

Major Bible Themes

52 Vital Doctrines of the Scriptures Simplified and Explained

Adapted from the book *Major Bible Themes*
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God the Holy Spirit: His Filling

- The Filling of the Holy Spirit Defined
 - In contrast with the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation – such as regeneration, indwelling, sealing, and baptism – the filling of the Holy Spirit is related to Christian experience, power, and service.
 - The works of the Spirit in salvation are once and for all, but the filling of the Spirit occurs repeatedly in the life of the believer.
 - Prior to Pentecost the Holy Spirit filled believers (Ex 28:3; 31:3; 35:31; Luke 1:15, 41, 67; 4:1), but on the whole relatively few individuals received this empowerment.
 - There is no indication in the Scripture that the filling of the Spirit was available to every believer before Pentecost.
 - Beginning with the Day of Pentecost, a new period began in which the Holy Spirit would work in every believer – each is indwelt by the Spirit and can be filled with the Spirit.
 - Numerous examples are given in the N.T. to confirm this conclusion (Ac 4:8, 31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 11:24; 13:9, 52; Eph 5:18).
 - The filling of the Spirit is a spiritual state where the Holy Spirit is supernaturally empowering the believer such that he is able to produce fruit (divine good) in his life.
 - Instead of being a rare occurrence as it was before Pentecost, today the normal spiritual state for the believer is to be filled with the Spirit and we are commanded to be so (Eph 5:18).
 - The state of being filled with the Spirit must be contrasted with spiritual maturity...
 - ✦ A brand new baby believer may be filled with the Spirit and manifest the power of the Holy Spirit in his life.
 - ✦ Maturity, on the other hand, involves growth in knowledge through the study of God's word and the wisdom that comes from the application of accumulated doctrines to life's various trials, all the while being consistently filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - Numerous passages speak of the need for spiritual growth...
 - ✦ Gifted men edify the saints that they might grow up (Eph 4:11-16).
 - ✦ Spiritual milk is what newborn believers need to grow (1 Pet 2:2).
 - ✦ We are to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ (2 Pet 3:18).

- There is an obvious relationship between the filling of the Spirit and growth to maturity...
 - ✦ The believer that spends most of his time filled with the Spirit will mature more rapidly than one who does not.
 - ✦ The filling of the Spirit and growth to maturity are two of the most important factors in achieving the will of God in your life and fulfilling God's purpose in creating you for good works (Eph 2:10).
- While there may be degrees of the manifestation of the filling of the Spirit and degrees of divine power in the believer's life, the fundamental principle remains that a believer is filled with the Spirit only when the Spirit of God is able to operate in and through him without hindrance.
- Being filled with the Spirit, like receiving salvation by faith, is not accomplished by human effort; rather, it is by permitting God to accomplish this work in the life of the believer.
- The filling of the Spirit, while it does occur at the moment of salvation, is not part of the permanent estate of the believer and will occur again and again in the life of the believer.
- The proper translation of Eph 5:18 would be "keep on being filled with the Spirit" indicating the repeated nature of filling rather than a once-for-all occurrence (like indwelling).
- The Christian desiring to do the will of God must enter fully into the privilege of being Spirit-indwelted by being filled.
- Conditions for the Filling of the Holy Spirit
 - Three simple commands have been given as the conditions for being filled with the Spirit...
 - ✦ Do not quench the Spirit (1 Thess 5:19).
 - ✦ Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God (Eph 4:30).
 - ✦ Walk by the Spirit (Gal 5:16).
 - Quenching the Spirit uses the imagery of quenching a fire (Heb 11:34) and means to stifle or suppress Him, thus preventing Him from accomplishing His work in the life of the believer.
 - ✦ When we are filled, God the Holy Spirit is in control of our life.
 - ✦ Quenching the Spirit is rebellion against God in choosing to do our own will instead of submitting to the will of God (the Holy Spirit).
 - The believer's submission (yielding) to God and His will
 - ✦ We are commanded to present ourselves (submit) to God and righteousness rather than sin (Rom 6:12-16).
 - ✦ We are commanded to present our bodies (submit) a living and holy sacrifice (Rom 12:1-2).
 - ✦ This submission to God is the antithesis of the prideful attitude that quenches the Holy Spirit and is a prerequisite for being filled with the Holy Spirit.

- ✦ When we are submitted to God, His will is first and foremost in our thinking and we are willing to do anything God wants us to do – whenever, wherever, and however He directs.
 - ✦ In order to submit to God we must first submit to the word of God and its commandments and exhortations – refusal to do so makes it impossible to be filled with the Spirit.
 - ✦ In addition, we must submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:14) who teaches us the truth and gives us guidance (in harmony with the principles of the word of God) in areas of life where the word of God does not explicitly delineate the right course of action.
 - ✦ True submission involves accepting God’s providential acts which often include situations and experiences we do not desire.
 - ✦ Just as Christ chose the Father’s will (Luke 22:42), the believer who desires to be filled with the Spirit must submit to His will.
- Grieving the Spirit occurs when we succumb to temptation and allows sin to enter into our lives.
- ✦ When the Spirit is grieved, the fellowship, guidance, instruction and power of the Spirit are hindered.
 - ✦ The Holy Spirit, although still indwelling, is not free to accomplish His full range of work in the life of the believer.
 - ✦ In order to return to the state of being filled with the Spirit, the believer must stop grieving the Holy Spirit by repenting of (changing his mind about) his sins and confessing them to God.
 - ✦ When the believer is cleansed of all unrighteousness and restored to fellowship with God, he will once again be filled with the Spirit since the Holy Spirit is now free to accomplish His work.
- The believer’s confession of sins to God
- ✦ 1 John 1:9 builds on O.T. passages that teach of confession of sins and gives us assurance that all unrighteousness will be cleansed, not just the sins we explicitly confess.
 - ✦ The issue in confession is restoration of intimate fellowship between the believer and God.
 - ✦ While some sins affect others and may require going to individuals who have been wronged to correct difficulties, the confession itself is done in private between a believer and God.
 - ✦ While it may take some time for us to reach the point where we are ready to repent and confess our sins, the moment we confess our sins to God we are restored to fellowship with Him.
- While there is immediate loss when we lose fellowship with God through sin, Scripture tells us that if we continually grieve the Spirit we will be disciplined by our Father in heaven who loves us (Heb 12:5-6).

- Therefore, we should be diligent to examine ourselves and judge ourselves rightly, so that God need not step in and discipline us (1 Cor 11:28-32).
- In both the grieving of the Spirit and the quenching of the Spirit, God has made provision for us to once again be filled with the Spirit when we confess our sins and humbly submit to God and His perfect plan for our lives.
- Walking by the Spirit is a command to appropriate the power and blessing that is provided by the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- This command in Gal 5:16 is in the present tense, meaning that we are instructed to *continually* walk by means of the Spirit.
- The standard of spiritual life is high for Church age saints and believers today will be unable to fulfill the will of God apart from utilizing the power available from the indwelling Spirit.
- We cannot love the way Christ loves (John 13:34; 15:12), take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor 10:5), or produce the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) without the supernatural empowerment of the Holy Spirit.
- Our growth toward spiritual maturity which results in the ability to rejoice always, pray without ceasing and in everything give thanks (1 Thess 5:16-18) is impossible unless one is walking by the Spirit.
- Our constant battles against the world, the flesh and the devil will result in defeat unless, by faith, we continually depend upon the power of the Spirit of God to achieve the victory.
- We will never achieve sinless perfection here on this earth and we can be assured that the spiritual warfare will continue unabated, but if we appropriate the power of God in walking by the Spirit we may achieve the will of God in our lives.
- The Results of the Filling of the Holy Spirit
 - A believer walking in the power of the Spirit experiences a progressive sanctification, a holiness of life in which the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) are evident.
 - A believer who is filled with the Spirit avails himself of the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit who guides us into the truth (John 16:13) and teaches us the word of God which must be spiritually appraised (1 Cor 2:12-14).
 - When we are in fellowship with the indwelling Holy Spirit, He guides us (Rom 8:14; Gal 5:18) in accordance with the word of God so that we will always know what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect (Rom 12:2).
 - When the work of the Spirit is unhindered, He assures us of our salvation as He testifies with our spirit that we are children of God (Rom 8:16).
 - True worship and expression of our love for God are possible only when we are filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18-21) because we must worship God in spirit and truth (Jn 4:24).
 - An effective prayer life depends upon walking by the Spirit since we do not always know what to pray for (Rom 8:26).
 - Our life of service and the exercise of our spiritual gifts depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39) which can only be manifested in us when we are walking by the Spirit.