

THE MARKS OF A SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH

(Part 3: Ephesians 5:18-21)

The great need of the church is the fullness of the Spirit of God. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we surrender ourselves completely to the righteous, loving and total control of God's Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). Being filled with the Spirit is not an option for Christians; it is a divine mandate. It must be a continuous ongoing experience for every believer where God's Word permeates and governs every area of their lives (Colossians 3:16). The Spirit-filled life is the normal Christian life. Hence, **as the church of our Lord Jesus, our life and ministry must be marked by Christ-exalting virtues and by the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.** Ephesians 5:18-21 identifies these four indispensable marks of the Spirit-filled church.

1. The Spirit-filled church is marked by continuous yielding to the Spirit's control.

2. The Spirit-filled church is marked by edifying and God-glorifying worship.

3. The Spirit-filled church is marked by _____.

The Spirit-filled life is a life of constant, all-inclusive and God-focused thanksgiving (Ephesians 5:20). We must offer praise to God and give thanks to Him constantly, all the time, regularly and in every situation. Our gratitude to God must also be all-encompassing. We must express thanks to God for both favorable and adverse seasons of life (Philippians 1:3; 4:4; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:18). Furthermore, the focus of our thanksgiving must be God Himself. As Paul said, "we must give thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20). Our thanksgiving as prompted by the Holy Spirit must be for everything which is consistent with the loving Fatherhood of God and the name of Christ, which signifies the person and work of our Lord Jesus (1 John 3:1; Ephesians 2:1-7; Romans 8:32; 8:28-29; James 1:17).

4. The Spirit-filled church is marked by _____.

The final mark and evidence of the Spirit-filled life involves submission. In verse 21, Paul explains the meaning of and the motivation for mutual submission. The term submit means "to arrange under," or "to subject oneself under." In the context of congregational relationships, mutual submission means cultivating the attitude of self-denial, willingness to lay aside one's rights and personal interests and commitment to defer to our fellow believers in order to humbly serve them in love (Ephesians 5:21; 4:1-3; Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3-4).

Our motivation for mutual submission is reverence for Christ. Revering Christ means acknowledging and bowing before His supreme authority as our Lord and Master and expressing holy fear to grieve and offend the One who loved us and gave Himself for us (Ephesians 1:22; Galatians 2:20). Christ is our compelling motivation and our supreme example in living a life of submissiveness and servant-hearted love towards our fellow believers (Mark 10:45).
