

PNEUMATOLOGY (78)

A believer cannot become mature at the moment of salvation, but he may become spiritual from this moment on. Maturity **only** comes through time and testing, whereas spirituality comes through obedience. One cannot become mature without being spiritual over a long period of time. There are no shortcuts to maturity. One who carefully focuses on understanding and applying God's Word over a long period of time is not only one who is spiritual, but one who is also mature.

Reason #4 - It determines whether or not one is useful or useless .

There is an intimate connection to being filled with God's Spirit and being used for God's glory. If one wants to serve God and minister for God, one must be filled with God's Spirit. If one wants God to reveal, develop and use one's spiritual gift, one must be filled with God's Spirit. Frankly, this explains why many believers never seem to exist in the same spiritual rut—they do not allow God's Spirit to control them, they allow their flesh to control them.

Several texts speak of the importance of the Spirit in one's ministry and usability:

- 1) Acts 4:31 – Spirit filling precedes bold and powerful communication of God's Word.
- 2) Acts 6:3 - Spirit filling precedes selection of leadership.
- 3) Acts 9:17, 20 - Spirit filling precedes an impacting preaching ministry.
- 4) Acts 11:24 - Spirit filling precedes additions to God's church.

We may safely and accurately conclude from these passages that if we are to fulfill our responsibilities for God at the ultimate level of usefulness, then we must be those who are being filled with the Spirit of God. Those who live in rebellion to the Word of God will not ever be filled with the Spirit of God. They may go through all the religious motions they want, but they will not be filled with the Spirit of God and therefore will not ever be powerfully used by God.

(Spirit Filling Question #4) - What are the prerequisites for being filled with the Spirit?

As we have previously studied and stated, God's Word **commands** that the believer be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). We have also observed that it is not within our power to fill ourselves. God must cause the Spirit of God to fill us. The question arises what must we do or what is our part? What are the conditional prerequisites we must meet in order to be filled with the Spirit of God?

Contrary to popular opinion and belief, there is **no place** in the Bible where believers are urged to pray for the filling of the Spirit. This opinion is based upon a misinterpretation of Luke 11:13, in which receiving of the Spirit is equated with filling of the Spirit, a belief which cannot be biblically supported. The danger of thinking that prayer is a prerequisite for filling is that instead of making proper biblical choices which actively enables one to be filled, one prays about it and then passively waits for something to happen.

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Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer made a profound observation when he wrote:

“Prayer for the Spirit’s filling is an error of great proportions and indicates a misunderstanding of the conditions which now obtain. The Spirit’s filling does not await the influence of prayer. God is not withholding this blessing until He is prevailed upon or some reluctance on His part is broken down. He awaits the requisite human adjustments. In other words, He is waiting for the believer to yield all to Him. When the revealed conditions, which are most reasonable, are met, the Spirit goes forward in the believer’s heart with all the activities which together constitute the Spirit’s filling. The Spirit does not need to be implored to do that which He came into the Christian’s heart to do; He is rather imploring the Christian to make the way clear for Him to do His gracious work” (Vol. 6, p. 232).

Contrary to another popular opinion and belief, there is **no place** in the Bible where believers are urged to wait for the filling of the Spirit of God. This opinion is based upon the fact that the disciples waited for ten days until the Spirit was fully come at Pentecost. Again this is a misinterpretation of the Bible, for the disciples were waiting for the day the Holy Spirit would come into the world. Since His coming into the world, no person **ever** need wait for Him again. It is ridiculous to wait for something that has already happened. It is not that the believer must wait for the Spirit; it is that the Spirit must wait for the believer to yield his life to God and His Word.

There is also another popular opinion and belief which basically says one becomes filled with the Spirit when one has gone through some crisis experience and has demonstrated some remarkable level of faith. Although such a belief may seem reasonable, it is **not biblical**! The Spirit longs to fill every believer and once the conditions or prerequisites are met, the believer is filled.

This leads us to the question proper to be analyzed in this section—“What must we do in order to be filled with the Spirit?” We must realize that this question is only pertinent to the believer, for the unbeliever **cannot** “be filled” with the Spirit until he is first “indwelt” by the Spirit. Spirit indwelling is a necessary prelude to Spirit filling. One who is indwelt by the Spirit is not automatically filled with the Spirit; however, one not indwelt by the Spirit cannot ever be filled with the Spirit.

As we search the New Testament, we may discover that there are three main conditions which are specifically stated in the Bible, which must be met by the believer if that believer is to be filled with the Spirit of God. Three main conditional prerequisites must be met if the Spirit of God is to control or fill the believer. Two of the conditional prerequisites are negative and one of the conditional prerequisites is positive.

What this means is that two of the conditional prerequisites describe what a believer **should not do** if he desires to be filled with the Spirit and one of the conditional prerequisites describes what a believer **should do** if he desires to be filled with the Spirit.

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Conditional Prerequisite #1 - If a believer is to be filled with the Holy Spirit he cannot continually grieve the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:30

The verb “grieve” is present/active/ imperative. What this means is this—it is a command of God (imperative) that a believer not continually (present) grieve the Holy Spirit and the believer is responsible for the action (active). One cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit and be actively and continually grieving the Holy Spirit. If a believer is continually involved in activity that grieves the Holy Spirit, he cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit because God will not allow the Holy Spirit to fill him.

Now the word “grieve” is one that literally means to cause pain or grief or to cause distress. If we are continually involved in things which grieve, bring pain to or cause distress to the Holy Spirit, we will not be filled with the Holy Spirit.

We must realize that the Holy Spirit came into each of our lives for the purpose of so controlling our thoughts, feelings, and choices to the extent that we become a powerful reflection for the glory of God. We know from Scripture that the Spirit will never leave the believer (John 14:16-17), so even when the Spirit is grieved “by” the believer, He is still “in” the believer.

A very obvious question to ask then is what is it that grieves the Holy Spirit? We may say that any continual rebellion against God's Word or any continual sin in one's life is that which grieves the Holy Spirit and will prevent the Holy Spirit from filling that believer.

When a believer persists in sin and refuses to deal with it by confessing it to God (Ps. 32:3-4; I John 1:9), one continually grieves the Holy Spirit and therefore is not filled with the Spirit. Floyd Barackman writes: “Our adjustment to the Holy Spirit's presence requires us to deal with any sin of which we are aware” (*Practical Christian Theology*, p. 217).

The Holy Spirit is grieved by sin; however, it is the Holy Spirit who prompts the believer to confess his sin. Since all of us have sinned from time to time, do sin in one way or another, it is not just the sin which means one is not filled with the Spirit; it is one's continual reaction to God's Word and to the sin which determines the matter. If the believer immediately confesses his sin, which is precisely what the Holy Spirit is prompting that believer to do, one may be filled with the Spirit. Although certainly at the moment of choosing to sin, one was not controlled by the Spirit; what one does after the sin determines whether or not one will or will not be filled with the Spirit. If, on the other hand, one chooses to sin and refuses to face it or confess it, one is living in a state of continual sin and the Spirit is grieved and that believer is not filled.

Those who live life in continual rebellion to the Word of God will not ever be filled with the Spirit of God. In fact, if one continually persists in not “rightly dividing” the Word, one continually persists in a nonconformity to true, sound and healthy doctrine. If this is the case, then one cannot and is not filled with the Spirit of God. We may dogmatically and categorically state that the Charismatic movement, which emphasizes the Holy Spirit so much in their verbiage, is a complete and total grievance to the Holy Spirit for it is **not based** on truth (i.e. baptism of Spirit). This movement continually rejects God's Revelation and therefore those who are continually in it cannot ever be filled with the Holy Spirit.

PNEUMATOLOGY (81)

There are four preventatives that will keep a believer from living a life of continual rebellion and sin:

(Preventative #1) - The Bible - Ps. 119:11; Heb. 4:12 - The more one comes under the power of the Word of God, the more one will be delivered from sin.

(Preventative #2) - The Holy Spirit - Rom. 6:6 - The Holy Spirit gives us a prompting and an enabling to resist sin.

(Preventative #3) - Jesus Christ - John 17:15 - Christ's intercessory prayer is also operative in keeping the believer from being continually dominated by sin.

(Preventative #4) - The Church - Hebrews 10:25-26 - The habitual assembling of ourselves together in the context of the N.T. church is an important way to keep ourselves in the Word and a way to keep us from continually being dominated by rebellion and sin.

These four preventatives will always work in helping the believer to not be consistently and continually dominated by sin. It is imperative that the believer do everything possible to prevent sin from controlling his life so as not to grieve the Holy Spirit. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer said, "When sin is tolerated in the Christian's daily life, of necessity the Spirit must turn from His ministry **through** the Christian into a pleading ministry **to** him" (Vol. 6, p. 234).

Conditional Prerequisite #2 - If a believer is to be filled with the Holy Spirit, he cannot continually quench the Holy Spirit. I Thess. 5:19

The verb "quench" is present/imperative meaning it is a continual command. One cannot be "filled with the Spirit" if one is continually quenching the Spirit.

The word "quench" literally means to quench or put out a fire. The idea isn't that a believer can put out the Holy Spirit from his life, but he can quench the fire of the Spirit's work in the believer's life. Dr. C. I. Scofield wrote: "To quench the Spirit, therefore, is to resist His fiery energy, His consuming and purifying work" (C. I. Scofield, *Plain Papers on the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, p. 57).

Also the words of Floyd Barackman are healthy here: "To 'quench' the Holy Spirit is not to extinguish Him as one puts out a fire, for He indwells us perpetually. It is to stifle Him, to limit or hinder His activity in our life by our refusing to cooperate with Him. We do this when we oppose or resist His control and give ourself to sin. We can correct this by dealing with our rebellious attitude and by giving ourself to the Spirit's direction and enablement. We yield to His control by heart decision and prayer. Isaiah said 'Here am I' (Is. 6:8)" (Barackman, p. 217).

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer gives further insight to this subject by carefully showing the distinction between "grieving" the Spirit and "quenching" the Spirit: "The Spirit is grieved when sin occurs and remains unconfessed.

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The Spirit is quenched when the Christian resists or rejects the will of God for him, which body of truth as set forth in the Scriptures is usually within the scope of the positive side of the spiritual life, though it is possible to quench the Spirit by resisting God respecting issues which have to do with victory over sin as well as in issues which pertain to life and service” (Vol. 6, p. 251).

We quench the Spirit when we resist the known will of God, when we do not yield our lives to God (Rom. 6:1-23), when we do not follow the example of Christ (Heb. 10:5-7; Luke 22:42; John 8:29), when we do not pursue the perfect will of God (Rom. 12:1-2), and when we do not live a sacrificial life (Ex. 21:5).

The ultimate example of one who rebelled against God, who resisted God, was Satan. It needs to be remembered that Satan’s problem was clearly a problem of his will versus God’s will (Is. 14:13-14). When we resist the will of God and give in to our will, we quench the Spirit.

Dr. C. I. Scofield, in his doctrinal study on the Holy Spirit, said there were several ways one could quench the Spirit: 1) When we oppose His will; 2) When we refuse to speak for Christ when the Spirit is consciously moving us to do so; 3) When we refuse a definite call to definite service; 4) When we refuse His absolute sovereignty over what, where and how we shall serve Christ; 5) When we try to get everyone in church to have the same kind of ministry (pp. 57-59). These are truly some ways we can quench the Spirit and when we do, we are not filled with the Spirit.

Conditional Prerequisite #3 - If a believer is to be filled with the Holy Spirit, he must continually walk in the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:16

The verb “walk” is present/imperative meaning it is a continual command. One cannot be filled with the Spirit if one is not continually walking in or by the Spirit.

The word “walk” is a combination of two Greek words which literally mean to walk concerning the Spirit. When the word is used in composition metaphorically, not referring to a literal physical walk, it has reference to living, passing one’s life and conducting oneself (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 356). What this means, concerning this matter of pneumatology, is if one is to be filled with the Spirit of God he must live his life, he must conduct himself or govern himself continually in a way that is concerned with the things of God, and in a way that relies on the Spirit of God. Life must be lived with a continual focus on God’s Word and will. Although the responsibility for this kind of walk falls to the believer, by virtue of the fact that the entire phrase is “walk in the Spirit” or “walk by the Spirit” indicates that the Spirit is the empowering force of the walk.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer clearly saw this when he wrote: “The Authorized Version translation of a determining verse like Galatians 5:16 is misleading. By this kind of rendering the text seems to impose responsibility upon the believer to maintain a walk in the Holy Spirit, whereas the more accurate rendering of the text assigns such achieving of the walk to the Holy Spirit and enjoins upon the Christian the attitude of dependence upon the Spirit.