

Ephesians 5:18-33

Leaders Guide

Cole Community Church

Under the Spirit's Influence

Christ loved us and died for us. Today He still loves us and cares for us. This intimate life was pictured for us in the Song of Solomon and can be a reality for all who yield to Him.

Verse 18-21 – Paul takes us to the banquet hall to share his message. According to Mathew Henry drunkenness was a very frequent sin among heathens particularly on occasion of the festivals of their gods, the Bacchanalia. As they filled themselves in excess with wine they went on to inflame themselves in all manner of inordinate lusts and depravity.

1. Paul contrasts the high found in drunkenness in spirits to the high in being filled with the Spirit. What are the differences between these two highs?
 - ◆ To be “filled with” means “to be controlled by”. On the day of Pentecost, the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit and were accused of being drunk (Acts 2:13). Just as a drunk is influenced by alcohol, so a believer should be controlled by the Spirit.
 - ◆ The drunk loses self-control, but the Spirit gives the believer self-control (Gal. 5:16-26). The drunk has an artificial happiness that is short lived. The Spirit filled person has a deep joy in the Lord.
 - ◆ Drunken people do stupid things that hurt others and bring them embarrassment or shame. Spirit filled believers help others and live to the glory of God. Getting drunk is associated with the old life and selfish desires that do not last. Drunkenness sinks its victim lower and lower into helplessness and hopelessness.
 - ◆ As Thomas Nelson said, there is a “strong contrast from the physical to the spiritual, from the debasing to the ennobling. In days of drab routine, disappointment, and depression, men need stimulation and inspiration. The Christian’s resource is the Holy Spirit.”

2. What does being filled by the Spirit mean to you?
 - ◆ Ephesians does not tell us how to be filled, just to be filled. From other parts of the word we must put away all sin in our lives so it does not control us (1 John 1:5-9). We must submit ourselves to His control (Rom. 12:1,2). We must let the word of Christ dwell in us (Col.3:16) so we know and look to Him. Finally we must be emptied of self (Gal 2:20). For our cup to be filled with **Him** it must be emptied of **us** first.

- ♦ As the Nelson commentary points out, “**Be filled** (Gr *pleroo*) is full of meaning. The second person plural means ‘you all,’ everyone without exception. It commanded all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30), so He has commanded every born-again believer to be filled with the Spirit. This verb is in the Greek present tense and means keep on being filled moment by moment.” Being filled by the Spirit is a day by day process. Just as is drinking wine for the drunkard. Yesterday’s filling of the Spirit will not do for today in the life of a Christian.
 - ♦ The Nelson commentary goes on to say: “The filling is what God does. When we are willing to let the Holy Spirit saturate us, He will pervade our entire being with His presence and with His power. The filling is not a question of having more of the Holy Spirit, but a question of the Holy Spirit having all of us. Our only choice is to obey or disobey this divine direction.”
3. The heathens in their Bacchanalia used to sing hymns to Bacchus whom they called the god of wine. Thus they expressed their drunken joy. But in contrast, what is Paul telling Christians in verse 19 - 20?
- ♦ The joy of Christians should express itself in songs of praise to their God.
 - ♦ Evidence of the filling is an inward joy and praise to God – “*singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*”
 - ♦ We are to give thanks for all things, our blessings and our afflictions (Rom. 8:28)

Think about verse 21, “*Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*” as you read verses 22-33. In commentary, Mathew Henry states, “Here the apostle begins his exhortations to the discharge of relative duties. As a general foundation for these duties, he lays down that rule verse 21”

4. What do you think Paul means as he wrote about submitting and submission in these next verses? Do these words connote absolute control of another as our world today seems to interpret this as being a doormat?
- ♦ The Greek term for *submission* has military origins emphasizing being under the authority of another. The word does not connote a forced submission – instead a voluntary submission to a proper authority.
 - ♦ Paul also teaches the appropriate response of the person to whom submission is given in the passages 22-33.
 - ♦ Paul’s major emphasis is not on the submission of wives but on the duty of a godly leader to be a servant leader – to use his position to give his wife the greatest opportunity to succeed.
 - ♦ The submission is reciprocal, mutual, voluntary, and personal. It is opposed to rudeness, haughtiness, and selfish preferences of one’s own opinions.
 - ♦ In essence there is mutual submission that we as Christians owe to one another – condescending to bear one another’s burdens, not advancing ourselves above others, not domineering over one another.

5. Verses 22-24 talk about the wife in a marriage. What is Paul saying to us?
 - ◆ Just as Christ is not inferior to the Father, but is the second Person in the Trinity, so wives are equal to their own husbands. Yet in a marriage relationship, husbands and wives have different roles. A wife's submission arises out of her own submission to Christ.
 - ◆ Authority and government are lodged in the husband. The home has its center and unity in the husband just as Christ is the center of the church.

6. Verses 25-31 instruct husbands. What is the significance of what Paul is saying to us?
 - ◆ Paul does not emphasize the husband's authority in v.25 - instead he calls on husbands to love self-sacrificially. Husbands are to emulate Christ's love...from laying down ones life for another to serving even if it means suffering.
 - ◆ How should a man care for his wife? He should be willing to sacrifice everything for her, he should make her well-being of primary importance and he should care for her as he does his own body.
 - ◆ In verses 26-27 Paul briefly outlines what Jesus has done for the church. First, He loved the church so much that He was willing to suffer and die for it. His actions saved the church. These actions also sanctified the church or made it pure with the washing of the Word – “the washings of regeneration”. (1 Cor 5-11; Tit. 3:5)

7. What is the “mystery” in verse 32 about and how does it apply to us today?
 - ◆ The great mystery is the comparison of the marriage union with the union of Christ and His Church.

8. Think and discuss how you would apply these verses to your marriage, to your relationship with others, and to your relationship with Christ today.