

Practical Ways to Let the Holy Spirit Keep Filling You

The apostle Paul taught the early believers to “be filled with the Spirit.” Then, he gave them practical ways to practice this imperative for Spirit-filled living:

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

“Do not be drunk with wine, for that is reckless living. But be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:18-19).

Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs

Every born-again believer is baptized “into Christ” by the Holy Spirit’s power (Rom. 8:9-11) and becomes part of the Father’s forever family. His Spirit now lives in us and makes us sure we are his children (Rom. 8:12-16).

Paul’s instruction to the Ephesians about Spirit-filled living includes the privilege and imperative for every believer to “be filled with the Spirit.” The word “filled” is in the present tense and is to be a repeated experience. It is kind of like shampooing your hair: wash, rinse and repeat. We are to be filled and then “re-filled” again and again.

As we grow and mature in Christ, we are to continuously live by the power of God’s Spirit, which is in us, and the life-giving practice of “singing and making melody in [our] hearts to the Lord” *through* “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.”

Psalms are scriptural lyrics, set to music. Like the gift of

prophecy, these expressions of inspired Scriptures serve to instruct, encourage and comfort the saints of God.

Many older believers will remember a resurgence of “Scripture songs” in the church during the Charismatic Renewal of the early '60s and '70s. By these songs of Scripture, newborn babes in Christ memorized the lyrics along with the melodies and learned scriptural truths. These songs joyously joined the Word with the Spirit and released a refreshing genre of Spirit-filled worship in the Church.

Hymns are humanly-inspired lyrical-melodies, which are expressed to or about God or members of the Godhead, individually. We come together to rejoice, instruct or encourage each other in song to the Lord our God. Or, we may share “gospel songs” with each other, which testify about Him or His acts, blessings and promises. Hymns are not about us. They are all about Him.

Singing hymns to God can break bonds and bring deliverance (Acts 16:25-34). In times of spiritual warfare, we need to be refreshed in our spirits. Joining with other believers to sing and pray “with the spirit” (1 Cor. 14:15) encourages and equips us for good and “greater works” (John 14:12). At such times, the sheer power of Spirit-filled praise can scatter the opposition. (See 2 Chron. 20:20, 21.)

Paul exhorted the Colossians to “teach and admonish one another” through singing to God, “with gratitude in your hearts.” Songs serve as the companion means, along with the written Word of God, to enrich our lives and prepare us for pure living and Spirit-filled fruitfulness, even in the middle of negative circumstances or outright suffering and persecution, which are prophesied to be intensified by Satan in the last days.

Revelation 12:11 tells us that the persecuted saints triumphed over the “accuser of our brothers” (and sisters) by “the blood

of the Lamb and the word of their testimony." That testimony may well include hymns about our mighty God and songs which encourage the saints and proclaim the redemptive gospel message. Many martyrs have died with a song on their lips! They "loved not their lives unto the death."

Spiritual songs are spontaneous, impromptu rhythmic lyrics given by the Holy Spirit in one's own language or in a "prayer language," which is an unlearned language or "other tongue." The apostle Paul called these "mysteries of the Spirit" and affirmed his personal practice (1 Cor. 14:14-15) of praying and singing with his intellect and with his spirit, for personal edification.

This non-conceptual communication to God was Spirit-driven and flowed freely from the overflowing fullness of his Spirit-filled life (John 7:38-39). It by-passed his intellect but perfectly expressed the will of God, which we are not always able to put into words (Rom. 8:26).

These spontaneous syllables of spirit-initiated songs may be a part of what Paul meant when he encouraged the Ephesians to "be filled with the Spirit" by "speaking to one another songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Eph. 5:18-19)

In conclusion, I invite you to pray for the fullness of the Spirit, as you learn to enjoy the continuing benefits of "singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" by teaching and admonishing "one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs." {eoa}

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