

Evidences of a "Spirit-filled" life

I often hear people describe themselves as "Spirit-filled" believers and wonder just what they mean by that. As I want to be truly such, I seek the Scriptures to see how I can 'measure' myself.

Whereas the 'deeper life' (or the Higher Life, as I would prefer!), begins with a sovereign work of God in baptizing one with the Holy Spirit in response to a consecrated, hungry longing for God Himself, it is our responsibility to "*keep on being filled with the Spirit*" (Eph 5:18). It is so easy for us, having experienced God on the mountain-top, to fall back into the old ways, relying upon our own thoughts and strengths (weakness). How then can I maintain that 'higher life'? I believe Ephesians 5 should be understood in this context.

Paul exhorts us to 'walk in love' and as children of light. We must have no fellowship with works of darkness, redeeming the time. We shall be able to do this as we **keep on being filled** with the Spirit (as I believe the meaning in the Greek implies). There follow **three evidences** of such a "spirit-filled" life.

V19: we are to have **a worshipping attitude**. I cannot claim to be a "Spirit-filled" Christian if I am not a worshipper. The Spirit now filling us has but one goal and that is to glorify Christ in and through us. Don't tell me you are a "Spirit-filled" believer if there is anything of self in which you glory. You may not be able to sing but your greatest delight is to sit at His feet in adoration while your heart is singing love songs to Jesus. I love to go alone out in the countryside where there is no one (and no cell phone!) to interrupt the sweet communion I enjoy with the Lord.

V20: we are to have **a thankful attitude**. I cannot claim to be a "Spirit-filled" Christian if I readily complain about things; if I am easily offended, often critical. Can I say "thankYou" even when I am struggling through a dark valley, knowing that He is there with me. Do we really believe it that "ALL things work together ... to them who are the called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28)? My wife's favourite verse is Phil 4:6 with its promise ... *and the peace of God which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*. How well she has proven this through her present bout with cancer.

V21: we are to have **a submitted attitude**. This means I am to live as your servant, to 'wash your feet' by encouragement and refreshing, I am to be a "one another" man, caring, exhorting, loving, etc. for others in the Body of Christ. I cannot claim to be "Spirit-filled" if I am only happy when I am in charge, when I have a need for honours and acknowledgment of others. We do not find it easy being submitted to others. It goes 'against the grain'!

Paul goes on to show how this submitted life is seen in the relationships between a man and wife, children and parents, masters and servants. (By the way, husbands are to be submitted to their wives as well as vice-versa!! The word "submit" is not found in the Greek original of 5:22)