

Ephesians 5:17-20

17 So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. [Here it is...]

18 Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit,

Here, as in so many other places, notice that Paul follows the “don’t do this, rather do this” formula. The word for foolish could also be translated “unwise.”

****20.** What do the admonitions of verse 18 have to do with what proceeds it in verse 17?

The Greek word for “debauchery” is the same word in the verb form of the “wild living” of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:13). The Expositor’s Bible Commentary says, “In classical Greek it signified extravagant squandering both of money and of the physical appetites. If they are wise, Christians will avoid all such excess.”

****21.** Why do you think the two parts of verse 18 are together?

“Nature abhors a vacuum” – you’ve got to be filled with something. Who or what is in control?

In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul tells us of one of the benefits of the filling of the Holy Spirit when he lists the Fruit of the Spirit. (Note “fruit” is singular – all are part of a whole.)... *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.* The last part – self-control – is especially needed in the matter of “not getting drunk with wine.”

****22.** Why do you think it is important that all nine parts be together? How do you understand the term “fruit”?

The tense of the Greek verb “be filled” here is very important – it is a passive, present imperative verb. That is, it is a command and an ongoing process, as if it said, “be being filled!” And, it is not something that one can manufacture on their own.

Sinclair Ferguson writes: “Paul is carefully balancing two things: first that we are active in the experience of filling – God does not treat us as automatons; but second, that this activity actually involves us being receptive (in that sense, ‘passive’) so that we are filled with the Spirit.”

* It is important to remember that to be filled with the Spirit is not for you to have more of the Spirit, but for the Spirit to have more of you!

****23.** How can we let the Spirit have more of us?

British author John Hunter described the important four-step process this way: “What you yield He takes, what He takes He cleanses, what He cleanses He fills and what He fills, He uses.”

One way that the Holy Spirit uses us is as we are given spiritual gifts. 1 Corinthians 12: 7 says *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

Spiritual gifts are not for our benefit, but for the benefit of the body of Christ.

(Note: You will find various spiritual gifts listed in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4 and 1 Peter 4. Each list is different, and this is not exhaustive. Some are even referred to in the Old Testament.)

Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift, some more than one.

****24.** Do you know what spiritual gift(s) you have?

19 as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts,

This is one manifestation of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Music is an important part of worship! I remember a man who said to me that he always came late to worship, just in time for the sermon, after the “preliminaries”! Others use the term “worship” to refer only to the music in a worship service!

****25.** Why is music such an important part of worship (even if you don’t consider yourself to be “musical”)?

Note, too, it says “**among yourselves**” (not “to yourself”), thus encouraging corporate worship. It also shows that there is a horizontal as well as vertical dimension to worship.

Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, using the metaphor of a play, said that in worship, God is the audience, the members of the congregation are the performers, and the pastors and other worship leaders are the prompters. Many people get this turned around.

****26.** How can you be a better “performer” in worship?

In the hymn “We’re Marching to Zion,” the importance of singing is stressed in the second verse:

*Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God,
But children of the heavenly King, may speak their joys abroad.*

What are the three types of music that are mentioned?

Psalms – the early Christian church made use of the Old Testament Psalter, with which those of a Jewish background would have been familiar in the Temple or a synagogue.

Hymns – exalted the name of Christ or God. (e.g., Philippians 2:6-11)

Spiritual Songs – Christian singing other than the first two, or perhaps “singing in the Spirit.”

The word for “making melody” literally means to pluck a stringed instrument. This is significant because there are those that say that musical instruments are not mentioned in the New Testament.

20 giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

****27.** Everything? Can you do that? How is that possible?

We can begin to understand when we embrace Isaiah 55:8-9

*“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD.
“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

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Another reason we can give thanks is in understanding the familiar verse of Romans 8:28 (NLT) *And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*

Our thanks is **“in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** *Name* is a way of referring to what the person stands for and has accomplished. That is the locus of everything we do as believers.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says,

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

****28.** Does this verse give you any further insight into the matter of always giving thanks?