

Bible Truths Foundations of the Faith

*Walking by the
Spirit!*

Walking Worthy of our Calling in Christ

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Walking by the Spirit

In Galatians 5:16-25 the Apostle Paul develops for us the significance of the Holy Spirit's ministry in our lives as believers. What is pictured there is a spiritual advance in life dealing with the details of life empowered by the Holy Spirit. With perhaps the exception of Romans chapter eight, no other chapter of Scripture is as significant in explaining this link. That is the link between Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the daily life of the believer! How Christ and the Holy Spirit impacts our lives as believers in Christ.

The Epistle to the Galatians, the first of Paul's letters, centers the attention of the reader on two dominant themes: (1) the justification of the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ apart from legal works, and (2) the ministry of the Holy Spirit as the indwelling energizer of the spiritual life in Christ." All this so that we could realize the freedom that is ours in Christ!

In the development of his argument to the Galatians, Paul first establishes the nature of the Gospel in chapters one and two by making clear that justification is by faith alone in Christ alone. One result of justification by faith is the immediate indwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

In Galatians 3:2 he asks a penetrating question: *This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?* The expected answer is the hearing with faith (cf., Galatians 2:16b; Romans 10:17). Law here refers to the Mosaic Law and the teaching of the Judaizers that wrongly attempted to instruct the Gentile Christians that they also needed to obey the Law in order to fully enter into the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant. (relationship with God)

This obedience to the Law included both the moral law and the ceremonial law. Paul counters by teaching that observance of moral and ceremonial precepts can never provide any sinner with the quality of righteousness necessary for justification before God (Gal. 3:10-12, 21; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Paul then shifts his subject from justification to sanctification with another very pointed rhetorical question: *Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh* (Gal. 3:3)?

He establishes two important contrasts, two antitheses: begun/perfected and Spirit/flesh.

The next place these concepts are addressed is in Galatians 5:16-25, where Paul explains the dynamic of how the Spirit is instrumental in the believer's life resulting in growth and advancement in the spiritual life. What is that growth in? The Word! That is the believer being filled with a knowledge of Christ through faith in the Word!

The first phrase, *having begun by the Spirit*, reminds them of the mechanics of salvation: a new life in Christ created through regeneration by God the Holy Spirit which occurred at the instant of faith alone in Christ alone. At the time of

Paul's writing to them, the Holy Spirit had already regenerated these Galatians. No one is able to regenerate himself, only God can do this (John 1:13).

For this reason salvation is by means of faith, not because of faith. When an individual exhales faith alone in Christ alone, His work on the cross, the Holy Spirit instantly regenerates him and simultaneously imputes God's perfect righteousness to that individual who is now a new creation in Christ. This new life in Christ is eternal in nature in contrast to the first birth.

This imputed righteousness is the cause of salvation. At that point, God the Father looks upon the believer's possession of imputed perfect righteousness and declares him justified. This occurs immediately after faith in Christ. Thus the logical conclusion is that ceremonial and moral acts are inconsequential to justification.

The believer has received a new life from the Holy Spirit, a life that the Spirit must now nourish and develop. Rem: That faith is the means, not the cause of salvation.

Just as human morality, law performance living, is inconsequential to salvation, Paul will argue that ethical obedience, law performance living is neither the means nor the cause of spiritual growth and living, though moral living within the will of God is an effect or consequence of spiritual growth. **Not a means but a result of!**

The contrast *being perfected* (Galatians 3:3) is an unfortunate translation for the Greek verb, *epiteleo* (ἐπιτελέω) This word is an intensification of the verb found in Galatians 5:16, *τελειοω*, describing the result of walking by the Spirit. [*you will not carry out the desires of the flesh*] *Epiteleo* means, "to perform," "to establish," "to finish," or "to bring to completion."

The Galatian believers began their Christian life through a work of the Holy Spirit, but they were now attempting to grow and advance spiritually, to live the Christian life through dependence on their own ability and works, not in dependence on the Word and the indwelling Holy Spirit.

The passive voice of the verb indicates the believer does not bring himself to maturation, but, by walking by the Spirit, that is, being responsive to the Word heard, applying it, the result will be growth in Christ. [must be in fellowship]

Moral though the Galatians efforts might have been, such attempts were illegitimate. Morality or law performance living is never sufficient to control and deal with the sin nature. [Paul in Rom 7:15f points that out.] Spiritual growth and the advance in the spiritual life only comes by dependence on or fellowship with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit must not be grieved or quenched.

Any and all activity accomplished in life not in dependence on the Holy Spirit and the Word, that activity is human good and it is derived from the source of the flesh. Paul wants the Galatians to understand that every activity in life derives from either one source or the other, the Spirit or the flesh (sin nature). We need to remember that having began by faith we must also walk by faith Col. 2:6.

The main point of Paul's rhetorical question here, however, has to do with the incongruity of beginning one's Christian life on one basis ("with the Spirit") and then shifting somewhere along the line to living life on another basis, that is, "by human effort/works" from the area of strength of the sin nature.

What Paul wants these believers to see is that the Christian life is one that starts, is maintained, and comes to its God given purpose only through dependence on the ministry of God's Spirit and His Word.

Paul clearly emphasizes the antithesis between the production of the Spirit and the work of the flesh, the sin nature. Paul clearly uses "flesh" (sarx) with an ethical dimension beginning in Galatians 3:3 where the flesh refers to the sin nature.

A Christian can clearly live an ethical, [Mosaic] moral law abiding life, yet the results are at best human good from the source of the sin nature. Isaiah emphasized that it is our righteous deeds (human good) not our unrighteous deeds that are like a filthy garment from God's viewpoint (Isaiah 64:6). The same thing Paul does in Titus 3:5.

Failure to take into account the reality that the **sin nature** can produce morality (human good) has led to much confusion and distortion in teaching about the spiritual life.

Have you ever wondered how it is that many unbelievers you know are very nice people who often live very strong moral lives. Better often than many believers?

In Romans chapter six, Paul makes it clear that everything the unbeliever does comes from the sin nature. The unbeliever is born enslaved to this sin nature. It is only after salvation that the believer is able to make a choice not to live enslaved to the sin nature.

Therefore, all that the unbeliever does good, bad, moral, and immoral-proceeds out from a fallen sinful nature. Paul in Rom. 7:5 emphasizes that even the attempt to live a moral life on the basis of the Law, arouses the passions of the sin nature. Morality, or law performance living therefore, is not able to control the sin nature. Paul implies that a believer can distinguish between the good and moral that the sin nature generates, and that which the Holy Spirit produces through the believer. (Rom. 7:6)

A life that emphasizes Law and works (i.e., simple human morality, as the means to spiritual growth) is in fact slavery to the sin nature. Paul reminds the Galatians that since they did not receive their new life because of obedience to ceremonial or moral law, the growth of their new life in Christ is also not because they observe ceremonial or moral law.

Our spiritual life and our growth in that life, the apostle bases both on the vastly superior ministry of the Holy Spirit. This does not exclude morality, but recognizes that morality is not automatically synonymous with spiritual growth. If it were, then the Galatians would have demonstrated spiritual advance by their own legalistic lifestyles.

Instead, the result was calamitous. As the apostle Paul had discovered in his own life, an emphasis on legal obedience and morality generates arrogance, covetousness, and numerous other mental and emotional sins.

These sins then culminate in overt sins. Morality alone is never sufficient to control the lust of the sin nature because that same fallen nature produces the human morality.

Only obedience to the precepts of Scripture, applying its truths in dependence on God the Holy Spirit has value for spiritual growth.

The argument Paul uses (in Rom. and Gal.) can be presented in the form of a syllogism, that is on the basis of deductive reasoning.

- 1) Everything the unbeliever does derives from his position in bondage to the sin nature and proceeds from the sin nature (Isaiah 64:6; Romans 6:6, 17, 18; Titus 3:5);
- 2) The unbeliever can live a moral, ethical life; therefore,
- 3) Simple human morality can be the product of the sin nature.

Conclusion: A supernatural means is necessary to produce the virtues and Christ-like character unique to the Christian life.

Paul answers this through the imperative to walk by means of the Spirit which we will examine.

Since we've already noted that it is not enough simply to do the right thing, or live a moral life, since the unbeliever can and will often do what is right and live a moral life. The believer must have some criterion to determine whether his morality derives from the production of the flesh, does it flow from the sin nature as it did with the Judaizers in Galatia or does it flow from the being motivated by the Word illuminated by the Holy Spirit who is empowering the life.

Since moral reformation can be self-induced through an act of the will, how can the believer discern the difference between morality and spiritual growth?

Paul gives us the answers to this question when he commands us to walk by means of the Spirit and all that flows along with that command.

In **Galatians 5:16** it becomes clear why Paul makes dependence on the Holy Spirit an essential facet to the believer's spiritual life, that is the life that is to be Christ centered. The moral qualities produced by mere human ability, the area of strength of the sin nature, cannot rise to the level of the ethical virtues exemplified in the spiritual life God desires for us as believers in the Church Age. The motivation is vastly different, it must be a response to Christ not one's self.

The highest of the virtues is love. Paul reminds the Galatians of this standard in Galatians 5:13-15. The new freedom they have in Christ is not self-serving. Just the opposite is true. Freedom in Christ is freedom from the bondage to sin

(Romans 6:17) and freedom from the law (Galatians 3:11-13; 4:7; Romans 6:14; 7:6) therefore we are free to serve Him as we present ourselves as instruments of righteousness to God Romans 6:13.

The Lord has made the provision to liberate each believer from the self-serving orientation of the sin nature so that we are now free to love as Christ loves.

Notice that when he stresses love, Paul quotes not from Jesus' statement in the upper room (John 13:34), but from Leviticus 19:18. He goes back and quotes from the Law because the Mosaic Law and its miss use is a major issue with these Judaizers in Galatia.

Paul's point is to show that under the Old Testament, believers never fulfilled the command as stated in Leviticus. Actually have an a fortiori argument implied, I believe. An a-fortiori argument is a logical argument that reasons from an accepted greater truth to conclude the veracity of a lesser truth.

The point is that if no one on the basis of the Law (human morality, law performance living alone) could apply the lesser mandate of loving others as themselves, then no one on the basis of human morality can apply the superior mandate of John 13:34-35, that is to love in the same manner that Jesus loved.

During the dispensation of the Mosaic Law, saved Jews had a spiritual life based on simple adherence to the ethical and ceremonial precepts of the law. It was a result of a covenant relationship with God not a cause of it. However, they were unable to live up to the Law by means of human ability alone. They needed to live out and apply the truth they knew.

We should notice the differences between the commands in Leviticus 19:18 and John 13:34-35. In the Leviticus passage, First, the object of love is the neighbor whom Jesus defined in the parable of the Good Samaritan as any other human being regardless of spiritual status. Second, the standard, expressed by the comparative particle "as" (hos), is the individual, as yourself (Gal. 5:14).

Jesus radically transformed this command. In John 13:34-35 when He states: *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even **as I have loved you**, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for **one another**.*

No longer is the object others but one another, i.e., other believers. And the standard by which the love is measured is no longer as you love yourselves, but **as I have loved you**. This love that Jesus is talking about here is the unique calling card of the advancing believer, who is growing in the Word and applying it.

Human effort cannot generate this love; only by God the Holy Spirit working in and empowering the life of the believer can this love be produced in the life.

Must ask?? How can the believer love in this way? How is this accomplished? Paul answers that question in his mandate to the Galatians, to walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16).

Some general observations need to be made regarding the context of Galatians 5:16-5:25.

First, this passage should be considered as one unit, whose purpose is to demonstrate how the believer can produce this love. This explains the priority of love among the fruit of the Spirit.

Second, the apostle makes four parallel statements that help clarify the subject: walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16), be led by the Spirit (Gal. 5:18), live by the Spirit, and walk [follow, stay in step with, be in line with] the Spirit (Gal. 5:25).

Third, it is when the Christian maintains the condition of walking by the Spirit that the Holy Spirit empowers the life and produces the character transformation in the believer.

The conclusion expresses the answer to Galatians 3:3: Are you so foolish? Having begun in [by] the Spirit, are you now being perfected [brought to maturation] by the flesh, the sin nature?

The apostle concludes in 5:25 that if they live by the Spirit (and they do because they are regenerate), they must also walk (the continuation of the spiritual life must be) by the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit verses the Flesh

The grammatical construction of Galatians 5:16 is crucial to understanding the dynamics of growth in the spiritual life.

The present active imperative of "walk" (peripateo) stresses an habitual action that should characterize our life as believer's, that is our goals, attitudes and actions in life.

Walking by the Spirit should be the ongoing, habitual lifestyle pattern of each believer. The nature of the verb itself, to walk, even in its metaphorical use, "to conduct oneself, or the pattern of life" indicates action on the part of the subject.

The activeness of the subject is further demonstrated by the parallel verb, "to be led" in Gal. 5:18 which likewise necessitates the act of following, as do the verbs "living" and "walking in step with" (5:25). **All require active daily choices by each of us.**

The nature of these active verbs anticipates a noun of means or manner. That is, it give us a link as to how, in what manner this all takes place. Paul uses the anarthrous dative of "Spirit" (pneuma) to supply this expectation.

The Christian life is not a passive waiting for growth that somehow automatically happens.

The believer must constantly decide to walk by the Spirit or to walk by faith.

The action described here is not like the believer's status "in Christ," which is passive emphasizing our position in Christ and the reality of our having been united with Christ at salvation in His death, burial and resurrection with the result we're raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:1-4). Because we're raised up to walk in this newness of life, this mandates a responsibility on the part of the believer to count as true, as fact, the reality of the provision of our identification with Christ. As it says in Rom. 6:11 that we are to count as true that we are "dead to sin, (separated from the power and rulership of the sin nature) but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

The use of the dative case of "Spirit" (πνεύματι) in context further supports the idea of means, or instrument. I mentioned earlier that Galatians 5:16 begins to provide us a positive answer to the implicit question of 3:3: How does the believer grow to completion in their spiritual life?

If we were to take this as a passive meaning such as, in the sphere of the Spirit and not means or instrument it would open the door wide to a **quasi mystical** "let go and let God" approach as if by simply being in the Spirit, growth will automatically occur divorced from the active volition of the believer.

Paul continuously hammers home to us that as believers that we live our post-salvation life through the means, or by dependence on the Holy Spirit. **Walking by the Spirit!**

The process of living the Christian life laid out by Paul logically necessitates an instrumental understanding of *Spirit*. The context of the passage is clearly describing the mechanics of production in the Christian life. How we are to live the Christian life so that we are able to bring glory to God.

The result is the transformation of the believer's character into the character of Christ. This result is described by the manifold fruit of Galatians 5:22-23. Also as we saw in Eph. 5:18 we are to be filled (with Christ) by (agency of) the Holy Spirit. Ultimate objective is that we might glorify Christ as we live our life!

The believer is commanded here to walk by means of the Holy Spirit. That this is not automatic is emphasized in the remainder of the verse. *And you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.*

The implications of the syntax in this clause are absolutely profound. The verb is in the aorist passive subjunctive and is negated by a double negative (οὐ μή), the strongest form of denial possible in the Greek. What is Paul saying so emphatically here? What's his point?

When the believer walks by means of the Spirit, it is impossible for him to bring to completion, or fulfillment, the lusts or desires of the flesh. Fulfilling the lust of the flesh and walking by means of the Spirit are mutually exclusive activities.

The believer at any moment either depends on the divine provision of the Holy Spirit, or his own innate ability that has its ultimate source in the sin nature. Remember that the area of strength of the sin nature produces human good.

So what do we have here? Stan Toussaint (an excellent N.T. scholar) has an interesting observation on this context. "In Galatians 5:16 Paul commands the

believer to walk by means of the Spirit. This imperative is followed by οὐ μὴ with the subjunctive, which is an emphatic negation used here as a strong promise. The flesh and Spirit are so contrary to one another that a walk by the Spirit automatically excludes a fulfillment of the baser desires. Victory is available to every Christian."

The next question we should ask: How, then, can a believer who is walking by the Spirit sin? *He must first stop walking by the Spirit.*

The promise implicit in this mandate is that as long as the believer consciously depends on the Holy Spirit, and walks by faith he will not sin.

Once the believer chooses to stop walking, then, and only then, does lust conceive and produce sin.

A choice must be made to stop walking by the Spirit and to put the sin nature in rulership/dominion, then sin is conceived. (Rom 6:12; James 1:14-15)

It is obvious from Gal. 5:16 that the Spirit and the flesh are polar absolutes and mutually exclusive. A believer walks either by one or by the other. There is no possibility that you can walk by the Spirit and the sin nature, the flesh, at the same time.

A believer cannot be walking mostly by the Spirit with a few occasional unknown, or unintentional sins.

Toussaint once again writes concerning this context: "In this entire epistle two alternatives are set before Paul's Christian readers. Either they may walk under law or under grace. These same two choices are open in Gal. 5:16-23. A walk under law necessitates a walk by means of the flesh (cf. Gal 3:2-3; 4:23). At the same time a life lived under grace automatically involves faith in the Word and the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal 3:2-3, 5; 4:29). It is for this reason that the contrast here is between the flesh and the Spirit; they are the two driving forces in the systems of law and grace."

Evidence of this dichotomy between the flesh and the Spirit is then described in the various character qualities listed in Galatians 5:19-23. First when the sin nature dominates in 5:19-21 and then followed in 5:22-23 by the characteristics demonstrated when walking by the Holy Spirit.

We as believers are to abide in Christ, and to walk by the Holy Spirit! That's to be the norm for the believer. It is never in our best interest or advantage to produce the deeds of the sin nature listed in 19-21 they only bring negative consequences in our life.

Paul includes this info here because as believers we may choose to stop walking by the Holy Spirit and begin operating by means of the flesh, the sin nature. These are the only two options.

It is clear that abiding, fellowship, (as developed by John in 1 John and John 15) and walking by means of the Holy Spirit all look at the advancing believer's life from the same perspective. In contrast, not abiding, lack of fellowship, and

operating by the sin nature describes the believer living in self-dependence dominated by the sin nature's lust patterns both the areas of weakness and strength. It might be helpful for us to relate these conclusions to another category of walking: *walking in the light*.

Walking in the Light

Numerous passages use walking as a metaphor for the Christian life. A noun in the dative or with an "in" (ἐν) clause often accompany "walk." As we study Scripture we must pay close attention to the context in determining the precise nuance and thrust the author intends for us to understand.

In Galatians, the nuance of instrumentality/means was necessary due to the nature of the verbs and the description of the action.

In 1 John chapter one, the apostle does not use a simple dative. Instead, John opts for "*in the darkness*" and "*in the light*" to describe the characteristics of two opposing walks of believer's that are found (1 John 1:6,7). Further, John's use of "in" (ἐν) makes it clear that he has a locative connotation in mind, that of sphere (1 John 2:9-11).

As with Paul's mutually exclusive categories of walking by the Spirit or walking according to the sin nature, John expresses the mutually exclusive walks of life as either darkness or light (1 John 1:6, 7). Having fellowship with God is impossible while walking in darkness.

Walking in the light is connected to fellowship in these verses, and fellowship is synonymous with abiding in 1 John. As believers we can either walk in darkness or walk in light. Paul's development of walking in Ephesians 4-6 supports this view.

As children of light (Ephesians 5:8).

The Christian life is covered extensively in Ephesians under the metaphor of walking in chapter 4 - 6. Five times the apostle uses the verb "to walk" three times in Ephesians chapter five alone.

The first is to walk in love (Eph 5:2). The Greek preposition "in" (ἐν), may be translated as a locative or instrumental. If locative, then the idea would be in the state or sphere of love, a more passive idea. Yet, the remainder of the verse suggests a more instrumental idea. The standard for the believer is Christ's love demonstrated at the cross.

The active voice of the verb suggests that Christ's active love for God the Father, to fulfill His plan and to provide salvation for mankind, was the motive that kept him on the cross (Heb. 12:2-3).

Thus, He endured not "in love," but "by means of love." Love for God the Father enabled Him to endure the indescribable suffering for our sins on the cross. This shows that certain means or instruments aid the believer's walk.

The Holy Spirit is one; the active application of love toward fellow believers is another.

Walking by means of love is then parallel with the next command to: walk as children of light in Eph. 5:8. This mandate follows the statement about our former position as in darkness with our new position as light in the Lord.

We are born physically in the realm of darkness and only become sons of the light at the instant of faith alone in Christ alone (John 12:36a).

Walking in the light, as John observed, is not automatic. As believers we can surely choose to walk in darkness instead of living on the basis of who we are now as a member of God's family, possessing a new nature, and indwelt by God the Holy Spirit.

Failure to reflect the character of the new nature.

The metaphor of light is used two ways in Scripture:

- 1) to portray the holiness, righteousness, and absolute perfection of God (1 John 1:5)
- 2) the revelation of God, His Person, Perfections, and plan through the Word of God (Psa 119:105, 130).

In Him, Christ, there is no darkness. John emphasizes that to walk in darkness breaks fellowship with God.

Dr. Dean commenting related to the subject here said: "Some suggest that only known sin breaks fellowship with God, or sin revealed to the individual by the Holy Spirit. Yet, how much sin violates the absolute standard of God's perfection? Does sin only violate that righteous standard when one is aware of it, or when he does it intentionally? The answer is that any sin, known, unknown, intentional or not, violates the standard of God's absolute perfection. The light of God's Word and the Light, His Son, reveals the standard. The believer is to walk consistently with God's Person and perfections as revealed in the light of His Word. Whenever he sins, he paralyzes his walk."

In Ephesians chapter five Paul, again, contrasts the mutually exclusive walk of the believer with the results of choices made outside the will of God. Paul recognizes that these are absolute states which are mutually exclusive.

The believer may imitate God or not (5:1), walk by means of love or not (5:2), have improper conduct or not (5:3, 4), be disobedient or not (5:6), and walk as children of light or as approving deeds of darkness (5:7-13). Paul shifts the metaphor of light from light as divine perfection to light as the revelation of that perfection in the Word that exposes sin in the context of (5:13-14).

This introduces the **informational aspect** of one's walk - **the revelation** of God's Word - that informs us as believers of the directive will of God, the mandates, and provisions for living the Christian life having impact for Christ.

Only through His Word as the Holy Spirit illuminates that Word and therefore teaches us, can we as believers learn what God's plan is and the procedures for life being lived in the light of the Word.

The Holy Spirit is crucial in this process. Jesus called Him the *Spirit of truth* (14:17) and the *Helper*, John 14:26).

Then, our Lord used the title the Spirit of truth in apposition to *the Helper* (John 15:26) showing that the Holy Spirit would help the believer with his understanding of truth.

The role of the Holy Spirit is in the revelation, communication, understanding, retention, and recall of the principles of the Word of God (John 16:13; 17:17; 1 Cor. 2:9-16).

As the believer learns under the teaching ministry of God the Holy Spirit, he develops wisdom. Wisdom is related to application of the Word. So again, Eph. 5:15-17 reveals an absolute contrast between wisdom, which is making wise choices as opposed to foolishness, ignoring the will of God.

Abiding, walking by the Holy Spirit, walking by means of love, walking in the light and walking as a child of the Light, and walking with wisdom - **all** represent the believer who is growing and advancing in their spiritual life.

However, how does the believer come to understand these mechanics and the doctrines they represent? Can he do that on his own? When Ephesians 5:18 is compared with Colossians 3:16 the crucial dynamic for the spiritual life is readily apparent.

The context of Ephesians chapter five reveals a dynamic that is both **parallel with** the absolute state of walking in the Light and, in itself, **tantamount to** walking by means of the Holy Spirit. [of Gal. 5:16]

Since the walk by means of the Holy Spirit is parallel to abiding in Christ and fellowship, we discover that the filling by the Spirit characterizes abiding in Christ.

This brings us to the command *Be filled with the Spirit* (Eph 5:18). Many have written on this verse, including its background and interpretation. We should note two salient points as noted by Dr. Dean in the Chafer Theological Seminary Journal.

"First, Paul's imperative directed toward the believer's volition indicates the possibility of only two options, **either obedience or disobedience**. Once again this mandate fits the scenario of absolute states: one is either filled, or not.

Second, Paul draws his contrast with wine. The issue is not control, but instrumentality. The Greek mystery religions, including that of Dionysus, proposed certain means for uniting with the gods, wine being one of those means.

The Holy Spirit is not the content of the filling, the believer does not get more of the Spirit in the filling, but rather the Holy Spirit fills the believer with

something. We discover the content of the filling in, a parallel passage. The apostle Paul mandates, *Let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you* (Col 3:16).

The results are teaching, admonishing, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, thankfulness, and transformed relationships in the home and at work (Col. 3:16-24).

This points out identical results that follow the filling by [agency] of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:19-6:9). Paul gives two seemingly distinct commands in two contexts that in turn produce identical results."

Comparison of these two passages yields a couple of conclusions.

The Holy Spirit fills the believer with Christ through the Word that is believed (Eph 3:17). Does this just happen? No it takes choices! We must choose to assemble consistently and study the Word. The believer, then, walking by means of the Holy Spirit, illumines the Word so that it transforms the believer's thinking and in turn transforms his life.

However, the believer can choose to reject the ministry of the Spirit, to reject the Word. This is synonymous with not walking by the Spirit, or walking in darkness at which point sin ensues.

The believer is no longer abiding, having fellowship with God, walking in the light, walking by means of love, and advancing in the will of God in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Instead, the believer is walking according to the flesh, as a fool, and in darkness. No longer does the Holy Spirit lead him, nor does he follow in the Spirit's footsteps.

The results of this walk are the works of the flesh, although it may be very moral. Such a condition shuts down [stymies] the production of the fruit of the Spirit in their life.

There is nothing mystical or magical about this process. Any believer may learn doctrine that is useable in his or her spiritual growth, but it has value for spiritual growth **only** when in right relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Apart from the ministry of the H/S it becomes distorted info and will be misunderstood and misapplied.

This does not involve some mystical takeover of the believer's volition, or "letting go and letting God." That indeed would be the result or emphasis, if Paul had used a genitive of content in Ephesians 5:18. But he didn't!!

The Spirit does not operate in a vacuum, but always in conjunction with the Word of God, the light of divine revelation. Neither works apart from the other.

Emphasis on the Holy Spirit without equal emphasis on learning and applying the principles of truth from the Word inevitably leads the believer to a subjective mystical approach to life.

In contrast, emphasis on study apart from the indispensable role of the Holy Spirit leads to knowledge for knowledge's sake, a merely academic emphasis often confusing human morality with spiritual growth produced by the Holy Spirit.

May each of us be motivated by our love of Christ to get in the Word and to live it out as it is illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

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