

# Pentecost and the Coming of the Holy Spirit

## Part 3-- The Filling of the Holy Spirit

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When Jesus poured out the Spirit from heaven the disciples were baptized in the Spirit and also filled with the Spirit. “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues” (Ac. 2:4). In our study of Pentecost it is important that we recognize the biblical distinction between Spirit baptism (which we have seen is a once for all historical event and thus in the new covenant era all Christians receive the Spirit when they are saved) and being filled with the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament, believers are baptized in the Spirit once. There are no examples of anyone ever being baptized in the Spirit more than once. However, when one examines the expression “be filled with the Spirit,” one finds an experience that is repeated over and over (e.g., Ac. 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9). Paul also *commands* believers to “be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18). The verb the apostle uses indicates that Christians have a responsibility to be *continuously* filled with the Spirit.

The expression “to be filled with the Spirit” and the description “a man...full of the Holy Spirit” (Ac. 6:5) can have different (yet related) meanings depending on the context.

(1) In the book of Acts the expression “filled with the Holy Spirit” usually refers to a special temporary enabling power from the Spirit given in order to deal with important situations. In Acts 2:4, the apostles are filled with the Spirit and then immediately begin proclaiming the gospel to the Jews in diverse languages. When Peter and John were arrested for preaching the gospel and stood before the Jewish authorities, Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit (Ac. 4:8) and spoke boldly (Ac. 4:13) to the officials. This “filling” and enablement was a literal fulfillment of our Lord’s promise in Matthew 10:19-20, “But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.” (Cf. Lk. 21:12-15). After the Sanhedrin let Peter and John go, they went to their fellow believers, reported what occurred, and in response the whole group prayed that God would grant them boldness to speak God’s Word. After they prayed “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness” (Ac. 4:31). The Spirit of God gave the disciples courage and strength to preach the gospel with boldness in the midst of persecution. In Acts 9:17, Ananias lays his hand on Saul so that he may receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. The new Christian Saul needed to be filled and enabled for his ministry as an apostle. Only a few verses after Saul is filled, we read: “Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God” (Ac. 9:20). In Acts 13:9 Paul is again filled with the Spirit in his confrontation with Elymas the sorcerer. “Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him.”

(2) In the book of Acts we also find the expression “to be full of the Holy Spirit” (Ac. 6:3, 5; 7:55; 11:29). This expression does not refer to temporary fillings for special circumstances but to a continuous pattern of godly behavior. To be filled with the Spirit is to live a life characterized by certain gifts and graces of the Spirit. In Acts 6 when the infant church is confronted with the task of choosing the first deacons the qualifications are: “men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” (v. 3). The men who would be handling the

collection and management of the church's money must have certain qualities. They must be controlled and enabled by the Spirit. The passage implies an observable continuous pattern of wise and godly behavior. Each man chosen would have studied and consistently applied God's Word to himself and his family (cf. 1 Tim. 3:7 ff.). One such man was "Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit" (Ac. 6:5; cf. 7:55). Note also how Luke describes the spiritual characteristics of Barnabas the evangelist. He is described as "a man, full of the Holy Spirit" (Ac. 11:24). Barnabas was a man of sterling character, a doer of good deeds because he was under the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. "The presence of the Holy Spirit and complete trust in Jesus furnish him with serene stability, genuine love for his fellow man, and unparalleled dedication to the work of the Lord."<sup>1</sup>

(3) The expression "be filled with the Spirit" occurs only once outside the book of Acts in Ephesians 5:18. Here Paul is not discussing a believer's condition or experience but is issuing a command. Reading the imperative in its context will aid our understanding of the apostle's injunction. "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:18-21).

There are a number of things that need to be considered regarding Paul's command to be filled with the Spirit. First, note that the apostle issues a command in the present tense. He is saying that we must keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit. "[B]e perpetually filled with the Spirit. Let it go on, let it continue, let it be your constant condition."<sup>2</sup> Paul is commanding believers to be filled with the Spirit all the time, every moment of every day. From the fact that we are dealing with a command to be continually filled with the Spirit, we can deduce that what the apostle is discussing in this passage is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit which is a one time experience over which believers have no control. Remember, the Spirit baptism is something God does. The 120, the Samaritans and the Gentiles at Cornelius' house were not told to seek Spirit baptism. They did not receive any commands or instructions on how to be baptized with the Spirit. The apostles were simply told to wait. They were *passively* sitting in a room while Jesus was *actively* pouring out the Holy Spirit. Note, also that the command to be continually filled with the Spirit sets this passage apart from the special temporary fillings of the Spirit found throughout the book of Acts. The apostles and evangelists were temporarily filled (aorist tense) for specific tasks such as healing, casting out demons, preaching the gospel with boldness or answering persecuting civil or religious authorities. The fact that Paul commands us "to be filled with the Spirit" indicates that this is not something that happens to us but rather is something over which we have control. "As a man decides and controls whether he is going to be filled with wine or not, so it is he himself who controls and decides whether he is going to be controlled by the Spirit or not. He is therefore given a commandment, and injunction, an exhortation. We must therefore cease to think of it in terms of 'having an experience.'"<sup>3</sup>

This point is very important, for many professing Christians have been taught that sanctification and growth in holiness is a very passive matter. Believers are taught to "let go and let God," or "empty yourselves that Christ may be all," or "come to the front of the church so you can be 'slain' by the Spirit." Many are mistakenly taught by word and example that the essence of the Christian life is to have an experience, to be repeatedly zapped by God. Paul has a

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<sup>1</sup> Simon J. Kistemaker, *Acts*, 421.

<sup>2</sup> D. Martin-Lloyd-Jones, *An Exposition of Ephesians 5:18 to 6:9* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 48.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 49.

very different view. He tells believers that there must be a continuous life-long appropriation of the Spirit. A decisive experience or series of experiences (getting zapped) is not what the apostle has in mind.

Second, Paul helps our understanding of what it means to be filled with the Spirit by setting up an antithesis between drunkenness and its consequences and being filled with the Spirit and its fruits. A person who gets drunk (who is guilty of excessive and immoderate drinking) places himself under the control of alcoholic beverages. As a result, he acts under the influence of alcohol. Everyone knows that excessive drink causes people to lose control. Their inhibitions are altered. Their consciences are dulled. They throw off every restraint of modesty, shame or decency. Drunkenness, Paul says, is a fountain of wickedness. “In drunkenness, he says, there is *asotia*, ‘revelry,’ ‘debauchery,’ ‘riot,’ whatever tends to destruction...”<sup>4</sup> People who are controlled by alcohol fornicate, commit adultery, get in fights, commit murder, participate in riots and generally act like total idiots (i.e., loud, obnoxious and out of control). Paul says don’t get drunk which places you under the control of alcohol and leads you to a life of unethical behavior, but rather be filled with the Holy Spirit. Place yourself under the controlling influence of the Spirit. The Spirit’s influence leads to godliness, ethical behavior and true joy.

Third, the verb (be filled) is in the passive voice and is followed by the instrumental *en* (in, with). What this means is that Paul is commanding us to be filled with God’s Spirit as vessels filled to overflowing. This analogy reminds us of Jesus’ statement, “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (Jn. 7:38). As a drunk fills his belly with wine and is thus controlled by its effect, the Christian must conduct himself in such a manner that he will be perpetually filled with the Spirit, allowing the Spirit to control the heart and life. The fact that the verb “be filled” is passive indicates that the Holy Spirit does the filling. The Holy Spirit is to control our hearts, our minds, our thoughts, our speech and our actions. Yet the fact that the verb is an imperative indicates that we must be active in order to be acted upon by the Spirit in the process of sanctification. It is in our power to determine whether we are filled with the Spirit or not.

Some may object to this teaching by saying that it endorses or supports salvation by works; that any idea of working hard at being holy or cooperating with the Holy Spirit smacks of Romanism. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. The Bible makes distinctions between justification, regeneration and sanctification. Justification is a one-time act where the Father declares the sinner justified (“not guilty”) in the heavenly court on the basis of the merits of Jesus Christ. A believer does not justify himself. He simply lays hold of what Jesus accomplished through the instrument of faith, which itself is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8). Regeneration is an act of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of man that is completed in an instant of time that radically changes the whole heart of man in a spiritual manner. The Holy Spirit resurrects a spiritually dead soul. Obviously a spiritually dead person cannot cooperate with the act of regeneration.

While sanctification is a work of God’s free grace that has its starting point in regeneration which carries forward the spiritual change of the new birth into the daily battles of life, there are some important differences between the one-time acts of justification, regeneration and the process of sanctification. Sanctification is a *life-long process* where the Holy Spirit enables believers more and more to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness. It is something that is rooted in Jesus’ redemptive work, yet which requires a *life-long effort* on the part of believers to be holy, to obey God’s Word. It is a work of God *in us* that enables us more and

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<sup>4</sup> Charles Hodge, *Ephesians* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1964 [1856]), 221.

more to be conformed to the image of Christ. The foundation of sanctification is Christ's death and resurrection. The person who believes in Jesus is not only justified but also set free from the reign or dominion of sin (Rom. 6:7 ff.). How does this happen? The believing sinner is united with Christ in His life, death and resurrection (Rom. 6:5-11). Sanctification has been merited for us; achieved for us by what God has done in Jesus. Therefore, the Lord receives all the credit and glory for the good deeds of believers. Christians have a responsibility to recognize what the Savior has accomplished for them (Rom. 6:11) and to live in a manner that is consistent with their union in the Lord's victory over sin. This victory over the reign of sin, however, does not mean that believers are sinless or completely free from the remaining effects of their sinful nature. The Christian life is one of a continual struggle--warfare against the world, the devil and the flesh. Thus, we need to be dominated and controlled by the Spirit. The things we do to be filled or controlled by the Spirit do not merit salvation. They are the fruits of a salvation already achieved by Jesus. "Thus, while sanctification is a grace, it is also a duty, and the soul is both bound and encouraged to use with diligence, in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, all the means for its spiritual renovation, and to form those habits of resisting evil and of right action in which sanctification so largely consists. An action to be good must have its origin in a holy principle in the heart, and must be conformed to the law of God. Although not the ground of our acceptance, good works are absolutely essential to salvation, as the necessary consequences of a gracious state of soul and perpetual requirement of the divine law."<sup>5</sup>

How then are we to be filled (i.e., dominated and controlled) by the Holy Spirit? Paul answers this question in what immediately follows his injunction. The main verb (the command--"be filled") is followed by a number of participial phrases (e.g., "speaking to one another," "giving thanks always," "submitting to one another") that both explain the fruit or behavior of people who are filled or controlled by the Spirit and inform us how to remain under the Spirit's control. Although Paul does not give us an exhaustive list regarding evidence of being under the Spirit's control, he does teach us that the Holy Spirit must dominate every aspect of a believer's life. Note how the participial phrases comprise the two chief spheres of life: the first group discusses worship and thus accords with the first table of the law, while the second comprises our whole duty toward man (the second table). The Holy Spirit enables us to conduct ourselves in a lawful, godly manner as we serve both God and man. Interestingly, Paul uses the phrase which deals with believers' loving behavior toward each other ("submitting to one another in the fear of God," v. 21) as the bouncing off point and main theme of a large portion of the epistle (Eph. 5:22-6:9). Allowing the Holy Spirit to dominate and control your life leads: to harmonious, blissful marriages that mirror the relationship of Christ and the church (Eph. 5:22-33); to harmonious families where children respect their parents, parents love their children and train them to serve Christ (Eph. 6:1-4); to excellent loving relationships between slaves and masters (and by implication, employers and employees) (Eph. 6:5-9).

Paul's discussion of the result or fruit of being filled with the Spirit as it relates to worship teaches us a number of important principles.

(1) Unlike getting drunk which leads to a chemically induced, temporary, false, self-centered "joy," being filled with the Spirit produces a real, lasting, God-glorifying joy. Drunkenness leads to lasciviousness, debauchery and violence which are wicked expressions of human autonomy, of supreme selfishness. Being filled with the Holy Spirit leads to the worship of Jehovah and to continual prayers of thanksgiving.

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<sup>5</sup> A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1992 [1869]), 196.

(2) Being filled with the Holy Spirit leads to fellowship among the saints where believers are saturated with God's Word. Christians are to express their joy in public worship ("The verb *lalein* has the general signification of 'using the voice,' and is specifically different from *eitein* and *legein*, for it is used of the sounds of animals and musical instruments."<sup>6</sup>) by singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The phrase psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is a Hebraic triadic expression (see Dt. 5:31; 6:1; Mt. 22:37; Mk. 12:30; Lk. 10:27; Ac. 2:22) for the inspired book of Psalms. The saints are to edify each other with the very words of God as they sing with joy. Clearly the element of singing praise has both a vertical and horizontal dimension. Corporate worship done in Spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:23) is both the response of being controlled by the Spirit and a means of grace whereby the body is further sanctified.

The intimate relationship between being filled with the Spirit and saturating the mind with God's Word is further exhibited in the fact that the parallel passage to Ephesians 5:18 ("Be filled with the Spirit.") is Colossians 3:16, which says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." "In view of the parallelism involved we are bound to conclude that filling of the Spirit and the richly indwelling Word of Christ are functionally equivalent. That indwelling Word is not some specialized or restricted truth granted only to some in the congregation but 'everything I have commanded you' (Matthew 28:20), faithfully believed and obeyed....The reality of the Spirit's filling work is the reality, in all its breadth and richness, of the ongoing working of Christ, the life-giving Spirit, with His Word. To look for some word other than His Word, now inscripturated for the church, is to be seeking some Spirit other than the Holy Spirit."<sup>7</sup>

Being filled with the Spirit not only leads to the joyful worship of God whereby the saints are edified by the word, it also leads to biblical behavior. Believers are to submit to one another in the fear of God (Eph. 5:21). It is not enough to have one's mind saturated with God's Word, one must obey the word. One must be led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14) and walk by the Spirit (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16, 25). Just as the person who gets drunk descends into an array of sinful behavior, the person who is controlled by the Spirit obeys God's Word and loves his neighbor. He leads a life of good works. He develops habitual patterns of godly behavior. This Spirit-led lifestyle leads to even more control by the Holy Spirit as the believer is more and more trained in righteousness.

## Biblical Principles Concerning Being Filled with the Holy Spirit

The necessity of being controlled and directed by the Holy Spirit is so important for a godly Christian life that a brief examination of the biblical principles involved in being Spirit-filled is in order.

(1) God's primary means for causing spiritual growth is the Spirit blessing His Word. The Holy Spirit uses the word of God to sanctify believers. "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby..." (1 Pet. 2:2). "...Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water *by the word*" (Eph. 5:25-26). "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!...Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law" (Ps. 119:11, 32-33). The Spirit's use of the word is primary because all the means of grace

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<sup>6</sup> John Eodie, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979 [1883]), 339.

<sup>7</sup> Gaffin, 33-34.

are dependent upon and subordinate to the Scriptures. The Bible defines holiness, it tells us how and what to pray, it gives the meaning and method of the sacraments and it is the source of all *biblical* preaching. Any idea that believers can be sanctified apart from the word through some mystical experience is unscriptural, antinomian and subjective.

If a professing Christian is serious about holiness then he needs to read the Bible everyday; study it; memorize portions of it; meditate upon it; sing it; discuss it; and sit under its exposition every Lord's day.

(2) To live a holy life one must continually have faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ and the whole revealed will of God—the Scriptures. “The special object of saving faith is the Lord Jesus Christ and whatever pertains to His redeeming work. But as an instrument of sanctification, faith has to do with the whole body of Scripture truth.”<sup>8</sup> Eve knew that God existed and conversed with Him in person. Eve's problem that led her into the sin of eating the forbidden fruit was her lack of faith in what God had said. She did not trust God's Word. Israel was rebellious and died in the wilderness because of unbelief (Heb. 3:18-19). There must be faith in what Jesus has done as well as a faith in what the Lord has said. These two cannot be separated. Jesus said, “If you love Me keep My commandments” (Jn. 14:15).

Paul repeatedly spurred believers to live holy lives by pointing them to the life-giving power of our Lord's redemptive work. Paul says that Christians must reckon themselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ (Rom. 6:11). There must be recognition of what the Savior has accomplished for us and we must live in accordance with that redemptive reality. A refusal to live in accordance with the reality of our union with Christ reveals a lack of faith in the Lord's redemptive power. Further, when we are discouraged because of indwelling sin and the continued warfare between the flesh and the Spirit, we must look to Christ and His victory. If we focus on ourselves we will be disgusted and sink in despair. We do not want to be morbid introspectionists and sink into the mire of despair as Peter sank in the Sea of Galilee when he took his eyes off the Savior. Note how Paul views his union with Christ as the end of his old unconverted existence. He writes: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). The fact that Paul was united with Christ and now has Jesus present within him by the presence of the Holy Spirit means that the apostle will live a life of continuous believing dependence on the Son of God.

(3) To be full of the Spirit we must be led by the Spirit. That is, we must be governed by the Spirit and obey what the Spirit says in His word. David declared, “How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word” (Ps. 119). Paul says, “If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Rom. 8:13-14). “‘Led by the Spirit’ implies that they are governed by the Spirit and the emphasis is placed upon the activity of the Spirit and the passivity of the subjects. ‘Put to death the deeds of the body’ (v. 13) emphasizes the activity of the believer. These are complimentary. The activity of the believer is the evidence of the Spirit's activity and the activity of the Spirit is the cause of the believer's activity.”<sup>9</sup>

By the virtue of our union with Christ the old man with his deeds has been put off, while simultaneously the new man has been put on (Col. 3:9-10). As a result of this blessing in Christ, believers must continuously mortify their past sinful habits. Christians must put to death all

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<sup>8</sup> Henry A. Boardman, *The “Higher Life” Doctrine of Sanctification Tried by the Word of God* (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1996 [1877]), 155.

<sup>9</sup> John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 1:285.

sinful behavior, both external and internal (Col. 3:5-7). “Having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1). “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25). “Meaning: ‘If the source of our life is *the Spirit*, *the Spirit* must also be allowed to direct our steps, so that we make progress, advancing step by step toward the goal of perfect consecration to the Lord.’”<sup>10</sup> “For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God....Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col. 3:3, 5).

(4) To be filled with the Spirit we must continually pray for holiness. We must pray for the Spirit to give us an understanding of the Word and the ability to obey the Word both inwardly and outwardly (i.e., in thought, word and deed). After David had repented of grievous sin he prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.... Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit” (Ps. 51:10, 12). In another Psalm he prayed, “Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression” (Ps. 19:12-13). When the psalmist praised God’s Word he prayed, “Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it. Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way” (Ps. 119:33-37).

When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians he ordered them to, “Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil” (1 Th. 5:21-22). Then he prayed, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely” (1 Th. 5:23). The apostle prays that the initial, definitive sanctification that the saints received at regeneration would be carried forward by divine enablement to the perfect sanctification received at the glorification of believers. For Paul, prayers for sanctification involve petitions for knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. “[W]e...do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy” (Col. 1:9-11). The apostle couples a request for a deep understanding of the divine will and the wisdom to put it into practice with a petition for strength and fruitfulness in every good work. The Spirit’s assistance in knowing and understanding what God requires of us goes hand in hand with the Spirit’s enabling process. There can be no sanctification through human traditions (Col. 2:20-23), because the Spirit always works in and through the Word.

Prayer for the Spirit’s assistance is very important not only because it is the enabling power of the Spirit that causes us to advance in knowledge, wisdom and sanctification, but also because as we advance in the knowledge of the truth we become more sensible of the sinfulness of our nature and the wickedness of our sins. The fuller our apprehension of God’s holiness and the breadth of His commandments the more we understand our inadequacy and the more tempted we are to despair. This fuller apprehension, however, should not paralyze believers but rather direct them to Christ’s sufficiency. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). This fuller knowledge causes us again and again to bow before the throne of grace in prayer.

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<sup>10</sup> William Hendriksen, *Galatians and Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 1:226.

(5) To be filled with the Spirit we must imitate Jesus according to His perfect human nature. While the phrase “What would Jesus do?” has suffered abuse as a fad among modern Evangelicals, the principle of imitating Christ is imminently biblical. “Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). Our Lord sets forth the only perfect example of obedience in the whole Bible. In the Savior we see the perfect exhibition of all the Christian virtues. He sets before us the proper path of Christian living. He perfectly obeyed the law and exhibited love toward the brethren. From Him alone we learn the proper balance of humility, boldness, indignation and patience. Thus, like the Thessalonians we must be followers of the apostles and the Lord (1 Th. 1:6). The goal of all believers is to have the “mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5). “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps” (1 Pet. 2:21). “Peter is urging Christians to write the biography of their own lives with one eye on the lifestyle which Jesus had written. Imitation of the incarnate Savior is the essence of continuing sanctification.”<sup>11</sup>

(6) To be filled with the Spirit we must keep godly associations. That is, we must befriend and fellowship with Christians that are serious about holiness. Believers who go to lukewarm churches and spend their time with lukewarm professors of Christ will become corrupted by such company. “Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits” (1 Cor. 15:33). We should seek out friends that are godly role models; that are full of grace and wisdom; who by their speech and behavior challenge us to serve Christ with the whole heart. “The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray” (Pr. 12:26). “He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed” (Pr. 13:20).

(7) To be filled with the Spirit there must be daily repentance. Or, to put it positively, we must always live with a total commitment to Jesus in the present. Obedience delayed means disobedience in the here and now. The person who makes a deal with sinful lusts by telling himself that he will repent tomorrow or next week grieves the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:3), destroys inner peace and assurance, implicitly denies the sanctifying power of Christ’s resurrection, places himself in a position to develop a habitual pattern of disobedience and places his soul in great danger. There are multitudes of people who promised themselves they would repent tomorrow and tomorrow never came. Days became weeks, weeks–months, and months–years. There must be a daily commitment to avoiding sin and a daily effort to mortify sinful lusts. “Holiness begins in our minds with a present-tense, total commitment and works outward to our actions.”<sup>12</sup> That is why the battle for holiness always begins in the mind. There must be a commitment in the heart not to sin, coupled with an arsenal of Scripture to strengthen the soul, and prayer for the Spirit’s assistance.

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<sup>11</sup> Sinclair B. Ferguson, “The Reformed View” in Donald L. Alexander Editor, *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1988), 66.

<sup>12</sup> Joel R. Beeke, *Holiness: God’s Call to Sanctification* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1994), 21.