



Clear Bible Truth on God the Holy Spirit - XII

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The Filling of the Holy Spirit - II

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18)

We have considered this doctrine negatively; now, positively.

First, Paul exhorted to avoid drunkenness, saying, “be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess”. The wine wasn't the problem rather the uncontrolled use. “Excess” implies reckless and without restraint. Alcohol and drug abuse is imminently destructive. Since restraint is a problem, most should disdain alcohol's use. Equally, Paul didn't put the congregation under a law of prohibition.

Secondly, Paul exhorted: “be filled with the Spirit”. This instruction, following “be not drunk with wine”, was a comparison by contrast. Drunkenness makes one out of control, yielding foolish and detrimental behavior. Being filled with the Spirit creates spiritual interest, moral restraint and personal control. The first makes one riotous; the latter makes one attentive to God's righteousness. The first dishonors God; the latter exalts Him.

“Filled” has nothing to do with contents or quantity. Rather, it means to be controlled by. For example, “they...were filled with wrath” and tried to kill Jesus (Lk 4:28); and, “the Jews...were filled with envy” against Paul (Acts 13:45). In both cases, the vitriolic feelings controlled their actions. Likewise, the redeemed are “filled” by God's Spirit moving their thoughts, affections, decisions and actions in a way that is consistent with grace.

Thirdly, “be filled” is a present tense, meaning continuous action; a passive, meaning the Spirit must fill; and an imperative, meaning a command. A good translation: “be being filled in the Spirit”. The indwelling Spirit controls and impels to love and obedience.

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