

## Topics in Practical Theology – Lesson 1 – Overview and Spirit Filling

Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School

Randy Thompson

12 August 2007

Theology comes from the Greek *theos* meaning “God,” and *logos* meaning “word”; hence, a word or discussion about God or simply the study of God. However, theology can be understood to be the general study of Christian doctrine – the discovery, organization, and presentation of the truths about God. To the degree that our beliefs and behavior align with God's will, as revealed in His Word, we will be good theologians. This must be the ultimate goal of the study of God.

A recent popular movie is quoted as saying concerning the Bible, “This book doesn’t have any answers.” (Homer Simpson in “The Simpsons Movie”) Yet, nothing can be farther from the truth (Psa 19:7-11; 119:9, 11; 2 Tim 3:15; Heb 4:12).

Understanding theology not only will help us to mature as Christians, it helps us to serve others. If people are led astray by false teaching, we will be better equipped to help them. If someone is struggling with various life issues, we will be better able to bring the Word to bear on their circumstances and direct them toward particular passages of relevance. By studying theology, we are enabled to teach ourselves and others what God says, thus fulfilling the second part of the Great Commission, "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

There are several presuppositions that are required if we are to adequately study theology.

1. Absolute truth exists and the only source of truth concerning God is the Bible.
2. The Bible must be approached with a plane, literal, grammatical, historical hermeneutic.
3. Since the student of theology is attempting to understand what the Bible, it is necessary that the student be a Spirit led believer (1 Cor 2:10-16).
4. Since God has progressively revealed more truth about Himself and His plan through the ages, it is important to understand that the New Testament takes priority over the Old Testament as the source of doctrine.

There are four general categories of theology.

1. Systematic Theology is the study of theology by examining the totality of Scripture and presenting doctrines by coalescing the whole. It is a correlation of the total structure of biblical doctrine. This systematization of Bible doctrine is not found categorized in defined topics in the Bible but rather has developed over the years. In systematic theology all major doctrines can be grouped into approximately ten subcategories:

Bibliology – Doctrine of the Bible

Theology Proper – Doctrine of God including the Trinity and God the Father

Christology – Doctrine of Christ

Pneumatology – Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

Angelology – Doctrine of Angels, Satan, and Fallen Angels

Anthropology – Doctrine of Man

Hamartiology – Doctrine of Sin

Soteriology – Doctrine of Salvation

Ecclesiology – Doctrine of the Church

Eschatology – Doctrine of Last Things

2. Biblical Theology uses the Bible as the only source of information. It is the study of theology which considers the historical circumstances and development of a doctrine as God progressively revealed Himself through the ages. Biblical theology emphasizes the study of a particular era or writer. For example Old Testament Theology, Pauline Theology, Petrine Theology, or Johannine Theology.
3. Dogmatic Theology uses as its primary source the dogmas (creeds, statements of faith, or teachings) of particular groups. For example Calvinistic theology, Arminian theology, Catholic theology, or charismatic theology.
4. Historical Theology is the study of doctrine as it developed in stages by individuals or groups throughout church history focusing on what others throughout history have said. For example patristic theology, medieval theology, reformation theology, or modern theology.

While not one of the main groupings of theological study, another group could be “practical” theology which would be the study of such things as love, money, marriage, parenting, etc. Over the next several weeks we will look into several topics of practical theology.

Overview and Spirit Filling  
 Spiritual Warfare  
 Worship  
 Decision Making  
 Spiritual Gifts  
 Body Life  
 The Poor  
 Prayer

## **The Spirit Filled Life**

Pneumatology is the category of systematic theology that deals with the Holy. Among the Spirit’s work in the believer is:

1. regenerating (Titus 3:5) which happens once and imparts a new nature (2 Cor 5:17) and new life (1 John 2:29)
2. indwelling (1 Cor 6:19) which happens once and is permanent (John 14:16).
3. baptizing (1 Cor 12:13) which happens once and is the act where the believer is united with Christ in His death (Rom 6:1-10) and into union with other believers in the body of Christ.
4. sealing (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30) which happens once at conversion and guarantees the believer belongs to God.
5. filling (Eph 5:18) meaning being controlled by the Spirit which we are commanded to allow to happen to us repeatedly.

The Spirit’s works of regenerating, indwelling, baptizing, and sealing, are one time events that happen at the moment one repents of their sins and transfers their trust completely to Jesus for their forgiveness of sin – receiving Him as their Lord and Savior. Only the Spirit’s work of filling is something that believers are commanded to do.

The apostle Paul often uses the “walk” metaphor to describe the Christian’s relationship with God.

1. Rom 6:4 walk in newness of life
2. Rom 8:4 walk according to the Spirit
3. Rom 14:15 walk according to love
4. 1 Cor 3:3 not like mere men
5. 1 Cor 7:17 as the Lord has assigned to each one
6. 2 Cor 4:2 walking in the truth
7. 2 Cor 5:7 we walk by faith
8. Gal 5:16, 25 walk by the Spirit
9. Gal 6:16 walk not boastingly
10. Eph 2:2 walk not in previous sins
11. Eph 2:10 walk in good works which God prepared beforehand
12. Eph 4:1 walk in a manner worthy our calling
13. Eph 4:17 walk not as the Gentiles (in the futility of their mind)
14. Eph 5:2 walk in love
15. Eph 5:8 walk as children of light
16. Eph 5:15 walk as wise men
17. Phil 3:17 walk according to the pattern you have in us (Paul)
18. Col 1:10 walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects...
19. Col 2:6 walk in Him (Christ Jesus the Lord)
20. 1 Thess 2:12 walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you
21. 1 Thess 4:1 walk according to the Scriptures in order to please God

Paul also describes the battle which rages in the Christian with the flesh.

For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Rom 7:22-23

Paul also describes that it is the indwelling Holy Spirit that provides the power to wage war with the flesh.

For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. (Gal 5:17)

Paul goes on to state that the key to living a life that is pleasing to God is to “walk in the Spirit.”

Walk in the Spirit and you will not carry out the lusts of the flesh. Gal 5:16

“Walking in the Spirit” is also described as “being filled with the Spirit.”

“Ephesians 5:18-20 describes the Spirit-filled life. It is one of the most important aspects of the Christian walk. Without the constant control of the Spirit of God, the believer cannot live by God’s standard.” *Living in the Spirit: Be Not Drunk with Wine--Part 1* by John MacArthur Tape GC 1936

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

The contrast between being drunk and being filled with the Spirit is clear. Someone who is drunk is under the influence of alcohol – they have surrendered control of themselves to alcohol. Believers should only be controlled by the Holy Spirit. The Greek statement here (pleroo) is a passive, present

tense imperative (something that we are commanded to let happen to us on a continuous basis). It is literally *let yourselves be kept being filled with the Spirit*.

Used of the wind filling a sail and thereby carrying the ship along. To be filled with the Spirit is to be moved along in our Christian life by God Himself... MacArthur NT Commentary: Ephesians

...carries the idea of permeation, and was used of salt's permeating meat in order to flavor and preserve it. God wants His Holy Spirit to so permeate the lives of His children that everything they think, say, and do will reflect His divine presence. MacArthur NT Commentary: Ephesians

...the connotation of total control... To be filled in this sense is to be totally dominated and controlled, and it is the most important sense for believers. MacArthur NT Commentary: Ephesians

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 our life to God so that it is the Holy Spirit is controlling our words, worship, reactions, and relationships.

The filling of the Holy Spirit is brought about by:

1. Repent 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.  
And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Eph 4:30
2. Yield to God in every area of life – An attitude of the heart that yields to God's Word.  
Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. 1 Thess 5:19
3. Immersion in the Word – Comparing Eph 5:18-21 and 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.
  - The Word in the heart and mind is the handle by which the Spirit turns the will. The two (being filled with the Spirit and letting the Word dwell richly in us) are the same spiritual reality viewed from two different sides. To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by His Word. To have the Word dwelling richly is to be controlled by the Spirit. The MacArthur NT Commentary - Colossians and Philemon

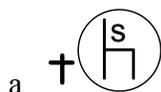
	<b>Ephesians 5:18-21</b>	<b>Colossians 3:16-4:1</b>
Command	And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit	Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you
Words	speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs	with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms <i>and hymns and spiritual songs</i>
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...

The results of being filled:

1. Edifying words (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16)
2. Pure worship (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16)
3. Godly reactions (Eph 5:20; Col 3:17)
4. Righteous relationships (Eph 5:21; Col 3:18-4:1)
5. Christ-like character (Gal 5:22-23)
6. Abundant fruitfulness (John 15:1-5)
7. Illumination and teaching (John 16:12-15; 1 Cor 2:9-13; 1 John 2:27)
8. Prayer (Rom 8:26-27) and answered prayer (John 15:7)
9. Assurance of salvation (Rom 8:16)
10. Effective witness (Acts 2)

#### Heart Thrones Illustration

- a. This person is not a Christian. He has not repented of his sins and trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. He is on the throne of his heart and he rules his own life. Jesus is outside of his life and he has no relationship with Him.
- b. This person is a Christian. He has repented of his sins and has received Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior by faith. He has an eternal relationship with Jesus. However, at this time he is sinning and is not allowing the Holy Spirit to control him. He is not filled with the Spirit. He has put himself back on the throne of his life.
- c. This person is a Christian. He has repented of his sins and has received Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior by faith. He has an eternal relationship with Jesus. He is yielded to Jesus and has placed Jesus on the throne of his life. Jesus rules his life. He is filled with the Spirit.



## Light Bulb Illustration

- a. This person is not “plugged in”. He does not have a relationship with Jesus. He does not have access to the power of the Holy Spirit and is not freed from sin.
- b. This person is “plugged in” but is “turned off”. He has trusted Jesus as his Lord and Savior but he has taken control of his life back and is not living under the control of the Holy Spirit.
- c. This person is “plugged in” and is “turned on”. He is living under the control and power of the Holy Spirit.



a.



b.



c.

## Summary

- a. Just as we are unable in our own strength to save ourselves from sin, we are unable in our own strength to walk in manner that glorifies God. Only as we are filled with the Spirit are we able to obey consistently.
- b. A walk in the Spirit is a moment by moment decision to recognize, repent, and confess sin; to yield our will to God’s will; and to allow the Word to richly dwell in us.
- c. When my family, friends, and co-workers see me, do they see a Spirit controlled believer or a carnal hypocrite giving lip service to my faith?
- d. Take some time to pray asking God to show you areas in your life that are not pleasing to Him. Write these areas down on a sheet of paper. Determine to repent and confess them restoring your relationship with God. Then determine to yield your life to God completely in these areas.

Topic in practical theology I would like to study: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

-----

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the key to living the Christian ?
2. What does it mean to be “Spirit filled”?
3. Discuss what is the effect of living a Spirit filled life.
4. What is one roadblock to living the Spirit-controlled Christian life?