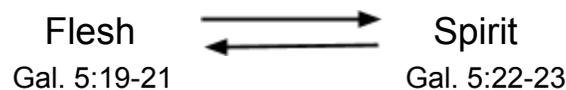


The Spirit-Filled Life

“For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” -Galatians 5:17-23

God promised to send his Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, to indwell every believer. The Spirit produces spiritual fruit in us when we walk with him, but we also still have our sinful nature, or flesh, which is opposed to the Spirit.



According to this passage, how can you tell if you're filled with the Spirit?

But in verse 16, God gives us the solution to the conflict: *“But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”* When we walk by the Spirit, we will still be tempted to sin, but we will have the power to resist that temptation. This is why we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). But if we already have the Holy Spirit, why are we commanded to be filled with the Spirit? This illustration shows why.



As you can see, the glass on the top has water in it, but is it *filled* with water? The Bible teaches that every believer has the Spirit (John 14:16-18), but that is not the same as being filled with the Spirit.



The glass on the bottom is *filled* with water. Being filled with the Spirit is not automatic. We must want to be filled--to be directed, controlled, and empowered by the Spirit. In other words, we must decide to get off the throne and give God control.

When we sin, water spills out of our glass. At that point, we have a choice. We can either continue in sin, or repent and ask God once again to fill us with his Spirit. You can think of it like spiritual breathing. Whenever we sin, we need to breathe out (confess and repent of our sin) and breathe in (recognize God's forgiveness and ask God to fill us with his Spirit once again).

Whenever you fall into sin, remember to practice spiritual breathing. Confess your sins to God, who promises to forgive you. 1 John 1:9 says, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to*

forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” When we ask him to be filled with the Spirit, he will do it. 1 John 5:14 says, “And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.”

How can you see this principle of spiritual breathing playing out in your everyday life?

How have you seen the fruits of the Spirit in your life? What leads to the fruit of the Spirit?

Take time this week to consciously practice “spiritual breathing” and to ask God to fill you with the Spirit. Take note of any changes you see in your relationship with God.