

WHAT DOES THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT MEAN?

Ephesians 5:18-21

Some churches rarely mention the Holy Spirit. Others emphasize the Holy Spirit and seek visible manifestations of the Spirit in signs, wonders, and tongues. Should we seek a baptism of the Spirit, a “second work of grace” that puts us on a higher spiritual plane? What should a Christian be seeking?

1.WE ARE COMMANDED TO LET OURSELVES BE CONTINUALLY CONTROLLED BY THE SPIRIT – Ephesians 5:18.

- The Holy Spirit is crucial to our Christian lives. He seals us – Ephesians 1:13, 14. The Holy Spirit indwells us – John 14:16,17; Ephesians 2:22. He unites us – Ephesians 4:3. We are to live different from the world especially in our relationships because we live now by the Spirit. Instead of being drunk and under the influence of alcohol, a Christian is to be under the control and influence of the Spirit. Drunkenness leads to debauchery in loss of control and restraints – Luke 15:13. Letting ourselves be continually filled by the Spirit leads to living life under His control and for His glory. We have more joy in God than any joy in alcohol or anything else in this world – Psalm 4:7.
- The filling of the Spirit is not a one- time thing. Being filled or controlled by the Spirit is to be ongoing. Spirit control is not the same as Spirit Baptism – 1 Corinthians 12:12,13; Romans 8:9. Every real Christian has the Holy Spirit. But not every Christian is being controlled continually by the Spirit – Galatians 5:16, 25. So we are not to seek a second work of grace or a baptism of the Spirit, but the control of the Spirit daily.
- Being controlled by the Spirit means not grieving the Spirit – Ephesians 4:30. You cannot be filled with bitterness and choosing sin and still be controlled by the Spirit. Spirit-control means being in the Word which was breathed out by the Spirit. The Spirit and the Word go together – John 16:13,14; Colossians 3:16. Ask God to control you afresh by the Spirit– Luke 11:11-13. Surrender to His control.

2.THE CONTROL OF THE SPIRIT MEANS A JOYFUL WORSHIPPING HEART

- The results of the control of the Spirit means addressing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (odes) – verse 19. These three terms cover all the singing that went on in worship. “Psalms” is from a word meaning “to pluck” and refers to a song of praise accompanied by a stringed instrument like a harp. “Hymns” are specially composed songs. “Spiritual Songs” may be more spontaneous praise from the heart. The Spirit-filled Christian has a heart filled with song. One evidence of Spirit-control is joy – Luke 10:21; Acts 13:52. Another evidence is holy boldness in speaking the Word of Christ – Acts 4:31.
- We sing both to one another and to the Lord. When we worship, the Lord is our Ultimate Audience, but we also do minister to each other. Jesus sings with us in the midst of His congregation – Hebrews 2:11,12.
- The control of the Spirit leads to singing and making melody with our hearts (not just our voices) to the Lord – verse 19b. C.S Lewis said there is no singing in hell. But heaven is full of singing and worship of the Lamb – Revelation 5:9,10. Let’s prepare for heaven now and sing! *“Spirit-filled people overflow in song! This has been attested again and again in times of great spiritual blessing...In the Reformation, Martin Luther brought hymn singing to the Church. During the*

Wesleyan Revival. Charles Wesley wrote 6,000 hymns...There is a sense in which when people are born-again, music is 'born again' in their souls. And if they remain full of the Spirit, life brings an ongoing symphony of soul." – Kent Hughes, Ephesians.

3. THE CONTROL OF THE SPIRIT MEANS A THANKFUL HEART

- Spirit-controlled people are thankful people – Colossians 3:17; 4:2. We are to be giving thanks in all circumstances, not just when things are going great – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19. Not being thankful, but being bitter is one way to quench the Spirit.
- *"I thank Thee first that I was never robbed before; second, because although they took my purse, they spared my life; third, because although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed."* – Matthew Henry, 1700, *a Prayer of Thanks on Being Robbed.*
- Every believer can and should thank God continually for grace and salvation in Jesus Christ. This glorifies God the Father. We live in thankfulness to Jesus by the Spirit to the glory of the Father.

4. THE CONTROL OF THE SPIRIT MEANS A SUBMISSIVE HEART

- The filling of the Spirit leads to an attitude of submission or willingness to yield to each other. Soldiers give up their individual rights to serve in the army. Submission gives up our rights. This means not seeking our own selfish agendas or trying to manipulate others to get your way in Christ's church – Matthew 20:27-28. Submission goes hand in hand with humility.
- Spirit-controlled people are submitting or subordinating themselves to appropriate authorities. This is not teaching mutual submission in all relationships, like marriage. *"Submitting to one another means wives submitting to their husbands, children submitting to their parents, and slaves submitting to their masters."* – Peter O'Brien.
- Submitting to one another is out of fear of Christ. Believers fear God in a positive way. It is fear of displeasing or shaming His holy name. It is illustrated in how an ordinary citizen would feel in the close presence of their earthly king. We submit to others because Christ is our ultimate authority. He is our King and we stand in awe of Him.

Concluding Applications:

- Are you sure you are in Christ, trusting in Him alone?
- Are you surrendering to God and seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit?
- Do you enjoy singing and worshipping God with His people? Is God's Word central in your worship?
- Are you known as a thankful person?
- Do you give up your rights and your own personal agenda for the sake of others and the glory of God?