

SERVING THE LORD BY MEANS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

III. The Filling Of The Holy Spirit

(Ephesians 5:18 et al.)

I. Introduction

- A. “From the viewpoint of practice and experience, the filling with the Spirit is the most important aspect of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit . . . But, like many other aspects of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit it is not always clearly understood.” (Charles C. Ryrie, The Holy Spirit, 1973, p. 93)
- B. We thus view the critically important doctrine of the “filling” of the Holy Spirit that we might be used of God in life and service with His empowering effectiveness (as follows):

II. The Filling Of The Holy Spirit (I am partly indebted to C. C. Ryrie, The Holy Spirit, 1973, p. 93-103)

- A. The idea of “being filled with the Holy Spirit” **cannot** mean that a believer can at times not be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, or that he has more of the Holy Spirit at certain times than at other times, for Ephesians 4:30 reveals that even when we grieve the Holy Spirit by committing sin, we believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit until the “day of redemption,” until the rapture of the Church.
- B. Thus, when the only verse in Scripture that commands us to be “filled with the Spirit” is Ephesians 5:18, we must view its context to understand the proper definition of the Holy Spirit’s “filling” activity (as follows):
 1. In this verse, Paul directed his readers not to be drunk with wine, but rather to be “filled” with the Spirit.
 2. Thus, by “filling,” Paul *figuratively* meant **control**: Instead of being filled with wine so that one is negatively **controlled** by its effects, Paul directed believers to be **controlled** by the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- C. Since the “filling” of the Spirit involves the idea of being **controlled** by the Holy Spirit, we view other Scriptures to discern what is involved in this **control** in a practical sense (as follows):
 1. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 directs us believers to **stop quenching** (present imperative) the Holy Spirit, Ibid., p. 95. The “fruit” or **product** of the Holy Spirit is identified in Galatians 5:22-23 ESV as the characteristics of “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” When we then rely by faith on the Holy Spirit and He produces the drive within us to align with or to express any one or combination of more of these characteristics in us, God wants us to yield to that drive to be “filled” or **controlled** by the Person of God the Holy Spirit.
 2. Ephesians 4:30 directs us to **stop grieving** (present imperative *lupeite* from *lupeo*, “grieve” [U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 673; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon), 1972, p. 254] with the negative particle *me*) the Holy Spirit, and the context addresses the sins of one’s speech to be avoided. Thus, God wants us to rely on the Holy Spirit to avoid sin, to be under His control that we not sin especially with the words of our mouths.
 3. Galatians 5:16 directs us to **be walking** (present imperative *peripateite* from *peripateo*, “to walk, walk about,” Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 660; Ibid., The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 320) in the Holy Spirit that we might not fulfill the lusts of the sinful nature. The verb “walk, walk about” suggests one’s general conduct in his daily functions of living, so Paul directed that we believers are to rely on the Holy Spirit’s promptings as we go about our daily activities that we either initiate or respond to every issue we face with the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control that God the Holy Spirit prompts within us.
- D. This “filling,” or **control** by the Holy Spirit, is interrupted by sin in a believer’s life, which sin puts a believer out of spiritual control by the Holy Spirit and outside his fellowship with the Lord (cf. 1 John 1:6; 2:1-2). The believer must then confess that sin to return to a state of fellowship with the Lord (1 John 1:9) and then sustain that fellowship status by ordering his life in the light of God’s Word (1 John 1:7) by relying on the Holy Spirit’s promptings of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control to function in his functions in life. (Galatians 5:16)

Lesson: To live for and to serve the Lord effectively, we must be “filled” with- or “controlled” by God the Holy Spirit. This control occurs as we yield to the Holy Spirit’s promptings to align with- or to express the Holy Spirit’s production of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, to avoid grieving the Spirit by not committing sin and to heed the Holy Spirit’s characteristic promptings in all of our functions in daily living. If we sin, that control by the Holy Spirit is temporarily broken, so to regain the Spirit’s control of us, we need to confess our sin for restoration to fellowship with God and the control of the Holy Spirit.

Application: May we always function with the “filling” of the Holy Spirit, being under His control as a way of life.