

Living Wisely in the Spirit
Study 11 – Ephesians – Living In Christ and the World
Ephesians 5:15-21

Message Mate

- Being careful how you live is key to living wisely in the Spirit. Live wisely and ask God to give you more wisdom. Make the most of every opportunity, acknowledging that what might appear to be a good opportunity is not always a God opportunity. Be wise and make the best use of your time so that you can do what the Lord has asked you to do. Being careful how you live includes not being foolish. Instead, find out what pleases God and understand what the Lord wants you to do so that you can do that.
- Being careful how you live includes not getting drunk, instead be filled with the Holy Spirit. Excess alcohol leads to an unwise, foolish and wasteful life (which is the original meaning of debauchery), whereas the Holy Spirit brings wisdom, self-control and godly use of time and resources. Sometimes the Holy Spirit causes people to talk, sing or act with such joy and freedom that people may accuse those under the influence of the Spirit of being drunk, as occurred on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:13-15).
- “Be filled with the Holy Spirit” involves a repeated ongoing filling with the Spirit. We can restrict the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in our lives by our thoughts, words and actions. We can quench the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 5:19) and grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30) by our traditions, thoughts and words, in how we pray or by our actions, including repeatedly not acting on God’s promptings or being unwise or foolish. We can limit the Fruit of the Spirit, the freedom of the Spirit or the power of the Spirit, often unintentionally. Therefore, we need to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit.
- Five actions that are part of a life of being continually filled with the Spirit include addressing one another with songs that include praise, teaching and Spirit-led spontaneity, singing and making melody to God, giving thanks to God and submitting to one another. We are called to address one another with psalms (songs of praise often accompanied by music), hymns (more liturgical and often with a teaching element) and spiritual songs (spontaneous songs from our heart as prompted by the Holy Spirit).
- We are called to give thanks. Thanksgiving helps us overcome temptations and sins and not giving thanks can limit the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives (Romans 1:21). A life of continually being filled with the Spirit includes thanksgiving. And we are called to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. To submit is to voluntarily yield in love, so when we submit to one another, we submit to the presence of Christ in another believer.
- Let us pray that we would live wisely, understanding the will of God with a desire for continual filling with the Holy Spirit so that we can be increasingly who God desires us to be.

Some Questions to Consider

1. We are to make the most of every opportunity, but not all opportunities are good or God opportunities. How do you distinguish between a good opportunity and a God opportunity? Do you have an example to share?
2. Being careful how we live means making the best use of time and avoiding foolishness. What are the biggest “time-wasters” that prevent you from doing what would please the Lord most? What is one practical thing you could do this week to either make the most of opportunities you have or to make the better use of your time?
3. We can restrict, quench, or grieve the work of the Holy Spirit through our traditions, thoughts, words, actions, or by ignoring His promptings. Which of these to you find most challenging to guard against? Why?
4. “Be filled with the Spirit” is a present continuous tense, meaning it involves repeated, ongoing filling. Discuss whether you considered regularly asking for a continual filling of the Holy Spirit (for yourself and for the church)?
5. Worship with song and/or music is an important part of being filled with the Spirit, and we are to address one another and worship the Lord. How does actively sharing with other believers in these times of worship bless each other and helps us stay continually filled? Why is this important for you individually and for us as a church?
6. A Spirit-filled life involves continual thanksgiving to God and voluntarily submitting to other believers out of reverence for Christ. Why do you think gratitude and submitting to the presence of Christ in another believer helps overcome temptations and allows the Spirit to work more freely in our lives?

Pray –

Pray with thanks to the Lord for the many blessings that He has given you.

Pray for a continual ongoing filling with the Holy Spirit.

Overview of verses 15-21

Be careful how you live:

Not as unwise **but** as wise (v15)

Don't be foolish – **but** understand the will of the Lord (v17)

Don't get drunk – **but** be continually filled with the Spirit (v18-21)

Speaking, singing, making music to one another and God

Giving thanks to God

Submitting to one another