

Ephesians 5:15-21 – The Spirit filled life

A. Introduction

- Paul is challenging the Christians to live holy lives in the pagan environment of first century Ephesus. God has saved them from the world and they must be different (4:17-32). They must walk in love (5:1-7) and in the light (5:8-14).
- How is such a life possible? Only through the power of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity (1:3-14). The Father plans to bless us; the Son wins those blessings; the Holy Spirit applies them to our lives (1:13-14; 1:17; 2:22; 3:16; 4:3; 4:30; 6:17-18).

B. Walk in Wisdom (5:15-17)

- Here it is a command to walk in wisdom – it is marked by three things:
- **Be careful (15)** – take care about the way you live – you represent Jesus (8-14). You must make Him visible, intelligible and desirable.
- **Be purposeful (16)** – make the most of every opportunity – the way we “spend” our time, like the way we spend our money, is a clear indication of the passion of our discipleship.
- **Be sensitive (17)** – try always to be sensitive to God’s will and aim to please Him (Colossians 1:9; Romans 12:1-2; Colossians 3:16).

C. Be filled with the Spirit (5:18-21)

- This single sentence has two imperatives and five participles.
- ❖ **Imperative 1 – Do not get drunk on wine (18)**
 - This is a general biblical instruction (Proverbs 23:31-35).
 - It may have been a particular problem in pagan Ephesus – the worship of Dionysius often led to drunken orgies.
 - It is placed in apposition to the command about the Holy Spirit – there is both a superficial similarity and an underlying difference.
- ❖ **Imperative 2 – Be filled with the Spirit (18)**
 - “*Filling*” has the idea of being controlled – hence the parallel with alcohol. A person who is filled shows it in their words and actions.
 - The difference is that alcohol destroys self-control, while the Holy Spirit enhances it (Galatians 5:22-23).
 - Are we filled “*with*” the Spirit or “*by*” the Spirit? He is the agent, the one who does it. He is also the substance – He fills us with the Triune God – Father, Son and Spirit (3:16-17, 19).
 - To understand the command, we need to break it down – it is...
 - ⇒ **Imperative** – not a polite suggestion, but a clear command.
 - ⇒ **Plural** – it is for all Christians, not the mature only.
 - ⇒ **Passive** – God does it for us, it is not a human achievement.
 - ⇒ **Present continuous** – “be being filled” – it is an on-going experience, not a once for all event.
 - All Christians have the Spirit (1:13-14; Acts 2:16-17, 38-39), not all Christians are filled with the Spirit, hence the command.
- ❖ **Five Participles (19-21)**
 - Paul tells us two things – the atmosphere in which a Spirit filled life will develop and the fruit and evidence that we are Spirit filled.
 - ⇒ Speaking to one another – fellowship (19; Hebrews 10:24-25).
 - ⇒ Singing and making music with your heart – worship (19).
 - ⇒ Thanksgiving (20) – cultivating a grateful heart.
 - ⇒ Submitting to one another – expressing the mind of Christ (21).