

Movement Mentoring Training Session 2 - The Foundation: The Spirit-Filled Life

Objectives

Help you assess whether you are living a Spirit-filled life

Key Scripture

Ephesians 5:18-20

Bible Study

We are all building a life and, as we build, nothing is more critical than the foundation. You may not currently be a follower of Jesus or you may have been following Him for many years. Either way, this series will help you consider the things that will help you build a rock solid foundation for your life. Each week we'll consider different pillars that lead to a strong foundation for your life.

We're beginning with a training session on the Spirit-filled life. Here's why. Because a Spirit-filled life is what I want most for my kids, myself, and you! Think about it. If we are continually filled with the Holy Spirit, then the things that are true of Jesus will be true of us *because* the Holy Spirit is Christ's presence in us. Galatians 5:22-23 says, "*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*" I want a life filled with this type of fruit for my kids, for myself, and for you and so we're going to start the journey by studying one of the most famous passages in the Bible on life in the Spirit!

Another reason we're beginning with a focus on a life that is filled with the Spirit is because the Spirit is *the* power to help do all that Jesus will call us to do. Period. Jesus knew this, which is why He was so insistent that his disciples wait to do *any* ministry until they received the *power* to do it. Literally moments before ascending into heaven He told them, "I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:50). Jesus didn't want them doing *anything* until they had the power to do it. In fact, the Holy Spirit was so critical for the journey that Jesus likened it to clothing because clothes are critical for any journey. Clothes are empowering. Naked people don't fare well in the world! Without the Spirit, we are as good as a naked person in the world. We lack the basic necessity that we all need to flourish in life. Therefore, we'll begin our mentoring journey by addressing one question that will be critical for the rest of the journey: how do I know if I am living a Spirit-filled life?

How Do I Know If I Am Living A Spirit-Filled Life?

Spirit-filled can mean different things to different people, based on your religious background (or lack thereof). A Spirit-filled Catholic, a Spirit-filled Presbyterian, and a Spirit-filled Pentecostal might all have different things in mind when using that term. For our purposes, we're going to cut across these distinctions in different religious traditions and look at what the Bible describes

as common to *all* who have been clothed with power from on high by the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:50).

One of the classic passages that provides markers of a Spirit-filled life is found in Ephesians 5:18-20 in which Paul provides 3 markers to help us know if we're living a Spirit-filled life. He gives us the following three indicators:

1. Spirit-filled people are drunk on the Spirit (v18)
2. Spirit-filled people are continually worshipping(v19)
3. Spirit-filled people are continually giving thanks (v20)

Spirit-filled people are drunk on the Spirit (v18)

The first marker—drunkenness—is one that is easy to relate to for most Americans because it immediately brings up a condition (drunkenness) that we're all familiar with (the saints among us can picture a friend or family member!). Paul says, "*Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery, Instead, be filled with the Spirit*" (Ephesians 5:18). Paul brings to mind the comparison between getting drunk on alcohol and getting drunk on the Spirit, which also happens in other places in the Bible. In Acts 2, when the people were "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4), everyone around them thought they were drunk (Acts 2:13). Ironically enough, by pondering drunkenness, we'll be able to see with a greater degree of clarity what a Spirit-filled life looks like through both the similarities and dissimilarities.

Similarity #1: Visible evidence. When we are drunk (on either alcohol or the Spirit), there is visible evidence in our lives. Imagine being pulled over by a police officer when you are inebriated. What does he ask you to do? Get out of the car and walk the line! In many cases, this simple test provides visible evidence that answers the question. In some cases, a bit more evidence is required and a breathalyzer is used to provide further evidence to see if the "fragrance of the aroma" of alcohol is present.[1] When we are filled with alcohol, it's obvious. Our speech is slurred, we can't walk straight, we reek, and we do crazy stuff. Now, if we've only had one or two drinks, there may be no visible evidence, but when we're bombed, it's obvious.

The same is true with the Spirit. If we keep our Christianity nice and compartmentalized and we're simply Christians on Sunday for one hour a week during church (if we even go), then there is most likely no visible evidence in our lives to anyone (including ourselves!). Paul and Jesus have no place for those that just take a few sips of the Spirit. Jesus calls people like this lukewarm and says, "because you are lukewarm—neither hot or cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:16). He doesn't want people who nurse one drink of the Spirit over long periods of time. He wants people who get hammered in the Holy Spirit so that there is visible evidence to the world that His Spirit is present!

Take Stephen (in the Bible--not me!) as an example. Acts 7:56 says he was "full of the Holy Spirit" and it was obvious in his life. An entire mob formed and started to beat him up and he

responded by saying, “*Lord, do not hold this sin against them.*” I don’t know about you, but that isn’t typically how I respond when someone punches me in the face. I’m ready to rock when someone slightly challenges me; the other Stephen, the one in the Bible, was literally taking rocks to the face and the thing he was most concerned about was his combatants’ forgiveness. Sounds a lot like someone else who hung on a cross and said the same thing about those crucifying Him!

This is, admittedly, an extreme example of visible evidence of the Spirit that seems unattainable for most of us. Far more commonplace is the everyday fruit that is born from a long obedience in the same direction.[i] Galatians 5:22-23 says, “*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*” The question, then, is whether our lives are increasingly marked by more love, more joy, more peace, and so on. To help evaluate this, I’m going to ask you to do something risky. Get prayed up and ask your spouse (if you have one) or a trusted friend (not a yes friend, but someone who will shoot straight with you) the following questions, “Am I quicker to listen and slower to lose my temper *now* than I was five years ago? Do I worship more and worry less *now* than I did five years ago? Am I more loving in my speech and my actions to you and others *now* than I was five years ago? Am I more generous with money and peaceful in God’s provision *now* than I was five years ago?”[2]

If we are filled with the Spirit, fruit will be obvious and plentiful in our lives over a five year stretch. In San Diego, a friend of mine had a blood orange tree. He said he literally had to prop the branches up with slats of wood because there were so many blood oranges on the limbs. He gave us four bags full and said that he gave away over 4,000 oranges from one tree. That is the picture of a Spirit-filled life. Obvious fruit, everywhere!

Similarity #2: Under the Influence. When someone is drunk, we say they are “under the influence.” We use terms like DUI (driving under the influence) to describe the controlling influence that alcohol can have in our lives. Similarly, the Holy Spirit takes a controlling influence in our lives and affects our decision-making, our personality, our character, and the overall trajectory of our lives.

If you have ever been under the controlling influence of alcohol, you know the buzz wears off (eventually!). Though many have tried, it is pretty difficult to stay drunk permanently. The same can be true with the Holy Spirit. Many of us have had a spiritual buzz at a camp or retreat and then once we come back from the mountaintop and descend into grind of life the buzz seems to wear off.

This is why Paul says, “*be filled with the Spirit*” (*Ephesians 5:18*). The tense that he uses for the verb “be filled” is present progressive, which means that it should happen on a continual, ongoing basis so that we are always progressing in the Spirit. Essentially, Paul is saying, “Be filled continually with the Spirit.”

Let's illustrate. I was first filled with love for my wife when she took me to a sorority formal in the spring of 1998. It was a magical night. She looked radiant and we danced the night away. I still have the "Two of a Kind" t-shirt to commemorate the glory of that evening! But what if that was the last time I was filled with love for my wife? That would be tragic and we would, no doubt, be divorced. In any healthy marriage, you need to be continually filled with love for one another and that happens on an ongoing basis—weekly dates, check-ins, calls, prayer together, texts (yes, texts!), and a whole lot of lovin!

Or let me put it another way. Have you ever seen the green gumby man outside of the Cricket stores that flaps in the wind to get your attention? For the Green Gumby to accomplish his purpose of attracting attention to the Cricket Wireless store, he needs to be continually hooked up to a generator that is inflating him. Without an ongoing, continual supply of hot air, Green Gumby man falls flat, literally.

The same is true for each of us. We need to be continually filled with the Spirit to do what God has called us to do here on earth. Without His animating presence, we fall flat, just like Gumby. Put in slightly different terms, my mentor often says, "We leak!" Someone who is living a Spirit-filled life understands this and is constantly seeking to be filled up with the Spirit through worship, prayer, community, reading the Bible, the sacraments, and many other ways to get filled up with the Spirit.

You might object, "Are you saying that we can lose the Spirit altogether and are no longer Christians?" No! Just a few chapters earlier, Paul described being filled with the Spirit in a way that takes you from death to life as being "sealed" with the Spirit once-and-for-all. "*And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit*" (Ephesians 1:13). Therefore, while we only need to be sealed once, we need to be filled continually.

Dissimilarity #1: Squander Life. We all know that getting drunk on the Spirit and getting drunk on alcohol are also categorically different. Paul knew this and intentionally contrasted the two by using the word debauchery. In Greek, the word debauchery means to squander, to waste, to live a purposeless life. For instance, think about the prodigal son in the Bible. Luke 15:30 tells us that he "squandered" his life and his father's inheritance. Conversely, someone who is filled with the Spirit lives a purposeful life, knowing that "*we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do*" (Ephesians 2:10). Rather than squandering their time, talent, and treasure, Spirit-filled people are imperfectly living out the purposes of God in a self-controlled manner by leveraging who they are for the kingdom of God.[ii]

Dissimilarity #2: Depressant/Stimulant. Alcohol is a depressant. We drink to mask our problems, to take the edge off. The Holy Spirit is just the opposite. It stimulates life in the best and fullest sense. Rather than masking our problems, the Holy Spirit un.masks our deepest problems and allows us to see them in full living color and, at the same time, see our problems through a new lens—the crimson colored lens of the cross! In John 16:13, Jesus says that the Holy Spirit “will guide you into all truth,” specifically truths like these—that our sin has been removed from us as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12); that there is now no condemnation in Christ (Romans 8:1); that we are more than conquerors in Christ (Romans 8:37); that we are *always* being led in triumphal procession in Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14); and that somehow he is working *all* things for our good (Romans 8:28). We know all of these heavenly realities through the Spirit stimulating, not depressing, these heavenly realities here on earth, and let’s be honest, heavenly realities are something that we need to get drunk on—continually!

What we are after, then, is to stimulate a *fullness* of the Spirit. What exactly is a fullness of the Spirit? Tim Keller describes the fullness of the Spirit this as “a supernaturally charged cognition which brings about a heart condition of courage and joy. It’s a heightened, intensified, existential, moment-by-moment awareness of God and his salvation that dominates your life so nothing else does, so no fears do. No danger does. Nothing does, because you see all of reality.”^[5] Oh to be drunk in this way so that we are experiencing the fullness of the Spirit!

Spirit-Filled people are Continually Worshipping (v19)

Enough with drunkenness! Let’s move on. The second characteristic of a Spirit-filled person is someone who **continually** worships. Paul says, “*be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your hearts to the Lord...*” Psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit is Paul’s way of saying let the whole range of music—from organ, to orchestra, to “Oh Come to the Altar”—flow forth from your life. Some of you are thinking, “Well, count me out then because I can’t worship to organ music.” Others of you are thinking the same thing about hymns or contemporary Christian songs.

But that misses the point! While the form is unimportant (psalms, hymns, spiritual songs), what is critically important is the substance (worship in some form or fashion)! Why? Because worship is an indicator of the presence of the Spirit in our hearts. Jesus put this clearly when He said, “*the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.*” Pretty convicting, isn’t it. Think about what comes out of your mouth? Worship, worry, kind words, curse words....the mouth speaks what the heart is full of!

Or let’s think about it in slightly different terms. If you peer up into the mountains and see the mountains full of snow, then you know that one day the streams in the valley will inevitably be filled with water. Certain inputs *always* lead to certain outputs. From an input standpoint, the Spirit is absolutely guaranteed to glorify Christ. Jesus made this clear when he said the central role of the Spirit is “to glorify me” (John 16:14). Therefore, if we are filled with the Spirit, the inevitable output of our lives will be worship. Period. No ifs ,ands, or buts about it.

One word of caution here. Spirit-filled worship naturally spilling out of the heart can and does look radically different based on personality type (introvert/extrovert, shy/gregarious, etc.), religious tradition (Pentecostal/Presbyterian/Catholic, etc), age, cultural background, and a host of other factors. Some people love hymns and liturgy; others prefer lights and smoke and loud worship songs. The style of worship isn't the point and neither is the expression of worship-- worship is the point! This is why Paul gives us the freedom to use the entire range of music (psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit) in a way that is unique to who God created each one of us to be!

To sing and make music in our hearts from the Spirit, in this way, is actually to do something most of think we can't do: "pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17). My good friend helped me realize this. He said, "I'm terrible at praying for long periods of time in the way that most people think about prayer, which means sitting in a room with my eyes closed and saying words out loud to God. My mind wanders like crazy. However, I love to worship. So I crank the worship music when I'm in my car and around my house and then those songs stick in my mind and heart throughout the day. That's the best way I know to pray without ceasing."

Happily, being filled with the Spirit in this way means that your prayer life will spill over into the lives of others as well and you will edify them. You won't just sing to God, but you'll "sing" to others. Our verse said, ""*be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit*" (Ephesians 5:18-19). Again, some of you are getting worried and starting to think, "I can't sing. And I'm definitely not going up to someone else and belt out a song! If that is Spirit-filled living, then no thanks!" Rest easy, you don't have to sing to anyone else, but you do have to *edify* everyone else. That's the point. Spirit-filled people are continually "singing" or speaking to others about what God is doing in their lives. They share words of hope and life to others because they recognize that the words of Jesus are the words of life (John 6:68). They are constantly building others up according to their needs with words of life (Ephesians 4:29).

Spirit-Filled People Are Continually Giving Thanks (v20)

Finally, one last way to assess yourself and determine if you are filled with the Spirit is through gratitude. Ask yourself, "Is there a chorus of thanksgiving in my life?" Without question, Spirit-filled people **continually** give thanks. Paul says, "*Be filled with the Spirit...always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" If you were reading this carefully, then you just did a double take. *Always*? *Always* is a pretty expansive term. *Always* giving thanks. Does anybody really do that? And as if that wasn't challenging enough, Paul said always give thanks for *everything*. Not some things, but everything. Cancer? Death of a spouse? Check please!

Many of us are thinking, "Well, I guess I am not Spirit-filled after all because there is no way I can pull that off, and, honestly, I don't even think I want to try." But what if it really is possible, through the power of the Spirit, to tap into a supernatural power that enables you to rise above

the circumstances of life and carry with you what J.R.R. Tolkien described as a “joy beyond the walls of the world.”[3] As life heats up, so does your gratitude. The worst things don’t break you, they simply deepen your joy and double down your thanksgiving.

The secret to this kind of life is right at the end of the verse. Paul says we are always giving thanks for everything “*in the name* of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Names in the Bible are a huge deal. They summarize the character of someone. Peter meant rock. Jacob meant deceiver. Abraham meant the Father of Many. Their names described their character. In the same way, the name of Jesus is the name above all names. There is no other name like it.

The name Jesus comes from the Hebrew name *Yeshua* or Joshua, which is made up of two parts. *Ya*, which is short for Yahweh, and *hoshea*, which means “salvation.” Put all that together and you see that the name Jesus means, “Yahweh saves.”

Now let’s put the pieces of the puzzle together. Tragedy, suffering, cancer, gossip, and any other hard thing that we walk through all create a need for salvation of some sort. The Spirit’s role is to take us to the one place, and the *only* place, where real salvation happens--the person of Jesus.

This is why, for a Spirit-filled person, the name of Jesus is so powerful. Think of the song “What a Beautiful Name” by Hillsong worship. It has had a sweeping impact in churches and worshipping communities across the world because of the tremendous power in singing and saying and celebrating the reality of the name of Jesus--that “Yahweh saves.”

Personally, I could share so many moments where the name of Jesus has saved me, literally. I remember one of the darkest moments of desperation in my journey when my wife was walking through a protracted bout with depression and the fog around us was so heavy that both of us struggled to get words out of our mouths in prayer and all we could do was pray the name: “Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!” On and on. One word. Minute after minute. We couldn’t get anything else out. And the atmosphere changed, eventually. Something broke in the air. Yahweh saved us in that moment. The name of Jesus was *the* thing, the *only* thing, that changed the temperature of the room. Anyone who has walked through intense spiritual warfare with the demonic knows just how true this is and how powerful the name of Jesus is when encountering the enemy!

Here the good news! Through stronghold, sickness, sin, and struggle, a Spirit-filled person has the power and authority to “*sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, **always giving thanks** to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Ephesians 5:19-20). Why? Tim Keller puts it this way, “when the Holy Spirit, as the years go by, shows you more and more of the genius of the cross, of the genius of what God has done and the wisdom of what God has done on the cross, and when you see how God brings more glory and more joy into the world because of the suffering of Jesus, when suffering hits you, you’re going to start to say, ‘I don’t know what you’re doing, but I thank you. I know you’re working.’ If you have that,

if the Spirit has glorified Jesus to the place where you can thank God always in everything, then you become a person who sings and makes music in your heart to the Lord.”

Friends, as the hammer of life pounds, we really can become like a nail being driven deeper and deeper into the name of Jesus, “a name that is a strong tower” (Proverbs 18:10). We can learn to give thanks that in His name, we are safe, even though *life* isn’t safe. Cancer has no hold. Financial fear has no hold. Broken relationships have no hold. Jesus does, and as a result, we give thanks for everything in the name, including the worst stuff, knowing that Yahweh saves in all things at all times! Is this hard? Yes, absolutely! It’s an exceedingly difficult, acquired skill that comes through faith and a life of being continually filled in the Spirit that we’ll be practicing together for the next year (and beyond!)

Discussion Questions

1. What did you find most helpful in this training session? Discuss why.
2. To determine if there is visible evidence of the Spirit in your life, ask your spouse and/or a close friend, “Am I quicker to listen and slower to lose my temper now than I was five years ago? Do I worship more and worry less than I did five years ago? Am I more loving in my speech and my actions to you and others than I was five years ago? Am I more generous with money and peaceful in God’s provision than I was five years ago?” Describe their responses here.
3. What comparison or contrast with drunkenness most resonated with you as you seek to be filled with the Spirit?
4. Describe, for you, the correlation between being Spirit-filled and continual worship and how this plays out in your spiritual journey.
5. In this lesson, we explored the exceedingly difficult acquired skill of always giving thanks for everything in the name of Jesus, including sickness, sin, strongholds, and struggle. Discuss how you feel about this. Have you ever practiced this? Why or why not?

LOVE DOES

1. In an effort to be doers of the word and just hearers, we’re going to practice the Spirit-Filled life (even if you haven’t yet been filled with the Spirit) by doing what we talked about. Here is the challenge:
 - Commit to making one part of your commute to work worship by listening to worship songs that resonate with you. No phone calls, no talk radio--just worship music

(prayer is allowed!). If you are not yet sure about following Jesus or whether you have been filled with the Spirit, then make your drive to work about spiritual growth. Pray and ask God to reveal himself to you everyday on your way to work. Watch what happens!

[1] 2 Corinthians 2:15 For we are the aroma of Christ to God...

[2] I am using five years as an arbitrary number to indicate that fruit grows slowly, over time, and in seasons. You may not see growth in a month, but you should see growth and fruit in five years if the tree is alive!

[3] J.R.R. Tolkien <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/51721-the-consolation-of-fairy-stories-the-joy-of-the-happy-ending>

^[4] Keller, T. J. (2013). *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive*. New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church.

^[5] Keller, T. J. (2013). *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive*. New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church.

[i] See Eugene Peterson's great work entitled *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society*. <https://www.amazon.com/Long-Obedience-Same-Direction-Discipleship/dp/0830822577>

[ii] Galatians 5:23 says the Fruit of the Spirit is self-control.

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