

Scripture: Ephesians 5:15-21

Note: For the past several weeks we have been looking at developing a Biblical lifestyle. We have learned many truths which if applied will promote a close walk with Jesus. Now comes the hard part. No doubt in order to apply these principles there needs to be a change in our lives. The power to change is within each of us.

I. We must obey the command to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 **And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;** We all know the Holy Spirit is a person of God living in us who reveals the presence of God, lifts up Jesus the Son, God the Father and bears witness to our hearts that God is real. The word being filled is described as being under control of a power greater than ourselves. Paul uses being drunk with wine because if any of you have ever been drunk it causes you to do and say things you wouldn't normally say. The alcoholic and drug addict are under the control of the substance causing their lives to become unmanageable. Excess wine destroys but you can't be too filled with the Holy Spirit. So let's figure out how to do that. First let's look at what are the hindrances.

1. Don't be ignorant of the world around you. (15-17) **See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.** One definition of circumspectly is cautiously; be alert because the enemy is alive and well. Josh McDowell recently wrote that he believed we were living in the last Christian generation in America. He quoted a recent survey by George Barna where parents were asked what were the most important things to pass to the next generation and they said 1. Get a good education, 2. Get a good job and marry into a good family and 3. family. To learn the truth about God was way down on the list. He also stated that statistics show that unless a child is saved before the age of 11 their chances of salvation are reduced to less than four percent. This tells us being filled with Spirit for those of us who believe is reaching a crisis stage because we are losing the next generation. Our world is filled with crisis, terrorism, opiate overdoses, rampant sexual immorality, and murders in the streets. None of these are as serious as a world without Jesus.

2. Be careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:29-31 **Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:** All of these align us with the Devil; we are giving him a place in our minds which will lead to pain for us. **John 10:10** **The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.** Sin opens the door to the thief who will steal, kill and destroy and the Spirit sees all this and is affected as we suffer; needlessly I might add. Pastor Chris Thompson tells a story about a teenage girl in his church in England who got saved but lived with unsaved parents. She would run away and come to Chris and his wife and they would always take her back home. One day she ran away and no one saw her for over a year until a shelter called and asked if Pastor Chris would come get her. She was dirty with nothing. When she ran away she took her backpack. In it was her Bible. Somebody stole her backpack and the one thing she missed was the Bible. He said all she had in life was that backpack but her most cherished possession was the Bible. Then he said something that struck me hard. He said just think that backpack was with her the whole time she was running. Jesus was with her the whole time she was running. The Bible contained the answers to her pain. Jesus was grieving because He longed to reach out a pull her out the miry pit of sin.

3. Be careful not to quench the Holy Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 Quench not the Spirit. Sometimes God speaks to us through sermons, other people, or during prayer but most often it is in reading the Bible. I quench the Spirit when I don't trust what the Bible reveals about me and about what I need to work on in my life. **John 16:33** *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.* When I live in misery instead of peace I am not trusting God's promises and am needlessly suffering.

II. Live in the Spirit through a Christ empowered life. Paul describes the life in **Galatians 2:20** *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* Notice the flesh is crucified; that means my sinful desires My flesh is controlled by the Holy Spirit. **Galatians 5:24-25** *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.* That will only happen if we consciously decide to give God first place in our minds. We understand that this power to want to serve God needs to help.

1. Look for the God supplied desire to do and power to carry out His will for my life. Philippians 2:12-13 *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* You may say how God could possibly do that or better yet how can I allow God to do that. We have had many verses about surrendering our will to God. In Romans 12:1-2 we talk about presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice; followed by a transformation as our minds are renewed. We know faith comes by hearing the Bible. We know prayer is a conscious contact with God. We know the Holy Spirit interprets the scriptures for us making it real for us. The Christ in us through the power of the Holy Spirit within us empower us to produce fruit for the kingdom (John 15). Even the changes within us which are the fruits of the Spirit are not produced by us they are produced in us by the Spirit. During this process my want too's are changed from me centered to God centered.

2. Walk in faith. Hebrews 4:2 *For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.* Faith is the key. If we don't believe we can be filled with the Spirit we won't be. **Hebrews 11:6** *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* It still comes down to a choice followed by an action. Faith says I know I can and probably should be filled with the Spirit but not right now. If that is you are quenching the Spirit. Another truth I kept being reminded of is I am on this earth for God. It is not God is in heaven for me. All of the principles we have learned in this series will be useless unless we apply them. We also need to know that "we" can't apply them without the Holy Spirit. We will be changed when we are filled with the Holy Spirit. We will never change when we try to do better or when we don't believe we need to. Most of the time we don't change because we don't want to.