under the influence of wine (which you should not be), and you're not under the influence of the Spirit, then what influence are you under.
35. Brethren, as Christians, we can only be under the influence of the Holy Spirit, or else, the influence of our flesh.
36. Perhaps, I can put it like this—we are either full of the Holy Spirit or else, we are full of ourselves (and that's not good).
37. (b) It's a continual command—the GK verb is present active which describes ongoing activity—"be continually filled with the Spirit."
38. In other words, unlike the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (which takes place once), the filling of the Spirit is ongoing.
39. Every single day we must be filled with the Holy Spirit—every hour we must be filled with the Spirit—every minute.
40. Now, this doesn't imply that Christians will always be equally filled with the Spirit or under His divine influence.
41. But we are to be continually and ongoingly filled with the Spirit, or under His powerful and gracious influence.
42. (c) It's something done to us and not by us—the GK verb is not only present active, but it's present active passive—"be ongoingly being filled with the Spirit."
43. The person being filled is passive—we are being filled by the Spirit—in other words, the activity is done to us.
44. For example, let's say you move an empty cup under the water faucet to fill it with water—the cup is passive, it merely receives the water.
45. Now, this doesn't deny our responsibility in being filled, but it simply underscores the receptive nature of the filling.
46. Every day every Christian must be filled with the Holy Spirit—he must ongoingly be filled with the Holy Spirit.
47. Thus, perhaps I can paraphrase this command as follows—"be ongoingly controlled or under the influence of the Spirit."
48. Or—"Insure you are continually being overwhelmed with and by the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit of God."
49. It's for this reason, that being filled with the Spirit and being lead by the Spirit are basically identical concepts.
50. (2) Its evidences—here I want to rather quickly suggest, three fruit or evidences of being filled with the Spirit.
51. Now, let me simply say in summary, the evidences of being Spirit-filled are the fruit of the Spirit and obedience to God's law.
52. But as we examine the immediate context of Eph.5:18, Paul goes on to suggest three results of being Spirit-filled (and they may or may not surprise you).
53. (a) Spirit filled worship, v19—"speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
54. This refers to public worship, in which congregational singing is an important element—notice it's horizontal and vertical.
55. It's horizontal because our singing is to edify and encourage each other—"speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."
56. It's vertical because our singing is ultimately to glorify God—"singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
57. Perhaps I can put it like this—a Spirit-filled person is a worshipful person—they worship in public and private.

58. I can even expand this to say—a Spirit-filled person adores God so much they break out in loving praise and prayer.
59. I find it very instructive, the first thing Paul mentions with regards to the filling of the Spirit, is public worship.
60. The first evidence of the Spirit's influence (filling) is praise and adoration—our hearts break out in joy-filled worship.
61. (b) Spirit filled gratitude, v20—"giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."
62. A Spirit-filled person knows that everything he receives is from God and is given to him by God's grace and mercy.
63. An unthankful person is not a Spirit-filled person—likewise, a person who's always complaining is not Spirit-filled.
64. Along with gratitude comes contentment—a Spirit-filled person realizes they don't deserve anything, and thus they're content with little.
65. (c) Spirit filled submission, v21—"submitting to one another in the fear of God"—which is then explained in v22ff.
66. V22—"Wives, submit to your own husbands...v25 Husbands, love your wives, 6:1 Children obey your parents, v4 and you fathers, do not provide your children."
67. In other words, v21 refers to a general submission to God, as it properly relates to every area (sphere) of life.
68. Brethren, I trust it's obvious—a woman who isn't submissive to her husband and a husband who is loving to his wife are NOT Spirit-filled.
69. Furthermore, a child that isn't obedient to their parents, and parents who are not raising their children in the fear of the Lord are NOT Spirit-filled.
70. Donald Macleod—"The Spirit-filled woman submits to her husband. The Spirit-filled man treats His wife the way Christ treated the church. The Spirit-filled parent treats His children the way God treats His children."
71. Friends, being Spirit-filled is not merely feeling something, nor knowing something, but it's also doing something!
72. When the Holy Spirit fills our soul, He fills it with joy and understanding, but He also empowers us to obey God.
73. Perhaps another way of saying would be—when the Spirit fills us He fills every faculty of our soul—heart, mind, and will.
74. I fear there's confusion on this point—some people think that being Spirit-filled is merely an inward emotion—other think that being Spirit-filled is merely knowing theological truth.
75. But those who are truly Spirit-filled have a deep joy and knowledge of truth, that leads them to submit to God.
76. Thus, before I suggest a few practical helps on being filled with the Spirit, let me first summarize what we've learned with two exhortations.
77. Exhortation 1—Let every Christian be humbled at our need for constant filling—left to ourselves we can do nothing.
78. Think of an old tire that has a rather serious leak—the leak is so large that every single day it has to be re-filled.
79. Well this is similar to our souls—unless fresh grace is poured into them, they become weak and eventually dead.
80. Brethren, we don't merely need filling every week, but we need it every day, every minute, and yes, every second.
81. We need the Spirit to live worshipful, thankful, and submissive lives—without Him our tires are not merely soft, but they are totally flat.
82. Exhortation 2—Let every Christian rejoice at God's provision of constant filling—this is really a very sweet command.
83. V18—"Be ongoingly being filled with the Holy Spirit"—that is, be ongoingly filled with joy, faith, and power.

84. Be ongoingly filled with the Spirit's water to revive you, oil to refresh you, and wine to gladden you—what a blessing!
85. O brethren, what a grand truth! We are commanded to be ongoingly filled with the infinite Holy Spirit of God!
86. Every single day, the first thing we need to do is, be freshly filled with the Person and power of the Holy Spirit.
87. To keep with our illustration of the tire, the first thing we need to do is stop by the gas-station to fill full our tire.
88. And yet, dear brethren, unlike the tire illustration, there is no limit to being filled with the Spirit—you can never be too filled.
89. "Be not drunk with wine"—that is, do not drink too much wine—"but be filled with the Spirit"—that is, be as filled as you can!
90. It's likely that Paul (Eph.5:18) is reflecting upon a statement made by the Groom to His Bride in the Song of Solomon.
91. Song 5:1—"Eat, O friends! Drink (wine and milk), yes drink deeply (abundantly or your fill), O beloved ones!"
92. Thus, the apostle Paul commands all Christians to be ongoingly filled with the Spirit, which will evidence itself in loving adoration to God, gratitude in all circumstances, and obedience to God in every area (sphere) of life.

### III. Three Practical Helps

1. At this point, I want to briefly address the issue of HOW Christians are to ongoingly be filled with the Holy Spirit.
2. But, before I do that, I want to you notice Paul merely tells them they must be filled without telling them HOW.
3. But as we consider the rest of Scripture, I want to suggest three simple helps in ongoingly being filled with the Spirit.
4. Help 1—Empty the heart of all sin and self—the first thing necessary if the soul is to be filled, is it must be emptied.
5. Now, brethren I fully understand that it's impossible to fully empty the soul of sin and self (this will happen when we die).
6. But what I mean is this—we must empty ourselves of all known sin, self-trust, self-confidence, and self-glory.
7. The first need for filling is emptying—we must empty the soul of all that would grieve and hinder the Spirit's work.
8. It's important to notice that before Paul speaks about the filling of the Spirit, he speaks about the grieving of the Spirit.
9. Eph.4:30—"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (1Thess.5:19)."
10. And according to the context, it's specifically evil speech, bitterness, anger, and malice, that grieves the Spirit.
11. Speaking evil things to others and speaking evil things about people—harboring bitterness and anger in our hearts.
12. Brethren, the Holy Spirit doesn't fill hearts that are full of bitterness and strive—He doesn't fill a self-sufficient soul.
13. Perhaps another way of putting this would be—we must know and own our own emptiness apart from the Spirit.
14. Ps.51:11—"Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me"—do not leave me to myself, for in and of myself I am empty!
15. Help 2—Fill your heart with the word—by this I mean, the Spirit fills our heart in conjunction with the Word.

16. And the primary purpose I suggest this is because, if we compare Eph.5:18-19 with a parallel passage, this becomes evident.
17. Col.3:16—"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."
18. In Ephesians we are told to be filled with the Spirit and sing to the Lord, whereas in Colossians we are told to be filled with the word and sing to the Lord.
19. In other words—being filled with the Spirit and being filled with the word, are two very closely related concepts.
20. A Spirit-filled person is a Word-filled person—a person who has the word of Christ, richly dwelling within him.
21. What does it mean to "let the word of Christ dwell in your richly" but at least, to understand, believe, and cherish that word.
22. Remember, brethren it's the primary task of the Spirit to glorify Christ, and this He does, in and through His word.
23. John MacArthur—"To be Spirit-filled is to live a Christ-conscious life, and there is no shortcut to that. The only way you can be saturated with the thoughts of Christ is to saturate yourself with the Book that is all about Him."
24. Help 3—Pray for the Holy Spirit—that is, we must pray to God that He would give the Spirit so as to fill our hearts.
25. Lk.11:13—"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"
26. What does it mean that the Father will give the Holy Spirit to us, but that He will give the Spirit so as to fill us!
27. Remember, every Christian has the Spirit as an Indweller, but what they need is the Spirit as a gracious Filler!
28. I once hear a famous preacher say, Christians should never ask God for the Holy Spirit as the Spirit already indwells us.
29. But this contradicts what our Savior is saying—our Savior is not speaking about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
30. Christians already possess the Holy Spirit (as we learned last week), but we still need the Holy Spirit to fill us.
31. Thus, in this sense we NEED the Holy Spirit, and our Savior tells us how to have Him—we must ask for Him.
32. This is also the pattern we find throughout the book of Acts—over and over again we find the disciples praying and then being filled with the Holy Spirit.
33. Acts 1:14—"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" 2:4—"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" Acts 4:31—"And when they had prayed, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit."
34. Brethren, we must wrestle with God in private and public—these two examples took place in public prayer meetings.
35. We must ask God to fill us with His Spirit so that we can be of serve to God, and so that He would be glorified.