



Obedience and Filled With the Spirit

So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit . . . Ephesians 5:17-18 (NASB)

Doubts About Salvation

Every true believer will be greatly concerned at some point in life that they are not a genuine believer in Jesus Christ. This occurs usually for one of three reasons. The first reason individuals may doubt that their sins are forgiven and have been saved from hell is that they do not know what is required to become a believer in Jesus Christ. They do not understand that God only requires that a person believe in Christ, that He is God, and His physical body died and was resurrected for the forgiveness of sins. True belief is evidenced by sorrow over one's sins and a desire that God change their life so that they stop sinning.

A second reason individuals may doubt they are saved is that they may not understand that they can never lose their salvation. The gospel of John states that Jesus has promised believers that they will never lose their salvation. What promises are given to us in these verses?

1. What is the first promise in John 3:16?

2. What is the second promise that is repeated in John 6:39, 40, 44, and 54?

Will of God Explicitly Stated

God has told us that His will for us includes at least five things:

Command	Passage
Be filled with the Holy Spirit	Ephesians 5:17-18
Be sexually pure	1 Thessalonians 4:3-8
Give thanks always	1 Thessalonians 5:18
Submit to your government	1 Peter 2:13-15
Be willing to suffer for God	1 Peter 4:19

A third reason genuine believers doubt they are saved is that they have committed some serious sin(s), or they are committing one or more habitual sins. It is sin that they have not been able to defeat. They confess their sins to God, but they keep repeating the sin or sins. As a result, they are fearful they are not saved and worry they are going to the lake of fire. Sadly, one very common recommendation given by biblical counselors and pastors is that the individual should recognize that doubts are normal. Some recommend talking with others about their sin, read the Bible, get someone to hold them accountable, or pray. Some of the worst advice is that the sinning individual should get involved in a spiritual ministry. Maybe the individual should also seek counseling. In the process, someone may tell the individual that he or she is a true believer. Unfortunately, it is possible the individual may not be a believer. Maybe they never understood what it means to believe in Jesus Christ. But the most common reason a genuine believer doubts they are saved and destined for heaven is the Holy Spirit is convicting them of their sin or sins. When believers commit a serious sin or have a sin habit, a true believer will feel guilty and doubt their salvation. Sin deceives! That is the message of 1 John 3:18-19. So, what should a believer do according to 1 John 1:9 if they are doubting their salvation due to sin?

The Greek word for “confess” means to admit one’s sins. It does not mean we are to beg for forgiveness. We only need to admit our sins. That is, the believer must describe the sins that they committed and not just generally describe it. Now that can be very difficult for someone who has sorrow over their sins. Most believers are ashamed to admit it. Others, want to beg God to forgive all of their sins. They fear they will suffer some kind of punishment before God will forgive them. Consequently, 1 John 1:9 is a great verse for believers who worry that the Father will not forgive. It encourages us that God the Father will forgive believers by giving us two attributes or characteristics of the Father. What are those attributes of God that reveal God will forgive? Write a definition for both of them. Next, explain why they are a promise of forgiveness.

Correct Heart Attitude

True believers long to be holy. Ezekiel 36:31-32 reveals the heart of a true believer. True believers will loathe their sins and themselves. A true believer knows he or she is a wicked person and totally guilty. Yet, they also know they are totally forgiven of their sins because Christ died so that they can be forgiven. What do these verses reveal?

1. What does 1 John 1:6 reveal about someone who thinks they are a believer and are habitually sinning?
2. What does 1 John 1:8, 10 reveal about someone who claims they do not sin?
3. What did the apostle Paul reveal about himself as a result of his struggle with sin in Romans 7:15-16?
4. What did Paul say was his problem within himself (Romans 7:21-22)?
5. What did the apostle Paul want according to Romans 7:24?
6. What is the correct heart attitude for a believer to have according to 1 Peter 1:15-16? What should we desire?
7. Do you want to be holy? If so, how strong is your desire?

We Need Help

The wonderful news is that the Holy Spirit can help us increasingly have victory over sin. Believers have not been left alone in the battle with sin. Read Romans 8:13-14 and then answer the questions.

1. What are the deeds of the body according to Galatians 5:19-21?
2. Who are the sons of God (Romans 8:14).

3. Who helps believers put to death the deeds of the body (Romans 8:13-14)?

4. Who can help us sin less (Galatians 5:16), and what must we do?

We are told the apostle Paul prayed that the Ephesian believers would be strengthened in the inner person.

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father . . . that He would grant you . . . to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man. Ephesians 3:14-16 (NASB)

What do believers need the Holy Spirit to do for them?

According to Paul, what is the result of being strengthened or empowered in the inner person in verses Ephesians 3:17-19?

- a. Christ dwelling in our hearts through _____.
- b. Be able to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the _____.
- c. To know this love that surpasses _____.
- d. You may be filled up to the fullness of _____.

Filled With The Spirit

Now we will discover how a believer can be strengthened in the inner person. Read Ephesians 5:17-21 and answer the following questions.

1. According to Ephesians 5:16-18 what is the will of God for you?

2. In Ephesians 5:18 the Greek word translated as “dissipation” refers “to reckless living.” So, believers are not to get drunk with wine but with the Spirit. So, how much of the Spirit should each believer be filled with?

3. The Greek word for “filled” in Ephesians 5:18 is a command. The Greek word for “filled” has the idea of being filled up. The verse tells us that we are doing the will of God when we are filled with the Holy Spirit. The evidences that a person is being filled with the Holy Spirit are given to us in Ephesians 5:19-22, 25; 6:1, 5. What are the evidences?

How To Be Filled With the Spirit. Now we will discover how to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The first point we must realize is that someone who is drunk with wine is controlled by the alcohol in the wine. The second point is that God used the illustration to reveal that being filled with the Holy Spirit means we must allow the Holy Spirit to control us too! So, the first step to being filled is to allow the Holy Spirit to do what in our lives?

Please compare Colossians 3:16-22 to Ephesians 5:17-6:5 noticing how they start and end. This will help us understand how to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Even though the two passages start differently, both of them give us the same results. Now answer these questions.

4. What does “Let the word of God dwell richly within you” mean in Colossians 3:16-22? What must we do in order for that to happen?

5. So, if we let the word of God dwell richly within us, then the result is identical to being filled with the Spirit. This reveals that to be filled with the Spirit requires we must faithfully study the Bible. How much should you study the Bible? What does “richly” mean?

Walking In The Spirit. There are three very important passages in the New Testament that help us understand how to be empowered or filled with the Holy Spirit. We have looked at two of them. Now we will look at the third one. It is found in Galatians 5:16-23. But first, let us look at Galatians 5:16-18,

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Galatians 5:16-18 (NASB)

This is a wonderful passage because it tells us that if we are walking in the Spirit, we will be having victory over sin. That is why we are studying these three special passages.

6. According to Galatians 5:16-18, there is a war between two things. What are the two things?

7. What does the flesh want to do according to Galatians 5:19-21?

8. If a person is walking in the Spirit, what does the Holy Spirit produce according to Galatians 5:22-23?

In Galatians 5:16, we are commanded by God to walk in the Spirit. To walk in the Spirit is the key to victory over our sinful desires and to living a holy life. The key to victory over sin is not self-punishment or doing penance. Self-help books or going to prolonged counseling sessions will not fill you with the Holy Spirit. The key to living a holy life according to Galatians 5:16 is to walk in the Spirit. Christians are commanded to walk in the Spirit (or obey the Spirit) since the Spirit already lives within them (Romans 8:2; Galatians 5:25; 1 Peter 4:6).

The Greek word for “walk” in Galatians 5:16 has the idea of continually walking in the Spirit and the Greek word for “carry out” has the idea of accomplishment. That is, if we are constantly walking in the Spirit, we will be sinning less and less. Now we need to ask, “How do we walk in the Spirit?”

The Greek word for “walk” is *peripateo* which means “to walk about.” This means that walking in the Spirit requires that a believer is 1) constantly filled with the Holy Spirit and 2) dwelling in the Word richly day after day, moment after moment.

When We Sin. The third step to walking in the Spirit is to confess our sins when we sin, which result in increasing obedience to the commands in the Scriptures. Sin prevents us from being continually filled with the Spirit, which results in less self-control over sin. We are like a trained dog which forgets his training and wanders away from his master. When we sin, we need our relationship restored and that only happens when we confess our sins. We hurt our relationship with the Spirit when we sin in two ways.

9. What does Ephesians 4:30 tell us happens when we sin? What does 1 Thessalonians 5:19 reveal happens when we sin?

Things To Ponder

1. What are the three conditions that must exist in a believer's life in order to be constantly walking in the Spirit?
2. If a believer is walking in the Spirit, what will happen to that believer over time?
3. Will a believer who is walking in the Spirit fulfill God's desire described in 1 Peter 1:15-16?
4. Will a Spirit-filled believer have doubts about their salvation (1 John 3:19-20)? Explain your answer.
5. What does God the Father want of each believer according to Ephesians 1:4?
6. Are you practicing walking in the Spirit?

Obedience and Filled With the Spirit

Answer true (T) or false (F) to each of the following statements:

1. Confession of sin is where I admit my sins to God. _____
2. We should dwell in the Word of God richly. _____
3. Quenching the Spirit refers to a beverage. _____
4. It is not possible to grieve the Holy Spirit. _____
5. God never commands us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is an option. _____
6. If we walk in the Spirit, we will have greater victory over sin. _____
7. When a believer is having difficulties, he/she should go to a counselor and ignore being filled with the Holy Spirit. _____
8. God commands us to walk in the Spirit, to be filled with the Spirit, and to study the Scriptures. All three are important. _____
9. The fruit of the Spirit is the one strong evidence that a person is a believer. _____
10. The greatest evidence that a person is a believer is that he/she is increasingly sinning less. _____