

BE FILLED WITH THE  
SPIRIT

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STUART OLYOTT



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## CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	vii
A key passage — to be read!	1
1. “BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT” IS A COMMAND	3
(1) In what context is this command found?	3
(2) Who is giving this command?	6
(3) Who is this command addressed to?	8
(4) What sort of command is it?	10
2. THIS IS NOT A COMMAND TO BE BAPTISED WITH THE SPIRIT	13
John the Baptist	13
The Day of Pentecost	16
Cornelius and his household	19
The Church at Corinth	23
3. THIS IS A COMMAND TO BE ‘FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT’	25
Divine appointment to office	25
Sovereign possession of an individual	28
Settled character	36
4. THIS COMMAND OPENS THE DOOR TO WONDERFUL BLESSINGS	44
Back to Ephesians	45
Model church members	47
Heaven on earth	50

5. THIS COMMAND IS EASY TO OBEY	53
It is easy to get drunk	53
What to drink	55
Drinking Christ	57
The means of grace	59
The Word	60
The sacraments	63
Prayer	67
The three are one	69
<i>Postscript</i>	73

*For Henry Spyyvee*

*A brother in the Lord  
and my friend and encourager  
since our early childhood.*



## INTRODUCTION

This important book is short and easy to read. It must begin by stating the obvious: when the apostle tells believers to 'be filled with the Spirit' (Ephesians 5:18) it is because some of them are not. Yes, it is possible to be a true Christian who has never experienced this spiritual reality.

Let us think about this for a moment. It is Sunday. Christians are gathering together in your local church. Very shortly they will sing together, pray together, and hear the Word of God read and preached. After the service they will talk together and, among other things, they will discuss the message. These believers have so much in common. But not everything. The fact remains that some of them are filled with the Spirit while others are not.

This is not what the Lord wants. He wants every Christian everywhere to be filled with the Spirit. He wants this for His own sake, for their sake, and for the sake of His churches and the

world. But how can this happen if believers don't know what the filling of the Spirit is?

The following pages are a brief summary and explanation of what the Bible teaches on this important subject. As you read it I trust that you will be enlightened, enriched, and drawn into a more intimate walk with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Stuart Olyott.



A KEY PASSAGE — TO BE READ!

“ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but 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, speaking to one another in 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.

— EPHESIANS 5:15-21



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“BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT” IS A  
COMMAND

**I**n the passage we have just read the apostle Paul tells the Ephesian believers to ‘be filled with the Spirit’ (Ephesians 5:18). He is not giving them some helpful advice. His words are not a recommendation. His instruction is an order. It is a command.

(1) IN WHAT CONTEXT IS THIS COMMAND  
FOUND?

The apostle begins his letter to the Ephesians by writing about the enormous privileges which we, as Christians, enjoy. Having done that, he moves on to talk about the responsibilities which we have to fulfil. So it is that the first three chapters of his epistle are doctrinal, while the remaining three are practical.

Those first three chapters are thrilling. The apostle leaves us dazzled with wonder as he

parades before us the extraordinary blessings that God has given to all of us who are 'in Christ.' Loved before time, we are the adopted sons of God whose sins have been forgiven. This is because Christ has shed his blood for us and redeemed us. The power which raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to the highest place in the universe has also worked in us. Indwelt by His Spirit, we are united to Him for time and for eternity.

This is true of all believers, whether we are Jews or Gentiles. Before our conversion we were all led astray by the devil and were spiritually dead. But God, who is rich in mercy, and because of His great love for us, has made us alive together with Christ. There are not two leagues of Christians. Jewish believers are the true Israel. And now, incorporated into that Israel, are all the Gentiles who have come to Christ. They are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. And there is more to be said than that. Jews and Gentile believers alike are the walls that make up the temple where God Himself dwells. We are built on the same foundation, and Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone on which the whole structure depends.

In Old Testament times it was well understood that Gentile believers could and would become incorporated into Israel. The prophets often spoke about it. But it never crossed anyone's mind that

those Gentile believers would enjoy exactly the same status and privileges as believers who were Jewish by birth! Although planned by God from eternity, this was something that was not to be revealed until New Testament times. The apostle Paul tells us that the Lord had given him a particularly clear understanding of this fact and had commissioned him to make it known.

How, then, does the Lord expect His chosen people to live? Every true Christian will want to know that; of course they will! What He has done for us is, frankly, astounding. And we don't deserve it. As long as He has been God, He has loved us. In Christ He has poured on us this deluge of privileges. We are the most blessed people who have ever lived, and these blessings will never diminish, not even in eternity. Every believer who gets a clear glimpse of what the Lord has done for them will find themselves aching with a desire to please Him.

Knowing this the apostle Paul writes the remaining three chapters of his letter. He tells us how the Lord wants us to live in the church, how He wants us to live in this hostile world, and how He wants us to engage in a spiritual warfare against demonic forces. It is in the middle of these three sections that he tells us that it is the Lord's will for us to 'be filled with the Spirit.' We don't see that as a cold call to duty. Having absorbed the first three chapters, we find that we can't wait to obey.