



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#127)
Other terms related to the Holy Spirit's presence.
(1)

I ALWAYS THOUGHT THERE WERE TWO TYPES OF CHRISTIANS...

... "NORMAL" CHRISTIANS, AND ...

... "SUPER-SPIRITUAL" CHRISTIANS WHO WERE HOLY-SPIRIT BAPTIZED.

AND YOU PROVED THAT ALL CHRISTIANS ARE HOLY-SPIRIT BAPTIZED!

BUT WHAT ABOUT THOSE OTHER SPIRITUAL-SOUNDING TERMS ...

... LIKE "FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT" OR "LED BY THE SPIRIT"?

THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION.

WE SHOULD LOOK AT SOME OF THOSE TERMS!

I THINK WE'LL DISCOVER THAT THERE MAY BE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY...

... BUT NOT TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHRISTIANS!

... UNLESS WE'RE REFERRING TO "FAKE" VS. "GENUINE" CHRISTIANS.

WE CAN USE A BIBLE CONCORDANCE OR COMPUTER SOFTWARE TO FIND THESE TERMS.

NO NEED FOR SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE ORIGINAL BIBLE LANGUAGES!

LET'S START BY LOOKING AT VERSES THAT MENTION "FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT" OR SOMETHING SIMILAR.

THAT WILL GIVE US ABOUT 25 VERSES TO CONSIDER.

(NOTE: In a few passages (mainly Old Testament), we might not be sure if it refers to the *Holy Spirit*, or the *human spirit* (controlled by the Holy Spirit); but the results are probably the same.)

What do we find?

① **Having the ability to DO something.**

Sometimes being Spirit-filled is associated with special abilities and wisdom to do something.

- Special enablement for special tasks. God prepared them to do something important that benefitted others.
- These are Old Testament verses. *Perhaps we could compare them to the New Testament "spiritual gifts" that focus on leadership.*

EXAMPLES – Being "Spirit-filled" resulted in ...

- ✓ JOSHUA – wisdom to lead – Deuteronomy 34:9.
- ✓ VARIOUS CRAFTSMEN – wisdom, understanding, ability – Exodus 28:3; 31:3; 35:31.

- When God gives people such abilities, it doesn't mean the abilities suddenly pop into existence. Sometimes he prepares a person through a variety of experiences, over a span of many years.

Some New Testament concepts related to Spiritual gifts.

- Ephesians 4:11-13 – God gave us *leaders* to help prepare the rest of us, so that we can use our abilities for the good of God's people.
- 1 Corinthians 12-14 – All gifts have value, even though they don't all get equal attention. We are all members of one body, and must function that way. We must use our gifts in love (ch. 13), and for the good of others (ch. 14).
- Romans 12:3-8 (also v. 9+) – We must use our abilities as members of one body, and do so in love (v. 9+).

② Being empowered to SAY something.

- Those described this way tended to be *leaders*; but not always.
- Sometimes the Holy Spirit used them to give us Scripture – but not always.

The significance of "not always":

At one time or other, most (if not all) of God's people have the potential to be filled with the Spirit in this way. (The examples include both leaders and non-leaders.)

EXAMPLE – non-leaders who prayed for power to obey:

- ✓ The CHRISTIANS that Peter and John associated with – they prayed, asked for boldness and power to tell others the Good News... and they became filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke boldly – Acts 4:31. [They prayed for obedience, not for "filling."]

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MORE EXAMPLES that involve speaking:

- ✓ The APOSTLES (and perhaps others with them) – filled with the Spirit on Pentecost; they also spoke in tongues – Acts 2:4.
- ✓ PETER – when he answered the Jewish leaders' questions – Acts 4:8.
- ✓ PAUL – when he rebuked Elymas the sorcerer – Acts 13:9.
- ✓ ELIHU – when he was about to respond to the arguments he had patiently listened to – Job 32:18.
- ✓ The prophet MICAH – when he was about to rebuke the Jewish leaders for their sin – Micah 3:8.
- ✓ ELIZABETH (John the Baptizer's mother) – rejoicing when she saw Mary, the (future) mother of Jesus – Luke 1:41.
- ✓ ZECHARIAH (John the Baptizer's father) – when the Spirit enabled him to prophesy about John (and Jesus) – Luke 1:67.

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③ One's whole LIFE being influenced by the Spirit.

(A) It's often a reference to spiritual MATURITY.

- Those described this way are often the leaders (or about to become leaders).
- This doesn't mean they are "superior" to other Christians; rather, it means they have had more time to grow in Christ! [They were once "new-born" Christians, just like others are now.]

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When it's a reference to spiritual maturity, godly characteristics will be evident in the people's lives. (EXAMPLE: the fruit of the Spirit.)

Those who have genuine spiritual maturity won't be arrogant and boastful about it! They don't consider themselves to be superior to others who are still growing in that direction!

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EXAMPLES – leaders in the early church, where the Spirit had an ongoing presence in their lives:

- ✓ The SEVEN DEACONS – one of the qualifications necessary for this position was to be full of the Spirit and wisdom – Acts 6:3.
- ✓ STEPHEN (one of the seven deacons) – the Spirit's presence appears to have been especially evident in him – Acts 6:5; also, as he was dying (still full of the Holy Spirit), he saw Jesus – Acts 7:55.
- ✓ BARNABAS – characterized as being full of the Holy Spirit and faith – Acts 11:24.

EXAMPLES where the Spirit was preparing someone for a future ministry to which he had called them:

- ✓ PAUL – was filled with the Spirit after Ananias (of Damascus) placed his hands on him – Acts 9:17 (see also vs. 15-16).
- ✓ JOHN THE BAPTIZER – led by the Spirit throughout his life – Luke 1:15.

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(B) New Christians can also be influenced by the Spirit.

If there is a difference in Spirit-filling, between new Christians and those who are spiritually mature, it may be a difference in "intensity," or perhaps how constantly it occurs.

EXAMPLE – "new-born" followers of Jesus who were like this:

- ✓ The DISCIPLES in the area of Pisidian Antioch (in western Turkey) – they were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit – Acts 13:52. [These were new followers of Jesus. They were living in a place that was hostile to Christianity.]

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(C) Jesus.

- ✓ JESUS – We could certainly put Jesus in the category of "being full of the Spirit always"; but the only time this specific phrase was applied to him was when he was being led into the wilderness, to be tested by the Devil – Luke 4:1.

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④ In one verse, being "Spirit-filled" is almost like a COMMAND.

> Ephesians 5:18 <

★ This would indicate that it is something available to ALL Christians (not just those who have a "special calling"). ★

☞ IF SO, IT IS AN "INDIRECT COMMAND," because WE DON'T FILL OURSELVES! ☞
It's not something we do... but God does it.

WHAT IS IT THAT WE CAN DO?

Our job is to choose a way of life that makes being Spirit-filled possible! (We can do this choosing, because of God's power within us.)

- ✓ We can choose to NOT let anything get in the way!
- ✓ This verse's context tells us about things we can do!

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(A) Ephesians 5:18 teaches a PRINCIPLE: The example of "drunk vs. Spirit-controlled" is intended to teach us to *not let other things control our lives!*

The issue is "*What controls us?*" We have *power* to *not* be controlled by those things, because one of the "fruit" of the Spirit's presence is *self-control!* (We do it, because the *Spirit* has enabled us to do it.)

(B) Ephesians 5:15-17, 19-20 teaches us what we must do: things that make possible the Spirit's filling-presence. It focuses on:

- **Wise, careful living** – with wisdom that is available only when we submit to the teachings of Scripture.
- **Encouraging each other** in the Christian life – that others may also live this way.
- **Grateful to God** – in all that happens.

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Ephesians 5:15-20

WISE LIVING, BASED ON THE WILL OF GOD

[THE PRINCIPLE: BE CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT CONTROLS YOU!]

ENCOURAGING EACH OTHER TO LIVE THIS WAY

GREATFUL TO GOD IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit,

speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.

Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:15-20 (NIV)

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The connection between doing God's will and being Spirit-filled.

- There is a direct parallel between wise living and being Spirit-filled.

Ephesians 5:15-17		Ephesians 5:18
Unwise; being foolish	>> parallels >>	Being drunk, leading to debauchery.
Wise; understanding the Lord's will	>> parallels >>	Being filled with the Spirit.

- **Colossians 3:16-17** is a similar passage (though it doesn't mention Spirit-filling). It also focuses on *wisdom, encouragement* and *gratitude*.

Doing these things will enable you to have a Spirit-controlled life!

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⑤ Warnings and misconceptions.

(A) LEARNING FROM EXAMPLES OF WRONG "FILLINGS":

- ✓ **A WARNING ABOUT FAKE "CHRISTIANS":** They can be filled with Satan, and (apparently) not even know it!

EXAMPLE: Ananias was filled with Satan, which made him willing to lie to the apostles (which was the same as lying to the Holy Spirit) – Acts 5:3.

- ✓ **SOME "FILLINGS" ARE INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE SPIRIT.** Note the contrast between Elymas the sorcerer (= full of deceit and trickery) and Paul (= filled with the Holy Spirit) – Acts 13:9-10.

We already saw:

- ✓ **ANYTHING THAT INTERFERES WITH THE SPIRIT'S CONTROL MUST BE AVOIDED!** Don't be controlled by something else – Ephesians 5:18. (Instead, seek out God's will... and do it!)

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(B) BEING SPIRIT-FILLED IS NOT AN EMOTION.

- Being filled with the Spirit is associated with *wisdom*, the use of the *mind*, and making conscious *choices* related to how one lives – the Holy Spirit influencing what we do and say.
- Yet though it's *not* an emotion, it can be accompanied by emotion – example, joy (Acts 13:52).

(C) WE AREN'T ALL THE SAME, AND SHOULDN'T EXPECT ALL THE SAME EXPERIENCES.

- We all have the same Spirit... and being Spirit-filled can be the goal of ALL who follow Jesus.
>> BUT <<
- We can expect some people to have a greater degree of spiritual growth (maturity) than others – resulting in a more consistent life of following Jesus.

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(D) NOTHING IN SCRIPTURE SUGGESTS THAT SPIRIT-FILLED PEOPLE ARE "SUPER-SPIRITUAL" PEOPLE!

- *God* never said they were! The *people* themselves never said they were!
- Some may have had greater spiritual maturity; but that's a "growing in Christ" issue, not a "more spiritual than others" issue!

WHAT DID PAUL SAY ABOUT HIMSELF?

- He considered himself to be "the worst of sinners." Only by *God's* grace did it change – 1 Timothy 1:16.
- Anything he could personally boast about was "nothing," compared to simply knowing Jesus – Philippians 3:4-11.
- He (and other leaders) were merely *servants* doing what God told them to do – 1 Corinthians 3:5-8.

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What should we conclude?

THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT IS AVAILABLE TO ALL WHO HAVE THE SPIRIT.

- The term is more often used for someone with special gifts, abilities, or spiritual growth. *But not always.*
- We need not be surprised if people who have grown-up in the faith tend to be more *consistently* Spirit-filled, than are the "new-borns." *They've had more opportunity to grow!*

★ THE BIGGER ISSUE IS THIS: IS THE SPIRIT IN YOU, IN THE FIRST PLACE! ★

- You can't expect to be "filled" if there is no Spirit present to do the filling!

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. **And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.**

Romans 8:9 (NIV84)

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YOUR MISSION:

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN DO.

And let God take care of the "filled with the Spirit" issue.

(If you aren't willing to do what you can do, then you don't really want filled with the Spirit.)

A SUGGESTED STARTING POINT



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MAKE IT YOUR GOAL TO LIVE BY THE SPIRIT

(whether or not you consider yourself to with filled with the Spirit).

- You will be less inclined to sin.

But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.

Galatians 5:16 (NET)

- If the Spirit influences your "inner life," it will influence what happens on the "outside."

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Galatians 5:25 (NIV)

ANOTHER WAY TO SAY THIS:

Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

Galatians 5:25 (NLT)

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[For further study, if desired.]

Various observations from our verse list.

(This is provided to show the relationship of various concepts to the filling of the Spirit. Many of these things will apply only in specific situations (such as maturity or giftedness). *Don't expect these things to all occur in your life!*)

Things that happened BEFORE the filling of the Spirit:

- The people were commissioned / hands were placed on them. Deuteronomy 34:9; Acts 9:17. [This focused on gifts and abilities.]
- Prayer for boldness to speak the Word of God. Acts 4:31. [This was NOT restricted to leaders. It happened to the group that was praying.]

This was a COMMON result of being filled with the Spirit:

- Speaking, communicating truth, etc. Job 32:18; Micah 3:8; Luke 1:67; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 13:9.

SPECIAL situations (not normally expected to happen):

- Being led into the wilderness (Jesus). Luke 4:1.
- A vision of Jesus (Stephen, while he was dying). Acts 7:55.

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Things ASSOCIATED with it. [They are found together, though some may be prerequisites for being Spirit-filled.]

- Faith. Acts 6:5; 11:24. [maturity]
- Wisdom. Exodus 28:3; Deuteronomy 34:9; Acts 6:3. [maturity]
- A good reputation. Acts 6:3; 11:24. [maturity]
- Wisdom, understanding, ability, etc. Exodus 31:3; 35:31. [gift]
- Joy (that goes beyond circumstances). Acts 13:52.
- Eager for justice; courage. Micah 3:8. [for proclaiming the truth]

Things NOT ASSOCIATED with it:

- Anything that interferes with the Spirit's control. Ephesians 5:18 (an example of something that would do this); Luke 1:15 (a symbolic illustration of this, based on O.T. ceremonial regulations). [Represented by the effects that result from being controlled by wine/strong drink.]
- Incompatible things – Satan, sinful conduct, etc. Acts 5:3; 13:10.

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NOTE: Many godly people in Scripture are NOT described as being "Spirit-filled." The absence of this phrase shouldn't lead us to conclude that they were less "spiritual," or that they *were't* ever Spirit-filled.

Credits

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