



## Connection to Session 11

Paul was writing to a congregation not just to individuals. The expectation was for all believers as a group to be walking wisely ... together.

## Introduction/Opening

Imagine moving from a mediocre team to a team known for excellence. You are excited about making the move so you can be part of a winning group. You tell everyone how excited you are and how much you like being part of a group that holds to such high standards. Then it happens. Your new team sits you down to let you know that excellence was not something to be giddy about but something to be lived. They challenged the new team member to stop looking at excellence as some unattainable curiosity and to start thinking like a champion.

The Spirit-filled life is like that; it is simply the way life is meant to be lived. It is not meant to be some higher level, rare achievement for spiritual hall-of-famers. When Paul mentioned being filled by the Spirit, he includes it as one phrase in the middle of a paragraph that starts with making good use of our time and then goes on to talk about singing in church. Being controlled by the Spirit is not meant to be mysterious or rare, but to be the norm for every believer.

## Outline

1. Live Wisely (Eph. 5:15-17)  
Paul defined wise living in terms of three actions. These three actions point to a stewardship that comes through understanding the grace of God found in salvation.
  - a) Pay careful attention to how you live
  - b) Make the most of your time
  - c) Understand the Lord's will
  
2. Live Willfully (Eph. 5:18)
  - a) Being Spirit-filled is contrasted with being drunk, which leads to reckless living. A person who is filled with the Spirit is just the opposite of that, not out-of-control or reckless. One aspect of the fruit of the Spirit is self-control (Gal. 5:23). When we are filled with the Spirit we are able to say no to temptation and yes to obedience.

- b) Think of being Spirit-filled as being under the influence of the Spirit to the point that we are no longer in control of our thoughts or actions (like being under the influence of alcohol). We are not put in a trance by the Spirit. We can't blame the Spirit for not giving us enough strength or not pushing us hard enough. The Spirit gives us freedom to obey. We still have a will that has to be engaged. We are responsible and able when filled with the Spirit to overcome the influence of the flesh (Gal. 5:16).
  - c) This being filled is more than just being indwelt by the Spirit, which is already true for all Christians.
  - d) This is a command; it's not optional. We are to continually submit to the fullness of what God's Spirit wants to do in our lives.
3. Live Worshipfully (Eph. 5:19-21)
- a) All of the phrases in this section start with participles (-ing words) that show the expected expressions of obedience to the command to be filled by the Spirit in v. 18. Verses 18-21 are actually one sentence.
  - b) The Spirit-filled life is for a body of believers, not just an individual to experience.

## Conclusion

We have seen already in Ephesians that God wants us to experience fullness, to comprehend the length and width and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge (3:18-19). We are told in John's Gospel that God "gives the Spirit without measure" (John 3:34). There is no half-way with God. And there should be no mediocrity in our devotion to Him. And remember, the Spirit is not an "it," like liquid in a glass. The Holy Spirit is a Person. He is God. God wants us to be filled with Himself! It is a command, yes, but it's also an invitation to the most significant and fulfilling relationship imaginable. Do you have this kind of relationship with God? You can and you should. It is the way your life is meant to be lived.

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