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THE SPIRIT-FILLED ~~LIFE~~ ⁷⁷ HENDERSON HWY., WINNIPEG 5

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The Scriptures plainly teach that the Believer can and ought to live a Spirit-Filled life. This experience is normally a progressively continuous experience by yielding obedience to God in all things, but it may also be a crises experience. The following summarizations suggest the principle issues of the doctrine of the Spirit-filled life.

I. The fact of the Spirit-filled life.

That the Spirit-filled life is a possibility is clearly stated in the command to "be filled" (Eph. 5:18), for "God has given no commandment for which He has not made the divine provisions enabling man to experience it." The repeated accounts in the Acts of Peter, of Paul, of Philipp, of Stephen, and of others, who were filled with the Spirit removes all doubt as to the possibility of a Spirit-filled life. (See Acts 2:4; 4:31; 4:8; 13:9; 6:35; 7:55; 11:24.)

II. The Nature of the Spirit-filled Life.

1. It is an obligation. The obligatory element of being filled with the Spirit is clear from the injunction "be filled". As a command, the verb, "be filled," being in the imperative mode, demands obedience, and thus is incumbent of every believer. Obedience is the key to the Spirit-filled life.
2. It is ideally a continuous experience. - This is indicated by the present tense of the verb "be filled," which implies that the normal experience of the Spirit-filled life is continuous, as occasions for life and service require it.
3. It may also be a crisis experience, particularly with reference to special needs for life and service. Peter was filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, yet at other occasions he was filled again (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31). It is also significant to note that the verb "filled", in several instances, is in the aorist tense, denoting a sudden, definite, and completed act. Thus, the experience of infilling with the Spirit may be a crisis for special needs of service. (See also reference to this experience in the life of Paul. Acts 9:17; 13:9.)
4. It is divinely imparted by Grace. Of significance to our understanding of the Spirit-filled life is the fact that the verb "be filled" is in the passive voice, which denotes that the believer is the recipient, and not the doer, of the infilling with the Spirit. Thus it is that the Holy Spirit, as a Person, is to fill our life with Himself, possessing the believer completely.

III. Differentiation of terms.

1. Full of the Spirit. The expression "full (adj.) of the Spirit" evidently refers to the habitual, permanent state of the soul, the character of the believer.
2. Filled with the Spirit. - This Scriptural teaching may either refer to a crisis experience for special needs of service, or to the ideal, continuous Christian experience of daily living.
3. Fullness of the Spirit. From a careful study of the Scriptures it would seem that the fullness of the Spirit was the experience of only ONE MAN, the Lord Jesus Christ; for in Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. However, the Scriptures do indicate that the Spirit in His fullness resides in the Church of Jesus Christ. It is in this light that I Cor. 12-14 must be interpreted.

IV. The Practicality of the Spirit-filled life.

We are not to understand that by being filled with the Spirit the believer will possess more of the Spirit, for the Spirit is not to be received quanti: namely as an "it," but that the Spirit is to possess more of the believer. True spirituality, then, will be manifested in "living out Christ." It is conditional by obedience. As the command of God in His Word, which presupposes an intimate fellowship with Triune God and a knowledge of the Word.

The practical results of the Spirit-filled life are:

1. Fellowship in the Word. (Eph. 5:19a)
2. Joy in the Lord. (Eph. 5:19b)
3. Thanksgiving to God. (Eph. 5:20)
4. Submission one to another. (Eph. 5:21)
5. Emancipation from the Law of SIN. (Matt. 1:21; Rom. 6:14; 8:2)
6. Separation from the World of SIN. (Rom. 8:5; Gal. 1:4)
7. Transformation into a Christ-like Character and Personality by producing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. (Gal. 5:22,23; II Cor. 3:18)
8. Illumination to lead us into the Truth of God's revealed Word. (John 14:26; 16:13; I John 2:20,27)
9. Confirmation in the Will and Purposes of God. (Eph. 2:10; Rom. 12:1,2)
10. Consecration and Qualification for specific Service. (I Cor. 12:1-11; Acts 1:8; 2 Tim. 1:7)
11. Communication - Witnessing. (Acts 1:8)
12. Intercession - a Life of Prayer. (I Thess. 5:18,19; Rom. 8:26,27)
13. Glorification - our inner being and physical body. (I Pet. 4:14; II Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:11)