



The path to spiritual maturity

Alcoholics Anonymous

Two prominent themes

Step 1 – We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.

Step 2 – We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

The same is true about gaining freedom from the controlling power of sin and living to please to God.

Three basic truths

- 1. We acknowledge** that we cannot live for God in our own strength.
- 2. We confess** our need for the power of God to live in a way that pleases God.
- 3. God gives this power** to us through His Spirit whom He causes to live in us when we believe in Christ as our Savior.

**But ... when we speak of
the power of God by His Spirit,
we should not see ourselves as
passive recipients
but as active appropriators
of God's power.**

Galatians 5:15-16

15 – If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

16 - So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Walk by the Spirit....

- **When the apostle says, “live” or “walk” – “by the Spirit,” he means, “let your conduct be directed by the Spirit.”**
- **A command with an emphatic promise** (based on a double negative in the Greek language) **“you will by no means fulfill the desires of the flesh (or sinful nature).”**

Galatians 5:16 – “so I say”, (“but I say”).

A formula used by the apostle Paul to alert his readers to an emphatic point - “**Here is my advice.**” Or, “Here is the remedy for the situation described in verse 15.”

To protect the community from destroying itself...

- **Command** - Each member must “live or walk by the Spirit.” (a present tense verb - “Keep on walking by the Spirit”)
- **Promise** - “Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves” (NLT)

He is not saying...

“*Try* not to fulfill the lusts of the flesh and then you will walk by the Spirit,” - as though the latter were a reward for the former.

This is like trying to depend on the flesh (your own strength) to walk by the Spirit.

- **This is not two commands -- the second being, “do not gratify the desires of the flesh.”**
- **There are similar commands not to satisfy the desires of the flesh**
(Romans 6:12-13; 13:14; I Peter 2:11).
- **But Galatians 5:16 is a promise or a word of assurance about the means for victory over flesh.**

**The
Holy
Spirit**

After Jesus was raised from the dead and ascended to the Father, He sent the Spirit for all who placed faith in Him as Savior and confessed Him as Lord (Jn. 7:37-39; 14:15-17; 16:5-15; Acts 1:4-9).

At the moment of faith in Christ, we receive the gift of the indwelling Spirit. All believers without exception are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 6:19-20; II Cor. 1:21-22; Gal. 3:2-5; Ja. 4:5).

If you are a believer, God dwells in you by His Spirit! And the indwelling Spirit of God is the agent and power for enabling us to live a life that pleases God.

You receive the Holy Spirit - at salvation

- “And you also were included in Christ when you *heard the word of truth*, the gospel of your salvation. *Having believed*, you were *marked in him with a seal*, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance...” (Ephesians 1:13-14).
- “God...saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Titus 3:5-6)

The Spirit in our hearts

“Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come”

(II Corinthians 1:21-22).

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?”

(I Corinthians 6:19)

The Spirit in the Church

Don't you know that you (plural) yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?" (I Corinthians 3:16)

The Spirit changes us

“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (II Corinthians 3:18).

Yielding to the Spirit

“So I say, *live by the Spirit*, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. Since we live by the Spirit, let us *keep in step with the Spirit*. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the *one who sows to please the Spirit*, from the Spirit will reap eternal life” (Galatians 5:16,25;6:8).

Be filled with the Spirit

“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, ***be filled with the Spirit.*** *Speak* to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. *Sing and make music* in your heart to the Lord, *always giving thanks* to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ*”

(Ephesians 5:18-21)

Two Commands (Ephesians 5:18)

- 1. Do not get drunk on wine - Never do this.**
 - 2. Be filled with the Spirit - Be continuously filled.**
- To be drunk is to be under the controlling influence of alcohol**

**How should
we understand
the meaning
of being
Spirit filled?**

Being “full of the Holy Spirit” is treated as a measurable and visible description of character.

Barnabas - “...he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.” (Acts 11:24).

Acts 6:4 – The people were told to “pick out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom.”

1. The meaning of the word “filled.”

- **“Be filled”** means to allow the influence of the Holy Spirit to permeate every part of your life.
- **“Filled”** - used of wind filling a sail; of being filled with emotions like joy or grief; of a body being filled with leprosy or a person being full of deceit (Acts 13:10).
- **Completely permeated.**
- ***But it's a command*** - You must do this - it's a choice related to who or what will be in control of your life.

2. The contrast - “Do not get drunk...”

- The drunk person chooses to allow alcohol to control him.
- Every function of his life is affected (speech, vision, coordination and even his mind is affected).
- **By contrast, the person filled with the Spirit** chooses to allow the Spirit of God to be the controlling influence in all parts of his life (speech, vision, body, mind).

Intention of the contrast

A person, and in this case, a community, whose life is so totally given over to the Spirit that the life and deeds of the Spirit are as *obvious* in their case as the effects of too much wine are obvious in the other.

4 expected outcomes of Spirit-filled lives

The commands of Ephesians 5:18 are followed by four supporting participles

- 1. Speaking (to one another)**
- 2. Singing (making music in your hearts)**
- 3. Giving thanks (for everything)**
- 4. Submitting (to one another)**

Each one as a participle is an expected outcome of obedience to the main command “be filled with the Spirit”

A Spirit filled person is...

- 1. Joyful - (1st, 2nd participle)**
- 2. Grateful – (3rd participle)**
- 3. Humble – (4th participle)**

A spirit filled person is not...

- 1. Grouchy, irritable or gloomy**
- 2. Ungrateful, discontent, complaining**
- 3. Arrogant, rebellious or proud**

Spirit-filled people look like this

“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23)

Question - “Who or what will we allow to be in control?”

4 practices for Spirit-filled living

1. Dwelling on God's Word

Colossians 3:16, 17 reveal the same results of dwelling on the Word as the results of the filling of the Spirit listed in Ephesians 5:18-20.

2. Confession of sin

Through the Word, God reveals sin to us. This will lead to confession based on I John 1:9. To confess sin is to agree with God about sin.

3. Yielding to God

The filling of the Holy Spirit requires submission to God. Yielding to God involves humility and implies that we choose God's will in our decisions (Romans 6:12,13).

“As we give ourselves to the study of God’s Word, we shall begin at once to experience the benefit of the indwelling Spirit’s cooperating action. For if as we study we are willing to learn and to be led, the Spirit will become our teacher and enlighten and increase our understanding, so that more and more we shall discern what we should believe, and how we should act to please God”

(J.I. Packer, *The Spirit Within Us*, p. 53).

“This is something we are told to be doing all the time namely, to keep ourselves full. We keep our lungs full of fresh air by constantly breathing; we are to keep ourselves filled with the Spirit by constantly exposing ourselves to His active ministry towards us”

(J.I. Packer, The Spirit Within Us, p. 60).

5 truths about being Spirit filled

1. Being Spirit-filled is objectively measurable in specific behaviors and attitudes. Any professed subjective experience of the Spirit must be accompanied by these observable and measurable realities (Gal. 5:21-22; Eph. 5:18-21; cf. the life of Barnabas and the seven chosen in Ac. 6:1-4).

2. When the Spirit fills an individual or a community of believers, expect to find permeating qualities of joy, gratitude and humility.

3. When the Spirit fills an individual or community of believers, do not expect to find an complaining, discontentment, lack of gratitude or arrogance.

4. When the Spirit fills an individual or a community of believers, expect to find qualities like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

5. The repeated commands in relation to the Spirit-filled life remind us that although the Spirit produces spiritual fruit (godly character qualities), He does not do this in a way that allows believers to be passive recipients

Philippians 2:12-13 - “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”