

# Ephesians 5:15-21

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Amen. Be careful, then, how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

! Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Crammed in there. Is it basically everything that everyone wants?

Everyone wants to be wise. No one wants to make foolish mistakes. We don't want to be followed up as morons. We all want to dispense sage advice. Everyone wants to use their time.

Nobody wants to waste their life. And our culture has all sorts of sayings to go along with this.

Carpe diem, seize the night, which you'll find on basically half of all recreational boats if you walk down a marina.

That's a national pastime. YOLO. You only live once. These are the expressions that are found right here. Make the best use of time.

[ 1 : 0 6 ] And everyone agrees that the days are evil. No matter what your background is, what your politics are, what your religion is, you don't think for a second that everything is good to go.

You don't think this world is as it should be. You might notice different parts of the brokenness of the world. But no one thinks that this is it.

This is paradise. Well, God's right there. And as we've been seeing throughout the book of Ephesians, he's at work bringing about a new world.

One new life at a time. Everyone wants to know what the will of the Lord is. Walk into any Christian bookstore.

After you pass the knick-knacks and gifts, you will get to row after row of books on one theme.

Knowing the will of God. We want it. We publish books year after year, book after book, on that topic because we want it so badly.

[ 2 : 0 6 ] And that's not just to Christians either. Actually, walk into any bookstore. And it's actually what you'll still find. Every self-help book pretty much boils down to connecting to the will of a higher power.

Twelve-step progress. Begin with yielding to the will of a higher power. Drug culture. Often is put in a language that sounds like a connection to some sort of cosmic reality.

Environmental literature is often in the language of connecting to the universe. The circle of life, if you will. My daughter makes the Lion King.

So the spiritual but not religious crowd wants to connect to God's will too. But what is the will of the Lord?

Verse 18. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery. But be filled with the Spirit. That's interesting. Paul, on the one hand, puts drunkenness.

[ 3 : 1 3 ] And being filled with the Spirit, on the other hand, in contrast to each other. As if they're somehow related. As if they're on the same spectrum. What does he mean when he says, be filled with the Spirit?

When it's in the same breath as drunkenness. Is he saying that drunkenness drives out the Holy Spirit? Who, as we saw in chapter 1, is the guarantee of our inheritance in Christ?

Will getting drunk make you not a Christian? I don't think that's what Paul's getting. I don't think he's saying that drunkenness is some new sort of unforgivable sin.

I think he's using filled with the Spirit a little bit differently. And he points out three different ways that drunkenness and being filled with the Spirit compare with one another.

One, on the surface, they affect our actions. Because, two, they affect our minds. And three, they both affect our hearts.

[ 4 : 18 ] So one, drunkenness and the Spirit both affect our actions. In a very real sense, drunkenness drives out the fruit of the Spirit.

Verse 18 points towards our actions. Getting drunk on wine leads to debauchery. And the verses that follow are an explanation of the fictions we do when we're filled with the Holy Spirit.

Singing. Thanking. Submitting. The drunk person and the spiritually fruitful person are basically doing the opposite thing.

You've heard of an angry drunk, but never a gentle drunk. You've heard of a violent drunk, but never a peaceful drunk. You've heard of a sloppy drunk, but never a thankful drunk.

And even when drunkenness isn't the polar opposite of the fruit of the Spirit, it's a bad copy. You've heard of a happy drunk, but you've never heard of a loving drunk.

[ 5 : 22 ] Thank you. Why do drunkenness and being filled with the Spirit affect our behavior? Why is that?

It's because they affect our minds and our minds. Let's start with the mind. Alcohol is a depressant. The effect someone feels when they're drunk comes from alcohol slowing down or shutting down what's going on in their mind.

One pastor put it like this. Alcohol makes you happy by making it harder for you to take in all of reality. You don't see as much of it. So instead of being worried, you're not worried anymore.

You see less reality, so you're courageous. You see less of reality, so you're happy. All intoxicates. Okay, you're mine.

One way or the other. Some are depressants, like alcohol, which tend to dull our senses so we don't take in as much of the world. And some are stimulants. Think of the stereotypical rave scene.

[ 6 : 23 ] The music, the lights, the motion, all designed to push every single sensory button we have. All at once. The things of the world that we use to intoxicate ourselves.

Wine, drugs, entertainment, food, pornography. They either dull our minds or they overstimulate them one way or the other.

But what does God do with our minds? We saw that in the second half of chapter 4. He renews it. He increases it. He opens it up.

God isn't interested in slowing down our minds or blindly stimulating. He's in the business of ending our darkened thinking. Of turning our futile minds and futile thoughts into sorrow.

So if you want more, you want God, not drug goodness. Drunkenness steals from God.

[ 7 : 26 ] Now, if you're a frequent abuser of alcohol or you get drunk on something else. Drugs, entertainment, porn, success, shopping.

Anything else to either overwhelm or deaden your senses. You likely feel trapped. You might have started using it so that you felt better about something else.

Or maybe not to feel something else. You're likely still dealing with that. But now you might feel weak for not dealing with the first problem.

And for escaping into wine. And you might feel the shame of trying to hide it. And you might feel addicted, like you depend on it.

And your drunkenness might be causing even more problems. Health, financial, relationships. And you might be numb. Feeling like you can't experience sensation in any way besides your drunkenness.

[ 8 : 31 ] And, and, and, and on and on it goes. Each step more hopeless than the one looking. But, if we have learned anything from the book of Ephesians.

It's that Christians need not fear hopeless situations. In the first half of chapter 2, you were dead. Dead in your sins.

That's hopeless. In the second half of chapter 2, there were insurmountable racial and national boundaries between people. That's hopeless. In the first half of chapter 4, our hearts were made of stone.

That's hopeless. In the second half of chapter 4, our minds were darkening and our thinking futile.

That's hopeless. But what does God do with hopeless situations?

He brings the dead to life. He makes one new man for many. He gives us new hearts. And he renews our hearts. If you are in Christ, you need not fear hopeless situations.

[ 9 : 47 ] And drunkenness, and everything that goes with it, all the baggage it takes with it, it feels hopeless. But we have hope in hopeless places. Because God is powerfully at work in our inner man.

That is the promise of Ephesians. Now, that's only true if you're a Christian. I'm sorry, I can't offer you hope. Unless he's your God.

Unless you have repented and believed in Jesus. Unless you've confessed Jesus as your name. So if you have no hope and you have no Jesus, I invite you to turn from your sins and receive Jesus. And you'll get hope thrown in. Paul doesn't want us to swim in a bottle. Instead, in chapter 3, he prays that we would be able to swim in the breadth, and the length, and the height, and the depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

God isn't a cosmic killjoy. Sometimes we look at the Bible, like it's a book full of all the things we can't eat, and all the fun we can't have.

[11:11] No. It's a book of intoxicating joy, found in Jesus, risen from the dead for sinners like you and me. God wants what's best for you.

And drunkenness isn't. So, both drunkenness and being filled with the Spirit affect our actions, they affect our minds, and they both affect our hearts.

What is Paul really talking about when he says, be filled with the Spirit? Hasn't he been saying all along that the Holy Spirit lives in Christians already?

Starting all the way back in chapter 1, verse 13, he says, In him, you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance, until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

So, do we have the Holy Spirit the moment we believe? Yes. Do we have him constantly, until we obtain our final inheritance in heaven?

[12:23] Yes. Paul used the word guarantee there. So, why does Paul tell us here, in chapter 5, to be filled with the Holy Spirit now?

Is there a difference between being sealed with the Holy Spirit in chapter 1 and being filled with the Holy Spirit in chapter 5? Let's turn back a page or so to chapter 3.

Paul uses really similar language in verse 19. He prays, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now, that is really similar to be filled with the Spirit, isn't it? Maybe this will help us figure out where Paul is going and what he's getting at.

So, what leads, in chapter 3 here, what leads to being filled with the Spirit? Verse 18 tells us, that we may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

[13:37] When Paul says filled with the Spirit in 5.18 and filled with all the fullness of God in chapter 3, verse 19, he's not talking about the ceiling that happened the moment God raised our hearts from the dead.

Instead, he's talking about a relationship. Look back, that we might comprehend the breadth and the length and the height and the depth and to know the love of Christ.

Not just know about the love of Christ, that we may know his love. So, Paul is talking about interacting with God. And that makes perfect sense in this passage, actually.

if you're habitually intoxicated with wine, success, porn, entertainment, anything, you won't be knowing. You won't be comprehended. You won't be filled with the fullness of God's love.

It's like being married and never talking to his spouse. Yeah, you're married, but you're not taking advantage of the love that's offered and available to you. You're not being filled with your marriage.

[14:46] You're tied in. And that's exactly what Paul is saying here. That's where he's moving. He says, being filled with a God who is love, take advantage of the love available to you.

Guide in to God. That's what he means when he says, be filled. Fill your life with God. Because he is good. And three of the things that that looks like are singing, thanking, and submitting.

And that's the rest of this passage. Now, are these results of being filled with the Spirit?

Taking advantage of God's love? Or are they the way we take advantage of God's love? In other words, do we sing songs and hymns and spiritual loves to get filled with God's love?

Or do we sing as a result of being filled? Is that what the Christian life looks like after we've been filled? Or is it how we get there? I think the answer is yes to both.

[ 15 : 57 ] We sing because we're filled with God's love. And when we sing, filling our hearts and our mouths with God's love for us, we get strengthened with a fresh understanding of his love.

I don't want us to look at this list like it's three random examples, though. Paul's actually very purposeful, I think, with using these three examples.

He wants us to be filled, to dive into God and his love in every facet of our lives. Every facet of our lives.

Songs, actually, he uses the language to say, fill your heart with God's love. Thanksgiving focuses our minds on God's love.

And submission injects God's love into our relationships. When Paul says filled, he means filled.

Diving into God's love in every facet of our lives.

[ 16 : 58 ] Our hearts, our minds, and our relationships. Everything. So let's look. Verse 19.

Addressing one another in songs and hymns and spiritual songs.

Singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart. We almost don't need to explain this, do we? I mean, hearts set on fire for Christ will sing out in Christ.

And, filling our hearts with songs of his goodness will only make us love him more. Throw yourself into the songs of the church and sing all the day of God as well.

Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Singing keeps us focused on God. and when we're fixed on him that breeds thankfulness.

When we see what he's done, what he is doing, and what he promises to do, when we see that clearly, we will be thankful. John Stott said, the grumbling spirit is not compatible with the Holy Spirit.

[ 18 : 15 ] And that's not just a warning against grumbling. It's actually a cure for grumbling. If you're tempted to complain, go back to chapter 2 and read.

You were dead. But God made you alive. forever. Then look back to your complaint.

See how that can matter. And thankfulness doesn't just help us to stop complaining and putting off the old man. It also helps us grow up in Christ.

Putting on the new man. It helps in all kinds of ways. It reshapes our thinking on basically every issue. One of the biggest places that's found is actually found in the next verse.

Verse 21. The final verse. Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Submission doesn't seem to fit on this list, does it?

[ 19 : 22 ] Sure, you know, melody is the Lord in your heart and thankfulness and attitudes and so is submission. but melody and thankfulness seem positive and submission not so much.

Melody and thankfulness seem God focused and submission, you know, man focused. Melody and thankfulness seem spiritual but submission not really.

next week, Paul's going to show us that submission in one specific relationship, husbands and wives, might just be the most spirit-filled behavior that Paul possibly could have used as an example.

But in this passage, in every relationship, have this mind. if Jesus, who is God Almighty, the great treasure, humbled himself and died at this person standing in front of you, well, I had better think pretty highly of that.

Now, this is what happens because we're filled with the Spirit and it helps us to become filled with the Spirit. It's what happens because we're filled with the Spirit that the Holy Spirit is a humble Spirit.

[ 20 : 45 ] And so if we are in Christ and He lives in us, then we will be humble too. We will show the gentleness, the humbleness, the submission of life. And it helps us to be filled with the Spirit.

When we voluntarily wash feet, we get to know a little bit better the one who volunteered to wash ours.

singing, thanking, submitting, they come from hearts, minds, and lives filled with the Spirit.

And it helps us to be ever more filled with the Spirit. Each of them itself and all together shout one thing. Jesus is better than all our sin.

He gives us more than drunkenness of any kind could ever offer. So look carefully how you look.

[ 21 : 52 ] Be wise, not unwise, and get the best use of your life. Sing, thank, submit, because Jesus is now.

Let's pray. worldly pleasures, all forsaken, Lord.

Take me, Jesus, take me now. And may your Holy Spirit fill us. And I know thy power divine.

we surrender all. We surrender all. All to thee, our blessed Savior. We surrender all.  
Lord, you are better than all our sin. Even if they could give us what they offer, which they don't.  
[ 23 : 01 ] You offer more. so, Lord, let us be filled to the bread in our lives with you. Lord, may we  
sing and thank, may we submit.

May our lives be full of you. May you be glorified in us. We pray these things in the precious name  
of Jesus Christ our King. Amen.

The rain see you for this time. It's going to be new some before.