

Being Filled with the Spirit, Abiding in Christ, and Bearing Spiritual Fruit

Jesus said: "I am the vine, you are the branches. **He who ABIDES in me and I in him will bear much FRUIT**; for apart from me you can do nothing." **John 15:5**

"....understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation;
but **be FILLED with the Spirit.**" **Ephesians 5:17-18**

There is a great deal of confusion about the filling of the Holy Spirit, and also about abiding in Christ, and how to bear spiritual fruit. **To "abide" in Jesus simply means to remain in a close relationship and constant fellowship with Him - to stay connected.** Jesus came to live in your heart when you received Him by faith. **He dwells in you by His Spirit - the Holy Spirit.** You have fellowship with Him through prayer (just talking to Him) and as you read His word (He talks to you). If you have become too busy, and "burned out" trying to do the Lord's work, or just trying to handle all your cares in your own strength, you may be suffering fatigue and depression because you have not been spending enough time just "resting in the Lord" and abiding in Christ. You must learn to be still, and know that He is God. In the natural realm, a branch abiding in the vine does not have to "**stress out**" about bearing fruit. If it is fastened to the vine, and getting its nourishment from the vine, the fruit will just naturally grow. The fruit that God wants to grow in our lives is also called "the fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23), because **the Holy Spirit is the power source for the growth of this fruit as you abide in Jesus.** Jesus promises that the spiritual fruit of His JOY will remain in you, and that your JOY will be full, if you abide in Him.

- **I John 4:13 & 15** "By this we know that **we ABIDE in Him**, and He in us, because **He has given us of His SPIRIT.**"
- **John 15:4-5, 7 & 11** "**Abide in Me**, and I in you. As the branch cannot **bear FRUIT** of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. **He who ABIDES in Me**, and I in him, **bears much FRUIT**; for without Me you can do nothing." "If you **ABIDE in Me**, and My WORDS abide in YOU, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you." "These things I have spoken to you, that **My JOY may remain in you**, and that your JOY may be full."
- **Psalms 46:10** "Be STILL, and know that I am God...."
- **Matthew 11:28-29** "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and **I will give you REST**. Take My yoke upon you and **LEARN from Me**, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find **REST for your SOULS.**"

Some people think the filling of the Holy Spirit is a one-time experience, and therefore do not examine themselves on a daily basis to see if they are **continually ALLOWING the Holy Spirit to be in CONTROL** of their lives or not. We are COMMANDED to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is NOT a ONE-TIME experience, but a continuous, moment-by-moment YIELDING of ourselves to the Holy Spirit's control in our lives. The literal translation of the Greek is "**keep being continually filled**" with the Spirit. One of the results of being CONTROLLED by the Holy Spirit is having **JOY in your heart** ("singing and making melody in your HEART"). **All the FRUIT of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control** will be abundant in your life as you allow the Holy Spirit to control your heart, mind, and actions. This is what Jesus meant by our lives producing fruit that will glorify God the Father. "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit" (John 15:8).

- **Galatians 5:22-23** "But the FRUIT (evidence, outworking) of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), kindness, goodness (meekness, humility), faithfulness, gentleness, self-control....."
- **Ephesians 5:18-19** ".....**be FILLED with the Spirit**, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **SINGING** and **making melody in your HEART** to the Lord."
- **Ephesians 3:17-19** "That CHRIST may DWELL in your HEARTS through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in **LOVE (a fruit of the Spirit)**, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the **LOVE of Christ** which passes knowledge; **that you may be FILLED with all the FULLNESS of God.**"

What does it mean to be "FILLED with the fullness of God"? This is the same as **being FILLED with the Holy Spirit**. "Filled" means "controlled by." In Ephesians 5:18, being DRUNK is contrasted with BEING FILLED with the Spirit. INSTEAD of being drunk, which is to be "UNDER the INFLUENCE" of alcohol, we are to be **CONTROLLED by** or "**UNDER the INFLUENCE**" of **the Holy Spirit**. Again, this is NOT a ONE-TIME experience, but a continuous, daily, even moment-by-moment YIELDING of ourselves to the Holy Spirit's control in our lives.

There are hindrances to the filling of the Spirit. If your heart and mind are filled with anxiety, anger, fear, doubt, selfishness, pride, or any other "works" or "lusts of the flesh" (Galatians 5:14-21), those attitudes will control you. If you allow your heart and mind to be controlled and filled with God's Spirit, the evidence ("fruit") will be seen in your life, and you will be filled with his love, joy, peace, and all the fruit of the Spirit. Your life will exhibit **the fruits of the Spirit which are in essence the character qualities of Jesus Christ**. God's primary desire and plan for our lives is for us to be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29).

Another hindrance is failure to be honest with yourself, also known as being in denial, or the Bible calls it deceiving ourselves. Failure to be honest with others (the Bible calls it LYING) is another hindrance, because lying is also one of the "works of the flesh". The Holy Spirit is known as the Spirit of Truth, so to be filled with the Spirit of Truth, you would need to be truthful with yourself, as well as with others and with God. The way to **get honest with God is by confessing your sins according to I John 1:9**, and allowing Him to cleanse you of all that is unrighteous and blocking the work of His Spirit. If you have received Jesus as your Savior, and have made Him Lord (boss, the One in control) of your life, and still don't have His love, joy, and peace, it may be because of obstacles or barriers in your life that **block the flow of God's Spirit**. These obstacles can be unresolved feelings of fear, low self esteem, inadequacy, guilt, hurt, anger, hatred, bitterness and resentment, or some "secret sin" which we have "stuffed" or hidden and not given up entirely to God. **To be filled with the Holy Spirit**, you may need to ask God if there are any things or areas in your life that are **blocking the producing of the fruit of His Spirit in your life**. Once you clear up these obstacles and blockages in your life, whether through self examination and prayer, good biblical counseling, or working a recovery program, **the Holy Spirit can FLOW through you freely to produce His FRUIT**. The Holy Spirit flowing through you like rivers of living water (John 7:37-39) not only continually washes you clean, but flows out to others in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and every other Christlike quality.

Many well-meaning Christians struggle so hard to have these Christlike qualities (the fruit of the Spirit) in their lives, but they fail to realize that the fruit must come from within, from the Holy Spirit dwelling in their hearts. **It is not by struggling, but by SURRENDERING**, that the Holy Spirit is allowed to fill us and produce His fruit. Jesus said that without Him, we can do nothing, and by that He meant that only His Spirit working within us can produce His fruit in our lives. You must completely surrender your life to Jesus Christ, learn to abide in him, work out and resolve the barriers of sin and dysfunction from your past, and **the fruit of the Spirit will come automatically. Anything you do "apart from Him" is "in the flesh" and worthless.**

- **James 3:14-17** "But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above (it's not from God), but is earthly, sensual (of the "flesh"), demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing will be there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield (humble, submissive), **FULL of mercy and good FRUITS**, without partiality and without hypocrisy."

God wants us to be bearing spiritual fruit in our lives, and **Jesus said if we would abide in Him, we would produce this fruit.** The evidence of a person being filled with the Holy Spirit is the fruit of the Spirit, not the gifts of the Spirit, as some groups claim, and this is where much of the confusion comes from. "By their fruit you will know them," Jesus said, not "by their gifts." Jesus also said they will know we are His disciples by our love for one another, and love is a fruit of the Spirit, not a gift (see I Corinthians 13). In fact, **the evidences or proof of being filled with the Spirit** are mentioned right in the verses following **the commandment to be filled**, but we don't usually read it that way. Ephesians 5:17-21 is all one long sentence, telling us what being filled with the Holy Spirit should result in: singing and praising God in our hearts, being thankful in all things, and being submissive to one another. Ephesians 5:22-33, and 6:1-9 are a continuation of the same thought, as Paul breaks down how **being submissive and having God's love in our hearts** will show itself in husband and wife relationships, children and parent relationships, and even employer and employee (servant and master) relationships. Therefore, a husband who is not loving his wife as Christ loved the church cannot claim to be filled with the Spirit, no matter what "gifts" of the Spirit he may have. A wife who is not submissive to her husband, or a child who is rebellious and disobedient to his parents cannot claim to be filled with the Spirit, no matter what gifts they may have received at one time, and no matter how much **they claim to be "Spirit-filled"** according to their church or denomination.

- **John 13:35** "By this **ALL men will KNOW that you are My disciples, if you have LOVE** for one another."
- **John 15:8-9** "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; **so you will PROVE to be My disciples.** As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My LOVE."
- **Ephesians 5:18-26** "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but **be filled with the Spirit**, speaking to one another psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **SUBMITTING** to one another in the fear of God. **Wives, SUBMIT to your own husbands, as to the Lord..... Husbands, LOVE your wives, just as Christ also LOVED the church** and gave Himself for it....."
- **I Corinthians 13:1-8** "Though I speak with the **tongues** of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have **the gift of prophecy**, and understand all mysteries and all **knowledge**, and though I have all **faith**, so that I could remove mountains, but **have not LOVE, I am nothing**..... Love suffers long (is patient) and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up (with pride); does not behave rudely, does not seek its own (is not selfish), is not provoked (not easily irritated), thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails."

The "Love Chapter" of the Bible, I Corinthians 13 tells us what love is, and also what it is not. A careful study of this description of love shows us that **it includes the fruit of the Spirit**, although some are described from the negative side: **love is NOT puffed up with pride** (fruit of goodness, also called meekness, or humility), **does NOT behave rudely** (fruit of gentleness, kindness), does not seek its own (is not selfish), is not provoked (doesn't get easily irritated, fruit of patience, gentleness, self-control), and thinks no evil (fruit of faithfulness). Love suffers long (is patient) and is kind (fruit of patience, kindness), and so forth. Someone behaving rudely, or puffed up with pride, or acting in an unkind manner would

obviously NOT be filled with the Spirit, since these things are the opposite of the fruit of the Spirit. Again, contrary to much wrong teaching, the evidence of a person being "Spirit-filled" is the fruit of the Spirit (especially LOVE), not the gifts of the Spirit. At least four "spiritual gifts" are mentioned in I Corinthians 13:1-8, and they are: speaking in tongues, prophecy, knowledge and faith, but verses 2-3 say that **without LOVE, they are NOTHING** (worthless). The Corinthian church had plenty of "gifts" (see chapters 12 and 14), but Paul said they were carnal (fleshly), and not "spiritual" people (I Corinthians 3:1-3)

The confusion about the Holy Spirit usually comes from people basing their beliefs on experiences and "traditions of men" (what this or that denomination teaches) rather than on a thorough study of the word of God. The Bible says **you receive the Holy Spirit the moment you accept Jesus as your Savior**. I John 4:13 and 15, "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God" has the Spirit of God dwelling in them. Romans 10:9-10 tells us that **"if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your HEART that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."** Ephesians 1:12-13 says that first, you HEARD the WORD of truth, then you TRUSTED in Christ (put your faith in Him, received Him as Savior), then AS SOON as you BELIEVED, you were SEALED with the Holy Spirit.

- **I John 4:13 & 15** "By this we know that we ABIDE in Him, and **He in us**, because **He has given us of His SPIRIT**. (Verse 15) "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, **God ABIDES (DWELLS) in him**, and he in God."
- **Ephesians 1:12-14** "That we who first **trusted in Christ** should be to the praise of His glory. **In Him you also TRUSTED**, after you **heard the word of truth**, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also **HAVING BELIEVED**, you were **sealed with the Holy Spirit** of promise, who is the **guarantee (pledge)** of our inheritance until **the REDEMPTION of the PURCHASED possession**, to the praise of His glory."

The Holy Spirit is given to us as a down-payment, a deposit, a PROMISE that the full price will be paid. When we accept Christ as Savior, our **spirit** is born again, and the **Holy Spirit comes to live in us** as a **GUARANTEE or promise** until our **BODY** is redeemed and made perfect at the **RESURRECTION** (See Romans 8:22-23, Eph. 4:30). According to Romans 8:9, there is no such thing as a Christian who does not have the Holy Spirit living (dwelling) inside of him. **You CANNOT BE a Christian, you CANNOT be SAVED, and NOT have the Holy Spirit IN YOU**, because it says you are "not His" if you don't have His Spirit in you. The **Holy Spirit of God** comes to **LIVE WITHIN your spirit**, and **YOUR SPIRIT** is "born again" when you receive Jesus as your Savior.

- **Romans 8:9, 11 & 16** "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the **SPIRIT of GOD dwells in you**. Now if anyone **does NOT have the SPIRIT of CHRIST, he is not His** (does not belong to Him)." "But if **the Spirit of Him** who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through **His Spirit who dwells in you**." "**The SPIRIT HIMSELF** bears witness with **our SPIRIT** that we are CHILDREN of God."
- **II Corinthians 1:22** "Who also has **sealed us** and **given us the Spirit** in our **hearts** as a deposit."
- **I John 3:24** "Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that **He abides (lives, dwells) in us, by the Spirit** whom He has given us."
- **I Corinthians 6:17 & 19** "But he who is joined to the Lord is **ONE SPIRIT with Him**." "Or do you not know that your **BODY** is the **TEMPLE** of the **HOLY SPIRIT, who is IN YOU**, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?"
- **I Corinthians 3:16** "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that **the Spirit of God DWELLS IN YOU?**"
- **Galatians 3:26 & 4:6** "For you are all sons of God **through FAITH in Christ Jesus**." "And because you are sons, God has sent forth **the SPIRIT of His Son into your HEARTS**, crying out, 'Abba, Father!'"

- **Ephesians 3:16** "That He would grant (give) you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might **through His SPIRIT in the INNER MAN** (your human spirit)."

But what about verses in the Bible that say to "ask God for the Holy Spirit" or to "wait for the Holy Spirit"? People get in trouble and come up with all sorts of wrong doctrines because they do not **take scripture in its context!** All of the verses that say to "ask for the Spirit" or "wait for the Spirit" are Jesus talking to His disciples BEFORE the Day of Pentecost! The Day of Pentecost was when the Holy Spirit came to dwell in ALL BELIEVERS, and now it happens automatically when a person is saved. In John 14:16-17, Jesus is speaking to the disciples at the Last Supper, BEFORE He has gone to the cross, BEFORE His resurrection, and BEFORE the Day of Pentecost. At this time, the Holy Spirit was only WITH the disciples, but after the Day of Pentecost came, the Holy Spirit would be IN all Believers in Jesus. All that is necessary for a person **to receive the Holy Spirit is FAITH in JESUS CHRIST!** "He who believes in Me" (John 7:38-39); "whoever confesses Jesus is the Son of God" (I John 4:13-15); "having believed in Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1:12-14). We don't have to wait, and we don't have to ask for the Holy Spirit to come to live in us. **The Holy Spirit is actually the One who gives us life and causes us to be born again** (in John 3:6 Jesus calls it being "born of the Spirit").

- **Luke 11:13** "If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"
- **Acts 1:4** "And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, 'which,' He said, 'you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now (speaking of Pentecost)."
- **John 14:16-17** "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth (Holy Spirit), whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for **He dwells with you, and will be IN YOU.**"
- **John 7:38-39** "He who believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, **out of his innermost being (heart) shall flow rivers of living water.**' But this He spoke of **the Spirit**, whom they that believe on Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

When it says, "the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37-39), Jesus was speaking about His death and resurrection, which at this point, was yet in the future (see also John 17:1). **On the Day of Pentecost, AFTER Jesus was "glorified" by His resurrection** and ascension to heaven, the Holy Spirit was GIVEN and continues to be given to ALL WHO BELIEVE in Him. As born-again Christians, we do not need to ask for God to send us the Holy Spirit, or ask for "more of His Spirit" or anything like that. **What He needs is MORE of US!** In other words, we must surrender ALL areas of our lives to the Holy Spirit, and ask Him to take control of our lives, in order to be filled with the Spirit.