

HOLY SPIRIT: FILLING

The filling of the Holy Spirit is essential to being a spiritual Christian. Unfortunately not every Christian relates to God, the church, and the world in a spiritual way. Paul divides Christians into categories: "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to Carnal, as to babes in Christ" (I Corinthians 3:1). We know Paul was speaking to Christians, because he addressed them as "brethren" and "in Christ." The Greek word for carnal means fleshly. Carnal people are willful rather than submissive to the rule of the Holy Spirit. They are also spiritual babies who can't understand the deeper truths of the Word of God. Carnal Christians are characterized by strife and divisions (3). Spiritual people are led by the Spirit, taught by the Spirit, discern by the Spirit, and know the mind of Christ (2:14-16). The filling of the Spirit is the way we live spiritual lives and are delivered from the power of sin. The filling of the Holy Spirit is available to all who will receive it by surrendering to the Word of God. "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). The filling of the Holy Spirit is conditional. It depends on surrender to God's will. To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with the Word. To surrender to the Spirit is to surrender to God's Word. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you..." (Colossians 3:16). The results of being filled with the Spirit and the Word of Christ dwelling in us is the same: speaking or admonishing each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord, giving thanks, submitting to one another (Ephesians 5:19-25; Colossians 3:16-22). Where the baptism of the Spirit is a onetime event, the filling of the Spirit is an experience that can be repeated (Acts 2:4; 4:31). In the Book of Acts the filling of the Spirit is associated with joy, courage, and freedom to witness. The filling of the Spirit has to do with allowing the Spirit to control us rather than wine (Ephesians 5:18). The filling of the Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit. "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh...But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..." (Galatians 5:16, 22-23).