

Applying Scripture to Life

Topic 3 – Scripture and Holy Spirit Filling

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Review / Introduction

The purpose of this series is to equip each of us so that through the sufficiency of Christ and the Scriptures we can mature and grow in our ability to apply the Scriptures to our own difficult life issues and sin. The additional purpose is to equip us to bring biblical care to our brethren when the inevitable opportunities to extend ourselves in love are presented.

We first saw that, unequivocally, Spirit-filled believers are capable and commanded to disciple one another.

We then looked at sin and salvation. The believer has been freed from the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and one day in heaven from the very presence of sin by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Yet now our labor is to battle the flesh and remain in constant fellowship with Christ with the resources God has given us. Should we sin, confession to God and repentance from sin are our remedies.

Today we look at the connection between the Scriptures, the filling of the Holy Spirit, and progressive sanctification (spiritual growth).

The Scriptures

God has revealed Himself to mankind: generally through creation and specifically through the Bible. In general revelation, God communicates His attributes, eternal power, and divine nature (Rom 1:18-20) through what has been made. Specific revelation is found only in the Bible which is God's complete moral will for mankind.

General revelation is sufficient for *condemnation* (no one has an excuse, Rom 1:20), specific revelation is sufficient for *salvation* and *sanctification* (2 Pet 1:3).

²⁰For since the creation of the world **His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.** (Rom 1:20)

³seeing that **His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us** by His own glory and excellence. (2 Pet 1:3)

“Inspiration” explains the means and extent of the Bible being the word of God and refers to God breathing out Scripture (2 Tim 3:16). God is the source of Scripture and as such it takes on His qualities of inerrancy (without error) and infallibility (trustworthy).

¹⁶**All Scripture is inspired by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16-17)

God “moved” or “superintended” or directed (but did not dictate to) the human authors so that, using their own personalities and styles, they composed and recorded without error in the original manuscripts God’s specific revelation to people (2 Pet 1:21-22).

²⁰But know this first of all, that **no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation,** ²¹for **no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.** (2 Pet 1:20-21)

Inspiration is verbal (extending to the very words) and plenary (including all the words). This is shown by the Lord Jesus’ and Apostle Paul’s statements, usage, and arguments (Matt 5:18; 22:31-32; Gal 3:16).

So, the Bible is the inspired, plenary, verbal, infallible, inerrant in the original manuscripts word of God! God’s words are the believer’s delight (Jer 15:16).

¹⁶Your words were found and I ate them, **And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart;** For I have been called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts. (Jer 15:16)

❖ **Are the Scriptures your delight? How is that demonstrated in your life?**

The Bible is authoritative (see Matt 4:4, 7, 10) and fully sufficient for all matters of faith and conduct – for salvation and sanctification.

The Bible is the standard of faith and practice for every believer (Matt 5:18; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Heb 4:12; 2 Pet 1:20-21). Only the Scriptures fully meet every spiritual need of God’s people. It is all-sufficient regarding the soul’s deepest needs, in our relationship to God, and in our relationship to others.

It is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks (2 Pet 1:3; Matt 4:4; Heb 4:12; 2 Tim 3:15-17; 1 Pet 2:2; Psa 19:7-13; 119:9, 11; 119:24).

²like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, **so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,** (1 Pet 2:2)

⁹How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping *it* according to Your word. ¹⁰With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. ¹¹Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You. (Psa 119:9-11)

²⁴Your testimonies also are my delight; **They are my counselors.** (Psa 119:24)

❖ **Do you view the Scriptures as authoritative in your life?**

The Bible is powerful and therefore able to accomplish God’s purpose (Isa 55:11) in the lives of people for which He sends it forth. The words of Scripture work their intended result because the author, the Holy Spirit, is at work in the lives of the readers.

¹²For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and **able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.** (Heb 4:12)

¹³For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it not as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, **which also performs its work in you who believe.** (1 Thess 2:13)

The Scriptures bring about transformation in our lives. Other books were given for our information; the Bible was given for our transformation.

❖ **Do you believe that you can be transformed by God, or have you lost hope?**

Because the Bible is authoritative, sufficient, and powerful, we need to be taking it in voraciously. God's will for us is found in God's word. We must go through the day thinking about God's word.

¹⁴I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches. ¹⁵I will meditate on Your precepts And regard Your ways. ¹⁶I shall delight in Your statutes; I shall not forget Your word. (Psa 119:14-16)

⁹⁷O how I love Your law! **It is my meditation all the day.** (Psa 119:97)

❖ **Are you often interacting with God's word?**

In every difficult time, in every temptation to sin, for overcoming every idolatrous master, God's word has the answer. As we go through the day and enter new circumstances; we need to be thinking: "What are God's precepts, principles, and promises now?"

❖ **At the day's transition points are you thinking about what God's word says about that moment?**

The Spirit and the Word

The Christian life is not lived in one's own strength. It is a life lived filled by the Spirit as the life of Christ flows through you (Gal 2:20). Living a consistently God glorifying life is only possible through Spirit-filling.

²⁰I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, **but Christ lives in me;** and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. (Gal 2:20)

God has described Spirit-filling in the Scriptures in several ways to allow us to fully understand it. Spirit-filling is described as "abiding in Christ" (John 15:1-11); "setting apart Christ as Lord in your heart" (1 Pet 3:15); "living by faith in the Son of God" (Gal 2:20); and "presenting your bodies a living and holy sacrifice" (Rom 12:1-2).

Yet the classic passage is found in Ephesians 5:18+.

¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but **be filled with the Spirit,** ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; ²⁰always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; ²¹and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ... (²²Wives..., ²⁵Husbands..., ^{6:1}Children..., ⁴Fathers..., ⁵Slaves..., ⁹Masters...) (Eph 5:18-6:9)

“Be filled” has the sense of being influenced, dominated, and controlled. The contrast is clear; someone who is drunk is under the influence of alcohol – they have surrendered control to alcohol. Believers should only be controlled by the Spirit.

The Greek for “filled” is a passive, present tense imperative (something that you are commanded to continually let happen to you). It is literally “let yourselves be kept being filled with the Spirit”. You are commanded to allow the Spirit to fill you.

The implication is that the usual, expected position of the believer is to be filled with the Spirit. The believer in a right relationship with God will be filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit is the surrendering of every area of your life to God so that the Holy Spirit is controlling you.

❖ **What is your usual condition?**

Being filled with the Spirit is equivalent to letting the word of Christ richly dwell within you.

¹⁶**Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you**, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (¹⁸Wives..., ¹⁹Husbands..., ²⁰Children..., ²¹Fathers..., ²²Slaves..., ^{4:1}Masters...) (Col 3:16-4:1)

“Letting the word of Christ richly dwell within you” produces the same result as “be filled with the Spirit”: Christ-like words, worship, reactions, and relationships.

	Ephesians 5:18-21	Colossians 3:16-4:1
Command	And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit	Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you
Words	speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs	with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms <i>and</i> hymns <i>and</i> spiritual songs
Worship	singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord	singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God
Reactions	always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father	Whatever you do in word or deed, <i>do</i> all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.
Relationships	and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ... Wives..., Husbands..., Children..., Fathers..., Slaves..., Masters...	Wives..., Husbands..., Children..., Fathers..., Slaves..., Masters...

We are commanded to be filled. We are commanded to let the word of Christ to richly dwell within you. But how specifically do we walk in the Spirit?

The filling of the Spirit is not some magical, super-spiritual experience. It occurs when you, in response to God and what He has done for you in Christ, bring your entire life under submission to Him as He has revealed to do in His word. The fruit of this filling is a tangible manifestation of strength, character, and your connection to God through Christ. The filling of the Spirit is brought about by:

1. Repenting of any known sin – An attitude of the heart that is willing to always come under the Holy Spirit’s conviction of sin and genuinely repent.

²⁹Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. ³⁰**Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (Eph 4:29-32)

❖ **Does your heart quickly come under the Holy Spirit’s conviction and repent?**

2. Yielding to God in every area of life – An attitude of the heart that yields to God’s word.

¹⁶Rejoice always; ¹⁷pray without ceasing; ¹⁸in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹**Do not quench the Spirit**; ²⁰**do not despise prophetic utterances**. ²¹But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-21)

❖ **Does your heart yield to God’s word continually?**

3. Immersion in the word – Comparing Eph 5:18-21 with Col 3:16-4:1 – The Spirit of God uses the word of God to produce the will of God in a believer’s life.

❖ **Are you placing a priority on immersing yourself in God’s word?**

Walking in the Spirit is a moment-by-moment decision to recognize, repent, and confess sin; yield your will to God’s moral will as set forth in His word; and allow the word to richly dwell within you.

The remedy for walking in the flesh (i.e., sinning) is not self-effort. It is Spirit-filling. It is walking in the Spirit. The Spirit enables a life that is in accord with God’s word.

The Spirit is powerful. God’s word is powerful. Therefore, the believer in the most dire, seemingly hopeless circumstances can be encouraged, comforted, and changed as the Spirit applies the word to our heart.

❖ **Is your life characterized by the flesh or the Spirit?**

How can we discern if we are filled with the Spirit, or walking in the Spirit? God has given us two ways, one negative and one positive.

¹⁹Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal 5:19-21)

“Evident” means made visible as an external manifestation to the senses. The Greek reads “evident now are the deeds of the flesh...” emphasizing the visibility of these deeds. A rebellious heart is demonstrated in external, rebellious actions.

The Holy Spirit never led anyone into sexual sin, idolatry, relationship strife, or intoxicated license. If you are involved in sexual immorality (heart or deed), exalt anything above God, have heart or actual broken relationships, or lose control of yourself, then you are not filled with the Spirit. You are not walking in the Spirit. You are walking in the flesh.

Maybe you cannot discern if the deeds of the flesh are present or not. But you can discern if the fruit of the Spirit is present or not.

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:22-23)

“But” contrasts the deeds of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. This is a completely opposite life of the evident deeds of the flesh. As opposed to the external manifestations of sin in the deeds of the flesh, the fruit of the Spirit is internal. A changed heart that is opposite of the world.

These are the “fruit” of the Spirit. “Fruit” is singular, not plural. One fruit manifested by nine characteristics. A supernatural response to the world, the flesh, and the devil.

❖ **How might the absence of these qualities be used as a barometer for Spirit-filling?**

So, we are filled with the Spirit for power to live in a way that is honoring to God, and we can discern clearly either negatively or positively if we are filled or not.

We have been set free from the power of sin (Rom 6). Yet we still fight the sin nature (Rom 7). We are free to choose righteousness but require the power to do it. The Spirit gives this power as He applies the word to our heart. Not only can we choose righteous one time, but we can grow and change at the heart level.

❖ **Are you discouraged with your walk? Take hope because of who God is, what He has done for you in Christ, and what He continues to do through the Spirit and word.**

Conclusion

As you seek to address your own difficult life issues and struggle with sin there are several impactful truths to remember. If you have surrendered your life to Christ, then you have been made new, freed from the power of sin, and indwelt with the Holy Spirit. You have been given everything you need for life and godliness. Pursuing a vibrant relationship with Christ through the Bible and prayer is a critical part of spiritual growth.

Additional Study

Read Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16-16; and Psalm 119:9-11 and answer the following:

What can God's word do powerfully in your heart?

Are you treasuring God's word in your heart?

What does/would treasuring God's word look like?

Read Psalm 119 each day for one week.

What are all the different names that God gives to the Bible? What can you learn for how to view the Bible from this?

How is the Bible described? What can you learn for how to view the Bible from this? What place should the Bible have in your life?

How is the heart of the righteous man toward the Bible described?

Read Psalm 19 each day for one week.

What are the two types of revelation spoken of in this Psalm? How are they different? What is the impact of each on the recipient of the revelation?

What are the different names given to the Bible in Psalm 19:7-9? What can you learn for how to view the Bible from this?

What does the Bible do to the believer from Psalm 19:7-9? Are you experiencing this? Why or why not?

Does Psalm 19:14 describe your heart? If not, what needs to change so that it does?