

Ephesians 5:15 The Hindrances to a Spirit-Filled Life

James 1:22 reminds us, “**But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.**” We are aware of the ungodly in our midst spiritually and culturally. We are also aware of the command to, “**be filled with the Spirit**” (**Ephesians 5:18**) which is God’s provision as, “**In him we live and move and have our being**” (**Acts 17:28**). Yet, we can nothing apart from God (**John 15:5**).

Ephesians 5:15: “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise”

- **Grammatical Usage:** “**carefully**” or in the Greek, “akribós” meaning, “distinctly; exactly”; “**walk**” or “peripateó” meaning, “live; conduct life”; “**unwise**” or “asophos” meaning, “foolish; unskilled”; “**wise**” or “sophos” meaning, “learned; cultivated; skilled”.
- **Literal Interpretation:** Live life, then, with a due sense of distinct responsibility, not as the foolish who do not know the meaning and purpose of life but as we who have learned.
- **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. God is more willing to give than we are to receive. He has given the Holy Spirit, and if we are not filled with the Holy Spirit it is due to some form of unwillingness on our side, hindrances which include:

1. It may be due to an unwillingness to acknowledge that we need His infilling. How proud and carnal the human heart is! If only we would humble ourselves before God and confess that we lack this infilling, and that we must obey His command to be filled with His Spirit, then the biggest obstacle to this life of abundant usefulness would be swept away. It IS humbling for a preacher, a leader in Christian work, a Christian of many years’ standing to confess his need for the Spirit’s infilling, and yet where there is true humility and honest confession victory is assured! (**Proverbs 22:4**)

2. It may be due to an unwillingness to accept the implications of His infilling. Before we can be filled with the Holy Spirit we must be the kind of people whom God can fill with His Spirit. We must be willing to be HOLY. We must be willing to live a life of SEPARATION from the world; not isolation but separation from everything upon which we are unable to pray His blessing. The filling of the Holy Spirit is God’s seal of His approval upon the life that is pleasing to Him. If we are not willing to forsake things, places and habits that are displeasing to Him, how can He give us His seal of approval? We must be willing to be His WITNESSES (**Acts 1:8**); to OBEY Him (**Acts 5:32**); and to be CRUCIFIED, DEAD and BURIED - with self on the cross and Christ on the throne (**Galatians 2:20**).

3. It may be due to an unwillingness to abandon the sins which prevent His infilling. We must be willing not only to separate ourselves from sin, but to rid ourselves of sin. We can be worldly without ever entering a place of worldliness! We need to cleanse ourselves from all contamination of the body AND SPIRIT (**2 Corinthians 7:1**) and we

are to do this cleansing ourselves – by deliberately removing from our lives those things that are displeasing to the Lord and unclean in His sight, whether they are gross sins (of the flesh) or hidden sins (of the spirit). It is the unholy spirits that hinder the Holy Spirit from filling us. Notice some of these unholy spirits, seek grace to face them and be cleansed from them (**1 John 1:9**):

- The Prayerless spirit (**Mark 9:29**)
- The Immature spirit (**Mark 9:32**)
- The Self-seeking spirit (**Mark 9:34**)
- The Lazy spirit (**Luke 9:32**)
- The Foolish spirit (**Luke 9:33**)
- The Intolerant spirit (**Luke 9:54**)
- The Selfish spirit (**Luke 9:59**)

4. It may be due to an unwillingness to accept by faith the promise, securing His infilling. (**Galatians 3:14**). When we have acknowledged our need, accepted the implications and abandoned the sins which hinder the Spirit-filled life, then we must ASK the Lord to fill us with His Holy Spirit (**Luke 11:13**), and ACCEPT HIS INFILLING BY FAITH (**1 John 5:14-15**). Just as at our conversion we asked the Lord Jesus to come into our hearts, and we believed that He came in (**Revelation 3:20**), so now we must ask the Holy Spirit to fill us and, by faith, believe that He does so.

5. It may be due to an unwillingness to adopt the means to maintain His infilling. The point of the abiding fullness of the Holy Spirit is found in **John 2:5** and is summed up in the chorus to TRUST and OBEY.

How important it is for us to learn not only the opportunity of His filling, but of maintaining His filling! This is ABIDING IN CHRIST (**John 15:5**) from which we have three promises:

1. When we abide in Christ, we enjoy His rest and peace. The word “**abide**” is used ten times in the first ten verses of **John 15**. Looking at the Greek roots of the word, we discover helpful definitions. To abide is to “dwell,” “remain,” “be present,” and to “be held and kept.” Abiding addresses our posture and place.
2. When we abide in Christ, our hearts are cultivated for growth. **John 15:2** shows us God’s active work in our hearts, “**every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.**” We often think of pruning as an act of cutting away. But looking closer at the original language, we’re given the image of cleansing. God purges us of anything not from Him. Like a tree pruned of dying or excess branches, the process makes us healthier to bear more fruit.
3. When we abide in Christ, we produce good and lasting fruit. After the initial ten mentions in **John 15:1-10**, we see the word “**abide**” once more in **v. 16**. But in this instance, it is not tied to our abiding. Instead, it is our fruit itself that abides.

➤ **Conclusion:** Have you a hindrance? Abandon it and abide in and with the Holy Spirit.