

# Be Filled With the Spirit

by G. Campbell Morgan

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*G. Campbell Morgan emphasizes the necessity of being filled with the Holy Spirit through abandonment and abiding in Christ for a powerful Christian life and service.*

**Scripture:** Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 5:18

**Topics:** "Filling of the Holy Spirit", "Abandonment and Abiding"

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## Description

G. Campbell Morgan emphasizes that being filled with the Holy Spirit is not merely a privilege for a select few but a command for all believers, essential for a vibrant Christian life and effective service. He outlines the necessity of both abandonment to God and abiding in Christ as conditions for this filling, highlighting that true Christian character and service stem from the Spirit's control. Morgan warns against the misconception that the filling of the Spirit is tied to specific sensations or experiences, asserting that the true evidence lies in the manifestation of Christ's Lordship and the fruit of the Spirit in one's life. He calls for a personal commitment to yield fully to the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to work through believers to reflect Christ's character and fulfill God's purposes. Ultimately, the sermon challenges Christians to examine their lives and ensure they are not grieving the Spirit but are actively living under His influence.

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## Transcript

THEY fall far short of the truth who speak of the filling of the Spirit as the privilege of believers. The word of Paul Be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit, is a present imperative, being of the nature of a command, rather than a counsel of perfection. Not merely for an elect few, but for all those born of the Spirit, the will of God is that they should be filled with the Spirit. And the necessity for this filling is proved by the fact that, apart from it, there can be no full Christian life, and no powerful Christian service.

The apostle declares that no man speaking in the 'Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit. The Lordship of Jesus is the basis of all Christian life. The Christian graces and virtues all spring from the recognition of that Lordship, and from absolute surrender thereto. It is only as man is born again of the Spirit that he can call Jesus Lord; and it is only as he is under the perfect dominion of that Spirit that he can live under the Lordship of Jesus.

Not only is this true with regard to the first step in life, but also in reference to the whole subsequent course. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. These are the evidences of Christian character

looked for in all those who profess to belong to Christ, the things that differentiate between a Christly and a worldly soul. There can be no manifestation of them save under the perpetual control of the Spirit. Neither is it possible to work for God except in the energy of the Spirit. There may be a great deal of what appears to be Christian work, but it is absolutely devoid of power unless thus energized.

No man can live the Christian life, and no man can serve in the Christian dispensation, save as he is filled with the Spirit.

It is, then, of urgent importance that there should be clear understanding of the law which governs this filling. That there are scores of Christian people who are not filled with the Holy Spirit is an all too evident fact. Bring that cluster of the wonderful fruit of the Spirit side by side with the actual life and achievement of scores of professing Christians, and this fact must be at once confessed.

To Christian people who really want to be such as God would have them be, who are tired of all that is merely formal and mediocre, and are anxious to live in the will of God at all costs, there is no question of more importance than that of the conditions upon which the believer, born of the Spirit, may live that life which is filled with the Spirit.

These conditions are of a twofold nature,--the initial, and the continuous; that by which blessing is first realized, and that by which it is maintained.

The first is that of abandonment.

The second is that of abiding.

The word abandonment is used intentionally. Consecration is a great word, but it has been so much abused that it has lost much of its deepest significance. This word abandonment is perhaps out of the ordinary run of theological terms, but it is full of force. Wherever whole-hearted, absolute, unquestioning, positive, final abandonment of the life to God obtains, the life becomes filled with the Spirit.

The thought is contained in Paul's words: Neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. The whole life, according to this conception, is to be handed over to the control of God, in order that, through that life, His will may be realized, His work may be done, His plans may be carried out. That is the abandoned life.

There are two passages which bear on this subject. The first reads: Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in Whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice. This is the abandonment of the life for purification. Abandonment to God is not merely the act of enlisting as soldiers to fight battles--that is a secondary matter; it is first the abandonment of self to the Spirit of God, that He may purify and cleanse from everything that is unlike His own perfection of beauty.

The apostle did not say: Put away bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and railing. The believer is not called upon to put these things out of the life: that is not the New Testament conception of purification. He said: Let these things be put away. The verse preceding explains the responsibility: Grieve not the Holy Spirit. The work of putting out of the life this unholy brood of evil things--bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, railing--is not man's work. Man is to let Him accomplish it.

The second passage is as familiar as the first: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. This is another aspect of abandonment. It is not merely assent to purification; it is also the presentation of the whole being to God for sacrifice. There are very many who seem to imagine that the apostle is calling Christians to sacrifice themselves to God, but he is rather calling upon them to present themselves to God as a sacrifice, which the High Priest will lay upon the altar. The abandonment asked for is a twofold one,--first, abandonment to purification by the Spirit; and, secondly, abandonment of the whole being to Jesus Christ, that He may offer it to God.

The theory seems easy. The practice is a very definite thing. The life which is thus abandoned to God for the filling of the Spirit is a life that has given up its own plans, and purposes, and hopes; and has taken instead the plan, and the purpose, and the hope of God.

If God wills to alter what appear to be Divine arrangements for to-day, so that the desire and the hope of to-day are disappointed, the follower of the Master should yet be able to say: I delight to do Thy will, O my God." The will of God should be the supreme matter, beyond the doing of which the soul should have no anxiety. How often men promise God that they will do certain things if He will do something for them! --an iniquitous attempt to bargain with the Most High, which is very popular, and as old as Jacob.

The difference between the Spirit-filled life, and the life that is not filled with the Spirit, is the difference between a life abandoned wholly to the will of God, and a life that wants to have its own way and please God too. Abandonment is that of which it is most easy to speak, and yet it is the one thing from which all men shrink. Men are quite prepared to sign pledges, to do any amount of work, even to sign cheques or give money, if only God will let them have their own way somewhere in their life. If He will not press this business of abandonment, if He will not bring them to the Cross, they will do anything; but they draw back from the place of death.

Yet it is only in that place that the Holy Spirit is able to flow out into every part of the life and energize it, until in all conduct Jesus is crowned Lord, and the fruit of the Spirit is manifest in character. Nothing can take the place of abandonment. Some there are who attempt to put prayer where God has put abandonment. Others profess to be waiting until God is willing to fill them. Both are wrong! While they think they are waiting for God, the fact is God is waiting for them. At any moment, if they yield to the Spirit, He will sweep through every gate and avenue and into every corner of the life.

The filling of the Spirit is retained by abiding in Christ. A great deal has been said about abiding, and many have endeavoured to define the term. Some beautiful definitions have been given, mystical and poetical, and yet for the most part out of the reach of the ordinary life of the believer.

It is well, where possible, to have definitions of Scripture from Scripture; and John gives a definition of what it is to abide in Christ: He that keepeth His commandments abideth in Him, and He in him. Nothing can be simpler. The mistake which may be made is that of trying to explain that passage until it is robbed of its simplicity. The definition is the very embodiment of clearness, and may be stated in a brief sentence: To abide is to obey.

The commandments referred to are given in the preceding passage; but are spoken of there, as one commandment, having two applications: And this is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another The whole law of Jesus Christ is summed up in that verse. The commandment is that of faith and love. Faith is the absolute dependence of the soul upon Him,

and the consequent life of obedience to Him. Faith in the Lord Jesus begins when a guilty soul submits itself to Him for pardon; but it does not end then. It is not by that one act of faith that men abide, but by continuing in the course begun, by making Him Lord always,—by entering into no transaction of business or of pleasure without taking Him into account; by treating Him as the ever-present King, by believing in Him; and by saying to Him, at all seasons and hours and everywhere: Master, is this Thy will? Faith in Him is belief on His name at the beginning for pardon, and constantly for purity and direction. Then every moment the soul lives in dependence upon Christ, and is able to sing:

I dare not take one step without Thy aid.

Not faith merely, but love: That we should . . . love one another. That is the life of service. He that keepeth His commandments abideth in Him. The conditions for abiding in Him are those of always believing in Him, always loving some one and serving some one. If men are filled with the Spirit by abandonment, they continue filled with the Spirit by abiding.

While it is true that there can be no full life and no powerful service apart from the filling of the Spirit, it is equally true that the Spirit-filled life must manifest the fruit of the Spirit and be powerful in service for God. These broad principles, however, are granted. The present subject is rather the conscious experience of a soul that is filled with the Spirit. Here a word of warning is necessary. A vital mistake is made by persons who formulate a code of sensations, and wait for them as evidences of the Spirit's filling. Some expect a magnetic thrill, some an overwhelming ecstasy. These experiences may be realized, they may be utterly absent. Others wait for an experience like that of some one else. That they will never have. There are many people who have read the Lives of good men like Fletcher of Madeley, Finney, and Bowen, and who expect to realize just what these men describe. Such hopes are doomed to disappointment. It may safely be said that the experience of the filling of the Spirit is in no two cases exactly identical, any more than the consciousness of ordinary life can ever be the same in any two persons. There are points of resemblance, great fundamental facts which are identical; but in the light and shade there is variety. Surely, if this be true of ordinary life, it is also true of the higher spiritual blessing. The Holy Spirit fills one and another. The realization of the one differs from that of the other. There are diversities of workings, but the same God. There is, however, a common consciousness to those who are Spirit-filled. It is the consciousness of Christ. The Holy Spirit, coming in His fulness, will give men to know the Lord as they never knew Him before. The consciousness of Christ in the experience of believers will be as varied as are the saints themselves; for the full consciousness of the Head can only be realized by the whole Church. His greatness is such that He cannot give Himself wholly and utterly and finally to an individual; He needs the whole Church for the display of His perfect glory, and the unfolding of the majesty of His Person. Let no one narrow down his consciousness of the Christ to the consciousness of any single person. He is one thing to one man, He is another thing to another, but the men are united in the fact that it is the Master of Whom they are all conscious by the Spirit. The Lordship of Jesus as a reality, is the first result of the Spirit-filled life.

It follows that Christ's victory over evil will be shared by His people; His point of vision of the affairs of men and the needs of men will be theirs also; and the impulses of service which bore Him to Calvary, against all opposition, and made Him Victor in its darkest hour, will likewise be their impulse of service, so that no longer will they offer Him the service of mechanical arrangement; but in the passion of His life they will serve, even though that be a consuming passion, as it was with Him.

Again, Christ's revelation of God to men will in measure be their revelation of God to men. As the Spirit fills the children of God, He will reproduce in their lives such likeness to Christ, that men, seeing them, will begin to understand Him, and be led into a clear apprehension of the glory of the Father.

This subject brings all to the point of personal responsibility. The whole study culminates here for the individual. That Divine Spirit Who worked in creation, who was the Spirit of revelation and of service through every age, dwells now in each believer. The individual question is whether He is indwelling in all His fulness. Or is He grieved and quenched by disloyalty to His government? If that has been the case hitherto, let the whole life be yielded to Him, that He may reproduce the Master Himself, to the glory of God, and for the good of men.

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