

every believer), permanent (for a lifetime), and normal (a requirement for living the Christian life).

14. Obedience is proof of the Spirit's filling.

You say, "How can I know if I'm controlled by self or controlled by the Spirit?" Here is a simple test. Ask yourself, "Am I doing the hard things?" Take for instance, "Give to him who asks" (Matt. 5:42). Or "Whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back" (Luke 6:30). Or "Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not" (Rom. 12:14). Or "Not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult" (1 Pet. 3:9). If you are doing these hard things, you have indisputable proof that self is *not* in control, because self would never do anything to its own disadvantage. Obeying the difficult commands and prohibitions of Scripture, then, is one evidence of spirituality—of the Spirit's control or filling.

15. The fruit of the Spirit is proof of the Spirit's filling.

"A tree is known by its fruit" (Matt. 12:33). "You will know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:20). If a believer manifests the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22–23)—he's filled with the Spirit. But if he manifests the deeds of the flesh—immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envyings, drunkenness, carousings (5:19–21)—he's not filled with the Spirit. In every instance the filling of the Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit. You can know you're filled if this fruit is present and increasing in your soul (2 Pet. 1:5–9).

16. The filling of the Spirit makes you Christlike.

17. The filling of the Spirit makes you a blessing to others.

Jesus, speaking in the Jewish Age, prophesied the imminent indwelling and filling ministries of the Spirit (John 7:37–39). In His analogy, the indwelling and filling Spirit is likened to rivers of running water in a thirsty land. A single drink (receiving the Spirit's indwelling at the moment of salvation) becomes rivers of running water flowing out of your soul in the form of blessings to others. In a semi-arid land

like Palestine, water is often in short supply and much appreciated. Rivers of running water are no less than super-abundance! The opposite, quenching the Spirit, deprives you and those around you of much-needed spiritual blessings.

18. The filling of the Spirit produces a local church that glorifies God (Eph. 5:18–21).

In this passage the command to be filled is followed by four consequences of the Spirit's fullness: (1) exhortation in songs of worship ("speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs"), (2) worship in song ("singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord"), (3) frequent prayers of thanksgiving ("always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father"), and (4) submission to church leadership ("be subject to one another in the fear of Christ"). Obviously, the more Spirit-filled Christians you have, the better the local church will be.

19. The filling of the Spirit is not a feeling or emotional experience.

You may not feel any difference when you're filled or not filled. The Spirit's presence is known only by divine revelation and by the results it produces in the lives of believers. That's why it's difficult to know if you're filled at any particular moment of time. You say, "What should I do if I'm not sure?" Easy. Examine your life. If you find any known sins you haven't confessed, confess them immediately, and you'll be filled with the Spirit. If you can't find any, assume you're filled.



The Holy Spirit wants to control your life. Why not let Him? Why not be filled right now?



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The
Filling
of the
Spirit



And do not get drunk with wine,
for that is dissipation,
but be filled with the Spirit.
~ Ephesians 5:18 ~

*W*ould you like to understand the Bible? Have power over the flesh? Receive divine guidance? Get answers to prayer? Use your spiritual gifts more effectively? Be a source of blessing to others? You can have all of these if you know the secret of Christian living—being filled with the Spirit!

1. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19).

In this age the Spirit of God lives in temples of flesh and blood, not wood and gleaming stone.

2. The Holy Spirit lives in every believer (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19; Jude 19).

He lives inside our bodies—His temple. This is the indwelling ministry of the Spirit.

3. He wants to fill His temple (Eph. 5:18).

The Spirit wants complete control of His temple—body, soul, and spirit. This is the filling ministry of the Spirit. It's mentioned 14 times in the New Testament (Luke 1:15, 41, 67; 4:1; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 6:3; 7:55; 9:17; 11:24; 13:9, 52; Eph. 5:18). Its frequency indicates the importance of the doctrine.

4. To be filled with the Spirit is to be completely controlled by the Spirit.

Filling is a matter of control; that is, who is going to control your life, you or the Holy Spirit? In Ephesians 5:18 the apostle draws an analogy or comparison between drunkenness and the filling of the Spirit: "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit." Drunkenness was the best illustration Paul could think of to describe this ministry. The two are similar in many ways yet vastly different in others. In short, you can learn many things about the filling ministry of the Spirit by watching drunks!

- A drunk is filled with alcohol. A Christian is filled with the Holy Spirit.

- Alcohol is a substance inside the body. The Holy Spirit is a person living inside the body.

- Alcohol controls thoughts, speech, and behavior from within. The Spirit controls thoughts, speech, and behavior from within.

- Alcohol is addictive. The filling ministry of the Spirit is meant to be a moment by moment influence in your life.

- Alcoholism is chemical dependency. Those filled with the Spirit depend on Him for help, instruction, and guidance.

- Drunks like the effect of alcohol. Spirit-filling is also desired for its effect: it produces the fruit of the Spirit and good works.

To recapitulate: as alcohol dominates those under its influence, the Spirit dominates those under His influence. He wants to change your life from within—if you'll let Him. The Christian way of life is a supernatural life produced by the indwelling Spirit of God.

5. The opposite of Spirit-control is controlling your own life.

Self-control, one of the fruits of the Spirit, is desirable (Gal. 5:23), self-government is not. Self-government is "I want to do things my way, not God's!" To be filled with the Spirit is to die to self (Gal. 5:24–25).

6. The filling of the Spirit is commanded.

"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). The imperative mood of the verb "be filled" (*pleroo*) indicates this is a command. The plural number of this verb shows it is a command addressed to every church-age believer. The passive voice means the filling of the Spirit is something you receive from God. The present tense envisions a repeated filling. To be filled, then, is expected; not to be filled is disobedience, a sin, walking in the flesh—carnality.

7. The filling of the Spirit is lost by sinning, restored by confession, and maintained by obedience.

You say, "How can I be filled with the Spirit?" Simple. Just confess your sins. Sin grieves Him and quenches His work. Sin prevents Him from controlling you. How can He control your life if you want to control it yourself? So, when you confess a sin, you're forgiven, restored to fellowship, and filled with the Spirit again—automatically. Through confession you give control of your

life back to the Holy Spirit. You lose the filling when you sin, regain it by confessing known sins, and maintain it by being obedient and resisting temptation.

8. The filling of the Spirit is a repeated, not a continuous experience.

No one can be continually filled; that would require never sinning. In practice, the filling of the Spirit recurs at successive intervals. Jesus is the only person who has ever been continually filled with the Spirit.

9. The Holy Spirit is free to do everything He came to do in the lives of Spirit-filled believers.

Since He is in control, not us, He is free to operate without hindrance to accomplish the Father's will in us and through us.

10. The filling of the Spirit is a basic requirement of spiritual growth.

The Holy Spirit is the divine author, teacher, and illuminator of Scripture. You grow to maturity when you're filled with the Spirit because He's free to teach you "all things, even the depths of God" (1 Cor. 2:10).

11. The filling of the Spirit is a prerequisite for church leadership.

To hold office, the first deacons had to meet three requirements: be "men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (Acts 6:3). If deacons, then how much more elders and pastors?

12. Unbelievers are never commanded to be filled with the Spirit.

13. The filling ministry of the Spirit is not unique to the Church Age.

Old Testament saints were never commanded to be filled with the Spirit. He filled some, but it was selective (only a few individuals were filled), temporary (for a short time only), and given to accomplish a specific purpose (not a requirement for daily living). Today, the filling is universal (for