

Led by the Spirit - Part 2

SPIRIT-FILLED

Ephesians 5:15-21

STIMULATE

** Today we continue in our six part series which has been entitled “**Led by the Spirit**”. In part one we learned the one place that the Holy Spirit of God and Christ would never lead us. Where was that?

He will never lead us into sin! If we find ourselves in a sinful pattern or decision, we can know that it was not the Holy Spirit of God and Christ who lead us there.
cf. Matthew 6:13 and James 1:13-15

** Where will the Holy Spirit always lead us?

Into the expressed will of God! We learned last time that the abiding concern for our Lord Jesus Christ during His life here on earth was to do the will of His Father. cf. John 4:34, 5:30, 6:38, Matthew 26:42

** Our first five studies in this series are dedicated to learning the “expressed will of God” from His Word. What did we learn last time about God’s expressed will for our lives?

God’s will is that we are to be **SAVED!** The only reason we enjoy our saving relationship with Jesus Christ today is that it was God’s will. cf. Titus 3:5, 2Timothy 1:8-9

MOTIVATE

** If I have been so blessed to be called by God and saved by His grace in accordance with His will; am I faithfully doing the will of God each day by obeying His Word?

That question introduces us to the second key to knowing that we are “**Led by the Spirit**”. It should be our food to do the will of Him who gave us life and sent us into the world as a witness for the gospel. cf. John 4:34

** How can I be more successful in obeying the Word of God? How can I walk each day knowing I am in the center of His will? For the answer, turn with me to Ephesians 5:15-21 and let’s learn the second key to being “**Led by the Spirit**”, which is living everyday “**Spirit-filled**”.

Spirit-filled

Read passage (V.15-17) (V.18-21)

Opening Prayer

INVESTIGATE

** Are you aware of the things which are trying to control your life? As Christians we have already seen the importance of being **Saved** as an expressed fulfillment of God’s will in our lives, but what are some of the things in this world that can take over who we are and how we act?

1. Physical discomfort - illness/injury
2. Peer pressure
3. Greed

4. Substances (Alcohol, drugs, food, coffee)
5. Self-centered attitudes
6. Grumbling and complaining

** If we wish to avoid that list of negative influence on our marriages and on our relationships with others around us, what must we be willing to do? If we hope to live a “**Spirit-filled**” life in the center of God’s will, we need to listen to the heart of the apostle Paul in our passage for today. He is going to give us seven characteristics of living out the Spirit-filled life. Our joy is going to come from learning these marvelous truths and then applying them to our walk with the Lord.

Let’s begin our passage for today -

V.15 ** Why does Paul draw a connection between our opening verse for today and the passage that precedes it?

Because we are "children of light" and the world around us is lost in "darkness", we must be careful how we walk! But it goes even further back, if we are going to be "imitators of God" we are going to have to be careful. cf. Ephesians 5:1 and 8

** What does the word "careful" bring to mind when applied to our daily walk with the Lord?

The phrase "be careful" is derived from two words in the Greek - blepho (to look at) and akribos (with exactness). Paul is calling for us to look at our daily walk with the Lord with an attitude of exacting caution, to be on guard or beware of the influences around us.

All see - 1Corinthians 3:10-14

** Back in Ephesians 5:15 - to what are we applying all of this exacting caution?

Our daily "walk", remember this is speaking of our conduct and should be viewed in moment by moment bytes! This requires a serious effort on our part, so that we might build upon the foundation of our faith with a daily conduct which brings glory to God among His angels as they observe our life. (Luke 15:7 and 1Peter 1:12)

Hopefully that is a sobering thought! This is the first characteristic of living the Spirit-filled life, **1) We are careful about how we walk.**

** What contrast does Paul choose to use to illustrate the nature of our walk and to also give us the second characteristic of living the Spirit-filled life?

It is to be: **2) “not as unwise”**

Psalm 14:1 "there is no God"

Proverbs 1:7 "despise wisdom and instruction"

Proverbs 14:9 "mock sin"

"but as wise"

Proverbs 12:1 "loves discipline and knowledge"

Proverbs 13:1 "accepts his father's discipline"

Proverbs 14:1 "builds her house"

Proverbs 15:1-2 Wisdom speaks - "a gentle answer turns away wrath"

** How does this second characteristic work towards building stronger relationships, even within our marriages?

God has given us His wisdom in His word, if we will employ it, our relationships will be blessed and reflect His image, we will be imitating God!

V.16 ** For the third characteristic, let's look at verse 16. While we are walking carefully and wisely, of what are we to be good stewards?

Time! Lit. **3)** **"Redeeming the time"** - Paul did not use *chronos* (the term used for clock time), but rather he chose *kairos* which denotes a measured, allocated season or epoch. He is speaking of our opportunity in this life as Christians. We are given, by God's grace, new opportunities everyday to display our careful and wise walk.

In witnessing to the lost and by encouraging, admonishing, blessing, and strengthening our spouses, or brothers and sisters, we should make the most of our opportunities.

** What reason does Paul give us for being concerned about how we spend our time?

"because the days are evil" - The world around us is evil and will get worse. We may find ourselves running out of time to live for Christ. The church at Ephesus disappeared during the second century because they did not redeem the time, but rather left their first love (Revelation 2:2-4). They caved in to the evil system around them and did not take their stand for Christ.

** What do we know about the evil of our world today?

It too is going to get worse! cf. 2Timothy 3:1-5 We must not waste our time in counter productive words or actions with our spouse, but instead work together as a unified witness to the love of Christ. They must see Him in us!

V.17 ** The fourth characteristic of living the Spirit-filled life" is found in verse seventeen. Do you see it?

4) **"do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is"**

** Paul says "So then" - because we are being careful, because we are wise, because we are making the most of our opportunity, we should not be foolish. In the absence of foolishness, our lives and our marriages should be based upon knowing God's will, what is it?

Our sanctification - 1Thessalonians 4:3

Our submission - 1Peter 2:13-15

Our suffering - 1Peter 3:17

Our satisfaction - 1Thessalonians 5:18

and from today's passage

Our sobriety - Ephesians 5:18

V.18 ** This verse introduces us to the fifth characteristic for this study. We have seen:

1) we are careful how we walk, 2) we have wisdom from God's word, 3) we make the most of our opportunity, 4) we understand God's will, and now **5)** **"we choose what influences us"**.

** What type of things should we avoid, so that they are not able to influence us in the wrong way?

Those things (like wine), that given too wide a door of opportunity, will influence us to drift away from God's desire for our life.

** Do you recall from our study in Ephesians the meaning of "be filled", which translates the Greek word pleroo?

It means to be moved or controlled by something. We saw in that study how sorrow, fear or rage can all be used to control our words and actions. Let's look a little closer at how this concept is represented in Scripture.

2Peter 1:21 - "men moved by the Holy Spirit", like wind filling a sail.

Our lives, under the control of the Holy Spirit, are driven along in the center of God's will. We must not allow ourselves to be controlled by anything other than our gracious God. cf. 1Corinthians 6:12, Matthew 26:69-75, Acts 4:8-12

** What is the contrast drawn by Paul in this verse?

Drunkenness vs. Control by the Holy Spirit.

** Why would he say that to a group of Christians?

Ephesus was the location of the Temple of Diana, where pagan worship of false Gods included drunken orgies. The drunker they got, the closer they felt they were to "god". Paul is simply correcting the error and calling believers to be different in their worship. The choice is ours to make!

V.19-20

** In the next two verses we will learn the sixth characteristic of living the Spirit-filled life. We are also going to learn the quickest path to allowing the Holy Spirit to control our hearts. First of all, what are the two manifestations in our life that we are under the Holy Spirit's control?

1. We sing! God has placed a new song in our heart and we cannot hold back from singing His praises. cf. Psalm 33:1-3, Psalm 40:1-3

** How do we know that these songs are sincere?

We are "making melody with our heart to the Lord". It is the genuine praise for God which flows out from our regenerate hearts when they are controlled by the Holy Spirit!

V.20 ** What is the second manifestation in our life that we are under the Holy Spirit's control?

2. We give thanks! Unsaved people, under the control of their flesh do not! cf. Romans 1:21

** How often are we to give thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ?

"always giving thanks for all things" Remember - 1Thessalonians 5:18!

** So the sixth characteristic of living the Spirit-filled life is **6)**"To be singing praises to God with a thankful heart", but what is the quickest path to allowing the Holy Spirit this much control of our hearts?

Consume God's word - allow it to change us from the inside out. Colossians 3:16 lists the exact same results, this time from letting "the word of Christ richly dwell within" us. This stands as a direct parallel to the Holy Spirit controlling our lives.

V.21 ** Finally, let's look at the seventh characteristic for today. What is it, based upon verse 21?

7)"Be subject to one another" - hupotasso (lit. to arrange or rank under) This should be the defining characteristic of a Christian. If we are imitating the Lord Jesus Christ, we will desire submission to be THE attitude of our hearts. cf. Philippians 2:3-8

** What motive does Paul present to us for doing this?

It is "in the fear of Christ". If we are truly His children, we will obey out of reverential awe!

** What impact would that have on our marriages if we all lived out that principle with our spouses?

With everyone serving each other, we would truly reflect Christ and His church to the world as they observed our homes and marriages.

EXTRICATE

** Alright then, let's review what Paul has shown us in this study. What are the seven characteristics of living the Spirit-filled life?

1. We are careful how we walk
2. We have wisdom from God's word
3. We make the most of our opportunity
4. We understand the will of God
5. We choose what influences us
6. We sing praise to God with thankful hearts
7. We are in subjection to one another

DELINEATE

** What was the motive for this kind of behavior?

"in the fear of Christ" - reverential awe!

EVALUATE

** As you look into your own heart, do you see a desire for the Holy Spirit to have absolute control of who you are, and thus be "**Spirit-filled**"? Do you wish to see more of these characteristics displayed in your daily walk? If Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior, out of worship for Him are you willing to be "**Led by the Spirit**" into making significant changes in your heart attitudes to become a child of God who imitates his or her spiritual Father?

ACTIVATE

** For us to apply all of what we have seen today, we are going to have to do two things. One - do not focus on the role of our partner, how he or she is doing. And two - expose ourselves willingly to God's Holy Spirit that

He might have free reign with our lives. May we become the husbands and wives, or brother and sisters in the Lord; that He desires us to be for the sake of His glory!

Closing prayer