***The Mechanics of How to be Filled with the Spirit

Colossians 1:25-29

COL-213***

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2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture is inspired by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

1 Timothy 3:13-14: "But evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. You, however, continue in the things you have learned, and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood, you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus."

Romans 1:18: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."

Our subject is "The Mystery of the Church, segment number 28, in Colossians 1:25-29.

It is a fact of the spiritual life that everyone born into the human race inherits a sin nature from his parents, and thus is automatically a slave of Satan, and evil is his lifestyle. The great King David agonized over his sin condition brought about by his physical birth, and he expressed that in Psalm 51:5, when he said, "Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." However, because of what Christ has done for us, and because of the power system provided for us in the church age (this unique and distinct dispensation of saints), we have a whole new ballgame by which to live, to overcome and to beat the old sin nature.

The apostle Paul referred to that in Romans 6:16-18, when he said, "Do you not know that when you present yourself to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness. But thanks be to God that, though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching (of doctrine) to which you were committed. And having been freed from the sin nature, you became slaves of righteousness."

Freedom from the old sin nature through salvation is a great victory of the church age. The church-age believer, furthermore, we have pointed out, has a spiritual power system provided by God the Father, which enables a Christian to reject sin, and to live a godly life. It enables a human being, who can be so overwhelmed by the sin nature to say, "No" – who has the power to refuse it. Why? Because you grit your teeth? No. Because the sin nature revolts your stomach. It offends you. You have a revulsion toward it because something has been dramatically changed within you. Namely, God Himself has taken up residence within your body. You are now really capable of being a good person.

In Romans 6:19-22, the apostle Paul continues, saying, "I'm speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh (that is, the sin nature). For just as you presented your members, the parts of your bodies as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now you present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Therefore, what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For now, the outcome of those things is dead. But now, having been freed from sin, and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome – eternal life."

**Loss of Shame**

The great tragedy of American society today is the loss of shame. From adults down to young people, people are not ashamed of doing that which is evil. All this began in the 1960s in a youth rebellion generation, who had parents who had certain shame when they violated the principles of godly conduct (of moral conduct) as enunciated in the Word of God. And these people said that what you should be ashamed of is that people are starving, and that people don't have a good place to live, and that people don't have clothing; and that some people have to do without while others have a great deal. And the whole concept of liberal socialism, which religiously was called "the social gospel," came into great impact, and controls thinking today: "You are a good person today, not by whether you keep the moral commandments, but by whether you have the politically correct views of liberalism." That's what makes you good.

If you don't understand that, you'll be appalled by what people in the highest echelons of government, and of the institutional of society, do, and you will say, "Why aren't you ashamed of that? How can you do that thing and think it's all right with God? How can you walk into church with the Bible under one hand, smiling and presenting yourself as a good person? Well, it is because what you do in your moral life no longer is a basis shame. Only what you do in terms of your social concepts – that is what you must be ashamed of. It's a great victory for Satan. And unless you have someone who teaches you the Word of God, I guarantee that you'll be caught up with that. That is the nature of our age. And when you understand that, then you can say, "Now I see why you're not ashamed. It seems that you're very abnormal in that respect." They think they're right on.

However, you and I, as members of the royal family of Christ, in the church age – we are commanded that we are to live a life which reflects the life of God, at the heart of which is holiness. We do what is right, and we do what is fair. Righteousness and justice constitute the holiness of God. And that is our calling every day of our lives.

**Two Commandments for Christians**

For that reason, we have pointed out to you that there are two commandments (and they are commandments which God gives to us as believers) for which we are responsible every day of our lives. And I'll say it again, hopefully so that there'll be no question about it, such that these will ring in your thinking, and they will be very much in the forefront of your consciousness day-by-day.

1. **Be Filled with the Holy Spirit**

The first one is found in Ephesians 5:18. I'll just mentioned this once more in passing. It says, "And do not get drunk with wine for that dissipation, but find your high by being filled with the Spirit." Every day of your life you are to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the concept of spirituality. The Greek word for "filled" here is pléroó (play-ro'-o). This word is in the Greek present tense. What that means (in the present tense in the Greek) is "all the time." All the time you are to be filled with the Spirit. Now the moment you sin; the moment you break a moral law; the moment you step out of the will of God; or, the moment you start getting captivated by the world in some system, you're no longer filled with the Spirit. That is because the word "filled" (pléroó) means controlled. You're filled because you're controlled by it.

Anybody who's described as just being full of football, or something else, means that he's controlled by it; and, he's obsessed with it. Being filled with the Spirit is being under the Spirit's control. It is in the present tense – all the time, every day of your life.

Secondly, it is in the passive voice. You cannot fill yourself. This is something that God has to do for you. How does He do it? 1 John 1:9: "When you confess sin, you come back into fellowship with God the Father, in time, and suddenly, you are under control of that divine Spirit." And most important of all, it's imperative. It's a command. God is not inviting you to be filled with the Spirit. He's saying, "Buster, you better do this. Otherwise, you're going to tear up your life. You better do this, or you're going to tear up your life." And if you don't think this true, then just think through the circle of your acquaintances of people that obviously walked with God. They were under the Spirit of God. Something happened. They broke that contact in time, and all of a sudden, they tore up their lives. And suddenly, they disappeared into the morass of nothingness of the world's system.

Be filled with the Spirit. Spirituality has to do with maintaining one's temporal fellowship with God the Father, so that it is God the Holy Spirit, within us, Who is guiding the believer's life in his conduct and in his service. It means to be in a status of life where God the Father is proud of you as His child. That's what it's all about. God the Father says, "I'm proud of you. You're filled with the Spirit. The Spirit of God is controlling you."

Now, of course, the devil always tears this all up. A few blocks from where we are right now, there's a church that has an outside sign that says: "A Spirit-filled church." Well, that all depends on whether they understand how to be filled with the Spirit. And it all depends upon whether the people are *personally* filled with the Spirit. If the people are filled, then to that extent it's a Spirit-filled church. But most of those who talk about that – the devil has converted all this into emotion.

**Confession**

I'm giving you the techniques. I'm giving you the practical means by which this is done: I can be filled with the Spirit. I can hand over control of my life to Him. I can achieve this at any point in time by simply returning to obedience to God my Father, in whatever way I've stepped out of line. This is based upon 1 John 1:9, spoken to Christians: "If we (Christians) confess (admit – cite) our sins, He (God the Father) is faithful and righteous (faithful – He'll do it every time; and, righteous – because He will forgive the sins because he paid for it through Christ) to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" – to cleanse us from even those things that are sinful but that we have forgotten.

That's a wonderful verse. And it makes it possible for you to fulfill the imperative commandment of God." Don't you ever let a moment of this day go by," your Father says, "where you're not filled with the Spirit, and where you are not walking under My control. And when you step out of line, **fix it**, right then. Persistent carnality is a very dangerous thing. You may say, "Yes, I know that, but I don't want to do that." If you refuse to do it, it will then lead to the next step of your spiritual degeneration, which will be reversionism spiritually, where you will break down more and more. And if it goes far enough, you won't be any earthly use to God. And I guarantee you that He'll just snuff your life out, and take you to heaven. And you can waste a lot of the life that you had, that you could have used for storing treasures in heaven.

So, point number one in this summary is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is required of every believer, every day of his life.

1. **Grow in Grace and Knowledge**

Boy, the younger you are to learn the next one, the more likely you'll have a life without a lot of scars on it. This second one is found in 1 Peter 3:18: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior." Grow in the grace, and the consequent knowledge acquaintance of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This word "grow" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "auxanó" (owx-an'-o). And as we might expect, the Greek tells us what we cannot see in English. This is present tense, which you now may remember: I just told you that in the Greek, present not only means time, but it means what kind of action. What kind of conduct? Constantly growing all the time in doctrinal knowledge and understanding.

Secondly, this time it's active, because you're the one who does it. When you decide to attend church or not to attend church, you have actively chosen to grow, or not to grow. When you sit down and read the Bible, to build upon what you've learned from the pastor-teacher and the services on Sunday, you've chosen to grow. If you don't read your Scriptures at home, you've chosen not to grow. And it also is imperative. This is a divine command. God is not saying, "Dear Christian child, I wish you would grow." He is telling you that you better grow. If you do not grow, you'll shrivel, and you'll be a prime target, because you'll be so spiritually weak for the devil; the world; and, the sin nature. And that's the source of your attack. It'll be Satan; it'll be his world system; and, it'll be the sin nature within you. And growing depends upon spiritual food – the doctrines of Scripture.

This is why Jesus pointed out, in Matthew 4:4: "It is written, man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Don't pretend that you know what God thinks, when you do not know the Word of God, which is the only place you can find out what He thinks. So, the knowledge of God is a thing that you are obliged each day to pursue.

So, don't come and tell me: "I'm so filled up with my business demands that I can't spend time with the Word of God." Don't tell me that: "I have so much schoolwork to do that I can't spend time with the Word of God." Get your life rearranged, so that you don't find yourself with schoolwork when it's time to be in church; when it's time to be in Sunday school; or, when it's time to be in prayer meeting. Do not excuse yourself. And don't blame someone else, because it is the way you have chosen to arrange your life. And in the church age, you have the privilege, as your own priest, to run your own business.

This word knowledge, by the way, is the Greek word "gnósis" (gno'-sis) for information. This is doctrine via the expository preaching of the local church pastor-teacher, and your own personal reading and study of the Word of God. Now that is a winning combination.

2 Timothy 2:15 therefore says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of Truth."

As I listen to people in groups speaking about the Word of God, I'm appalled at their ignorance. They're not stupid people. They're just ignorant (uninformed). They are obviously sheep without a shepherd who is teaching them. And they have the most monstrous, gross concepts of spiritual matters. And where does it lead them? To their own destruction. You are to grow so that you can accurately handle the Word of Truth.

Now, for several weeks you have been learning one of the most basic principles: the difference between Israel and the church: the era of the Mosaic Law of Judaism; and, the church of the grace of God in the era between Pentecost and the rapture. These are two totally different groups of human beings: both saved through Christ; but, both having a lifestyle which is totally different. One is the Old Testament lifestyle of defeat. The other is the New Testament lifestyle of great power. And it all comes upon accurately understanding the Word of Truth.

People who cannot make that distinction between those two dispensations rob themselves of what it means to be a Christian. So, we need to maintain one's spiritual status (the status of spirituality – being filled (or controlled) by the Spirit); and, to store up knowledge. And this, incidentally, is full knowledge. That is the Greek word "epignósis" (ep-ig'-no-sis) – knowledge that you have been taught, and you said, "I accept it, and I believe it." This is not knowledge such that you have sat in church, and said, "I don't want to listen to that. I don't want to believe that. I don't want to live like that. I don't want to have to stop doing this in my life, and that in my life." It means knowledge that you have accepted, and now is stored in your human spirit.

**A Spiritual Maturity Structure**

Well, what that does is build a spiritual maturity structure in your soul. What's a spiritual maturity structure? Well, it's described in 1 Corinthians 12:10, and it means that you're a grace-oriented person. It means that you have a mastery of the details of life. Money is used to fulfill your mission in life. And you control the money – money does not control you. You have a relaxed mental attitude. You have an emotional loving condition that Christ gives you. And you have an ability to take things in stride. You're not getting your nose out of joint, but you're able to wait upon the Lord. You have the capacity of love; that is, mental attitude love, that only God the Holy Spirit can give you. And then you have inner happiness. All those are qualities of spiritual maturity.

That spiritual maturity comes directly from staying in fellowship and growing in the knowledge of doctrine on a daily basis. It enables a believer today not to waste his life in human good production, but to be able to perform divine good works, qualifying for rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

In Luke 9:25, Jesus points out a very sober principle: "What is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses (or forfeits) himself?" And this is speaking of Christians. What is a Christian man profited if he gains fame and fortune of the whole world, and he loses (or forfeits) himself. It doesn't mean that he loses his salvation. We know that. What he does is lose the potential of his life for enriching his eternity with eternal rewards.

Then in 1 Corinthians 5:10, the apostle Paul leaves no question of what is at issue here: "For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ (we Christians), that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body (in terms of his service for Christ as a believer), according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

So, the spiritual maturity structure enables us not to waste our lives. The spiritual maturity structure also enables the church-age believer to reflect the character of Christ, and thus to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the point of our life each day: for each day to pass, and for Christ to be glorified by the way we have lived.

So, Ephesians 5:1-2 says, "Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for you in offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma." It is our desire to glorify Christ. But when you have a spiritual maturity structure in your soul, that's been fully developed and matured, you're like Christ. Because that structure reflects exactly what He is. And the result is that He is glorified by the way you live.

1 Peter 1:14-16: "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance (the sin nature lust patterns), but like the Holy One Who called you, be holy yourselves in all your behavior, because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'." Now, nothing could be more outrageous and nonsensical for God to tell us to be as holy as He is, knowing that that's impossible unless He made it possible.

That's it. Be filled with the Spirit, and grow in doctrinal knowledge. And I guarantee you that it's possible. You can walk, in your humanity, the holy life of the Lord Jesus Christ. And when that spiritual maturity structure is developed, it cannot be developed erratically. That's why absence in-and-out of church, and in-and-out of the Word is bad business. You will not go far in the Christian life. And you'll always be a potential spiritual casualty.

The spiritual maturity structure enables a Christian in temporal fellowship to understand doctrine; to witness effectively to the unsaved; to be guided in life by the Holy Spirit;, to worship God in Spirit and in truth; to pray with power; to guide others spiritually; and, to produce divine good works of service as the Holy Spirit directs him.

What's the bottom line? Well, what the Word of God is telling us, brethren, is that our lives as Christians in the church age belong to God. They do not belong to Satan. They do not belong to Satan's world. They do not belong to us. We are on a divine mission of full-time Christian service. You and I are both in full-time Christian service from the moment of our salvation. And if you haven't awakened to that, you are really wasting a life potential.

Please note 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, Whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body." God says, "I own you. I bought you with that price upon the cross. I paid for that terrible crime that was against My Son, so that He could die in your place. And now you belong to Me. I bought you with a price; I bought you with a purpose; and, I bought you for a mission. And your life now is not for you to mosey through life doing all these things that you might be interested in. Your very source of livelihood I give you so that you may fulfill the reasons for which I have brought you into life.

Colossians 1:10: "So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." What is my life? Bearing divine good work fruit, and I'm increasing in my knowledge of God, both through doctrine; and, in my experience.

If I belong to Him, what does that mean? Ephesians 2:10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Yes, it's going to come down to that folks. There'll be that chart in heaven in God's sight, and it'll be this work; this mission; this project; this thing; this thing; and, this thing. That's what I want you to do. And they will look at that. They will check it out, and they'll see how much of that you accomplished. You belong to God. You're His servant. And that is our calling. Our greatest life is on the other side, in His presence for eternity. This is the preparatory stage. And He will say, "Well done, you good and faithful servant;" or, "Sam, you got 30%. That's not too good, Sam. You got yourself messed up with so many other things in life that you couldn't fulfill your calling.

Ephesians 2:10: "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus through salvation, for the purpose of divine good works produced by the Holy Spirit through us, specifically those which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Then there's Luke 9:23, "And he was saying to them all (Jesus said to them), 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me." What is the cross? Your mission – that list that God prepared for your life. That's what it is. You belong to Him. He has a purpose. And you can run yourself through your life as you please, to your sweet contentment, but it will be a great tragedy to get up there, and find what might have been.

The spiritual life of church-age saints (spirituality in the church age) – means to be filled with the Spirit, and thus controlled by His indwelling, as we've seen in Ephesians 5:18. That is the product of confession of known sins; and, staying in temporal fellowship. It is the product of the knowledge of growing upon the Word of God. Spirituality (being filled with the Spirit) is the most important feature of a Christian's life every day. All time spent where the Spirit of God is not in charge, you're not filled, and it's wasted time.

**How to be Filled with the Holy Spirit**

In order to achieve the filling of the Holy Spirit, the mechanics, again, are very clear. They come down to three steps.

1. **Do not Quench the Spirit**

To be filled with the Spirit is explained in 1 Thessalonians 5:19, which says, "Do not quench the Spirit." Again, for us to understand what we're talking about, we have to go back to the Greek. There, the word "quench" is the Greek word "sbennumi" (sben'-noo-mee): "Do not 'quench' the Holy Spirit."

Let's get a little grammar background first. It's in the present tense. Bingo! You've learned something already this morning. Anytime it's present in the Greek, it means all the time: "Do not ever quench the Holy Spirit." Secondly, it is active voice. Bingo! Now we know that that's up to you. You can quench Him, or you cannot quench Him. It's not something that just happens, or somebody else does. It has nothing to do with anyone but yourself. Next, it's imperative mood. Bingo! It's a divine command. This is not optional. God says, "At no point in your life are you to quench the Spirit of God." Now, what does that mean? "Quench" means to neutralize something. Here it refers to neutralizing the control of the Holy Spirit in your soul as a Christian. Quenching results from one thing: disobedience to God's Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit that is laid upon your heart – that intuitive understanding that He gives you. It is not the departure of the Holy Spirit. You don't squelch Him, so that he's gone. He never leaves you. "Quenching" means that you neutralize Him. You incapacitate Him in the work that He is supposed to be doing in your life.

It does not involve a moral or ethical issue. You do not quench the Holy Spirit when you lie. You do not quench the Holy Spirit when you're guilty of sexual sins. You do not quench the Holy Spirit when you steal. You do not quench the Holy Spirit when you play games with words and thus to bear false witness.

Quenching the Holy Spirit is resorting to human good judgment in some area that comes from the strength of your old nature, so that you think that you know how to do things better than God. >Every sin nature has an area of strength. Isaiah 64:6 calls it "filthy rags," but it is human good works.

God rejects this at the cross, as Titus 3:5 tells us. But it is people operating from the strong side of the sin nature, doing what they think is human compassion and human good. And when you do that, you have quenched the Holy Spirit. This is because His guidance is being overridden by your old sin nature's judgment. Human good will soothe the conscience, so that the Holy Spirit remains quenched, and the Christian remains out of fellowship. And he will, at the same time that he's out of fellowship, claim that he's in the will of God, because he is now functioning on emotions. And because he is functioning on emotions, he feels really good about this, because that's the devil's playground.

**Carnality**

How do you quench the Holy Spirit? Reducing it to one word: by saying, "No" to Him. That's what it is. You say no to Him at some point of His guidance in your life. You say "No" to some direction; some concept; some mission; or, some request that He puts upon your life. Quenching takes the Christian out of temporal fellowship with the Father, into the area of carnality.

When you quench the Holy Spirit, you step out of the control of the Holy Spirit, and you step out into the carnality area, where you are controlled by the old sin nature. This is the carnal Christian territory. You're still within salvation – that outer circle. But that inner circle, where the Spirit of God is able to tell you what to do – that's gone. You shut Him down. You've quenched Him.

So, it is not a good idea to stay out of that inner circle of temporal fellowship, quenching the Spirit of God, because until you turn around, and say, "Yes," you're going to stay out there in that carnality circle. Yes, you can stay there your whole life. You can dig your heels in, and you can say, "This is what I'm going to do, and nobody's going to dissuade me." And you get very emotional about it, so that you actually think that this is the will of God. Quenching a very serious thing. But if you want to be filled with the Spirit, you must not quench the Holy Spirit.

1. **Do not Grieve the Holy Spirit**

There's a second negative command (concerning the filling of the Holy Spirit), and that is found in Ephesians 4:30, which says, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God." This word "grieve" is "lupeó" (loo-peh'-o) in the Greek. And again the Greek tells us that it's the present tense. At no time are you to grieve the Holy Spirit. It is active. You yourself are responsible when the Holy Spirit is grieved. You decide to do it. And it is imperative. It is a divine command. God says, "Don't you ever grieve the Holy Spirit."

Now, what the word "grieve" in the Greek means is "to cause distress." Grieving results from sins in the life of the believer. Here, now we do come to adultery, lying, mental attitude sins, stealing, and bearing false witness. All of those are ethical issues. And all of those have to do with grieving the Holy Spirit. It causes distress to the holiness of God. It is producing sins and human good from the area of weakness of one's old sin nature.

Now we're at the other end. Every sin nature has an area of strength, and it has an area of weakness. And that area of weakness is sin and human good. 1 Peter 2:24 tells us that Christ bore that at the cross. So, that doesn't come into the picture. But when you want to resort to that area of your life, you will be grieving the Holy Spirit, because you're operating on violating the moral code of God. Grieving is choosing evil instead of choosing righteousness. And what grieving does is that it takes you right out of that inner circle of temporal fellowship, and takes you into carnality, and you will stay there until you cease and desist from the evil. Those are the two negatives: quenching the Holy Spirit; and, grieving the Holy Spirit. There's one more point of guidance for the mechanics of being filled with the Spirit. Number one was: "Do not quench the Holy Spirit by saying "No" to Him, in terms of what He tells you to do through the Word of God, or that intuitive guidance. Secondly, do not grieve the Holy Spirit by personal acts of sin of one kind or another.

1. **Walk by the Holy Spirit**

The third is a positive command, and this is found in Galatians 5:16. It says, "But I say: walk by the Spirit, and you'll not carry out the desires of the flesh" (the desires of the sin nature). This third one is "walk by the Holy Spirit."

In Galatians 5:24-25, we read, "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh (the sin nature), with its passions and its desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." Walk by means of the Holy Spirit.

Anybody who has had trouble with a leg which is not capable of sustaining the physical body, will discover that every time you walk, you're putting one foot out ahead of the other. And every time you put one foot out ahead of the other, you are creating an incipient fall. You are creating a potential fall. And if, when you put that leg out there, it is not capable of bearing the weight of the whole body, you will crash to the floor. You are walking by means of the capacity of your legs to sustain you. You are dependent upon them.

This is how the Christian walks through the spiritual life. If the Spirit of God doesn't sustain you, you're never going to make it. It's not going to be some preacher who's going to kick up your emotions in some rah-rah service. None of that is going to work. The word walk looks like this in the Greek: "peripateó" (per-ee-pat-eh'-o). In the Greek, it's present tense. At no time are you to walk by means of the sin nature. Walk always by means of the Holy Spirit. It is active. Don't say, "The devil made me do it." You did it. You chose not to walk by means of the Holy Spirit. And third, it is imperative. Isn't that amazing, how every one of these grammatically is the same. This is also a divine command.

This means to live the Christian life in dependence on the Holy Spirit, not on your human old sin nature capacities. It means to use the techniques of the Christian life under the guidance of the Holy Spirit: the technique of confessing sins; the technique of faith rest; the technique of Bible study; the technique of spirituality; the technique of thinking divine viewpoint; the technique of prayer. We have a whole series of tapes on those things. That is what is at the back of walking by means of the Holy Spirit – living under these techniques. Walking by means of the supernatural power of God the Holy Spirit, and doctrine. That will maintain the filling of the Spirit.

Christians are tempted to depend on their own willpower, and their old sincere intentions, to carry them through life. But that's how the world lives. Walking by means of the Spirit is appropriating His divine power through doctrine in the soul. Walking by means of the strength of the old sin nature takes a Christian out of temporal fellowship with the Father, into carnality. And you will stay there until you confess, and come back in. So, it is a terrible place to be.

So there you have it. From these three commands to every Christian, relative to the Holy Spirit Who indwells him, it is evident that personal evil is a hindrance to being filled with the Spirit. The solution for quenching, grieving, or not walking by means of the Spirit, is confession of the sin that is hindering (1 John 1:9). Avoid your human desire to solve your carnality by working up sorrow; by making promises to do better; and, doing penance to feel forgiven. Just believe it.

The whole great Roman Catholic system is based upon these very things: solving the carnality in their life by working up a sorrow over it; shedding tears; making promises that they can't keep to do better; doing penance assigned by priest; and, whatever else they can to feel forgiven. No, you're not going to be forgiven.

**Don't Ask God for Forgiveness**

Also, don't ask God to forgive you of your sins. The Bible doesn't tell you to do that. It says, in 1 John 1:9, "Confess – admit." Say, "Father, I did this. This is what I thought. This is what I've been guilty of, and it is wrong. And I express my recognition that I was out of your fellowship. Thank you for taking me back in." Just believe the system that God has put together. The issue in spirituality is to imitate God (Ephesians 5:1, Ephesians 1:6) – not to imitate some unbeliever (1 John 1:6, 1 Corinthians 3:3).

Now, only the Holy Spirit can enable you to imitate God instead of other people. And spirituality is an absolute condition. You are not part spiritual, and part carnal. Our diagram of the concentric circles of eternal fellowship (the outer circle) and temporal fellowship (the inner circle) should make that clear. You're either in the inner circle, or with sin, you're out of this inner circle, into carnality. You're not ever on the borderline. It is always one way or another.

In 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, for example, Paul says, "My brethren could not speak to you as to spiritual men (people who are in the inner circle), but as to men of flesh (men under the control of the sin nature in that outer circle), as to babes in Christ (they are believers). I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you are not yet able to receive it. And indeed, even now, you are not able for you are still fleshly (under the control of the sin nature). For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men (like mere unbelievers)?

Now, most of what has been said here this morning, you people understand, because most of you are mature Christians. Most of you are able to grasp it. This sermon would go over the heads of the average congregation – zip! They have no frame of reference for understanding these things. They have no means of grasping it. And this is what Paul was so frustrated with. He said, "I've taught you, and taught you, and taught you in Corinth, and you're a bunch of dummies. I'm still having to come and give you simple little inspirational talks, and little doctrinal principles – the milk of the Word. You're not able to get in there and feast upon the riches which you're entitled to, as members of the church age.

In Galatians 5:16-21, Paul says, "But I say: walk by the Spirit, and you'll not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets in desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. And these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law." Do you understand that? You're either in carnality, or not. It is an absolute condition – not partway. "Now, the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, just as I have forewarned you, that those who receive such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Now, I must remind you once more that this is talking to Christians. This horrible list of sins – run your eye over them again. These are the things that you Christians can do. And he says, "If you do this, you're out of that inner circle of fellowship. You're out in carnality. And the devil will bring you down. And I guarantee you, when you get out into the millennium (the Kingdom of God), you will not be in authority with a throne of administration. You're going to be people who are at the lower echelons. You're not going to be the people of the church age who are going to run the world under the millennium. You're not going to be up there as God's great administrators. Why? Because you lived a life that was not filled with the Spirit. And spirituality is not something that is a mere pretense. It is a reality.

There is one more. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 says, "Do not quench the Spirit," that we've been looking at. So, that depends only on who and what the Holy Spirit is.

Galatians 5:22-26 tell us the wonderful things that He will do in contrast to the old sin nature.

**Spirituality vs. Spiritual Maturity**

Spirituality should not be confused with spiritual maturity. The moment you're born again as a baby Christian, you are spiritual. As soon as you step out of line (and sin), you're still a baby Christian. You're still immature, but you're no longer spiritual. As soon as you confess, you're still a baby Christian. You're immature, but you *are* spiritual. When a Christian is spiritual, he has God's power working through him. And that means that God gets the credit for all the divine service done by the believer. That is a great way of life.

Spiritual growth by grace in the church age is a magnificent experience that is potentially possible for every one of us. And we shall look at that at our next gathering.

Dear God, our Father, we thank You for the fact that the Word of God is alive, active, powerful, and significant for those who have ears to hear. We pray that You would indeed make us a people who are spiritual, filled with the Spirit, and who are proud of it – pleased to know that when we are that, you are proud of us as your children. We ask You to help us to walk our lives knowing that they're very short, and we're getting closer to checking out, and we pray that we shall leave behind us a record in heaven of which we shall not be ashamed. It's all possible for the Spirit-filled Christian. For that, we thank You in Christ's name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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