

HOLY SPIRIT



SHEPHERDCHURCH

LESSON 6:

THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

WELCOME

Answer one of the following questions:

- If you had an extra hour every day, how would you spend it?
- What's one habit you've stuck with that ended up changing your life more than you expected?

As you prepare to facilitate this lesson, keep in mind that each WELCOME section ties into the theme of the overall lesson. When it comes to engaging the WELCOME section, as the Life Group Leader, consider going first to model vulnerability and set the tone for sharing.

WORSHIP

As a Life Group, play a worship song and just listen to the lyrics. Then, share which line of the song stood out the most to you and why.

Budget around 7–10 minutes for this portion of the lesson. Ask your fellow Life Group members to go around and share the specific line from the song that stood out the most to them and why. As with most sections of each lesson, let everyone share only if they feel comfortable doing so.

WORD

1. In the video lesson, Mandie said, “The believers’ circumstances didn’t immediately change, but they were changed by the Spirit to meet those circumstances faithfully.” How has this been true in your life?

Guide the Conversation

Ask your Life Group to recall a difficult season they faced or are facing and ask them to reflect on what God was doing in them, even if He didn’t immediately change what was happening around them. If they are currently going through a tough time, ask them how they see God moving. If needed, encourage those going through current challenges to remember how God has brought them through tough seasons before. For all the members of your Life Group, ask them to consider how the Holy Spirit developed their character, deepened their trust in God, and gave them the strength to remain faithful. As people share, point out that God’s work often includes transforming His people through life’s challenges, shaping them to become more like Jesus and equipping them to respond with faith regardless of their circumstances.

2. Based on **Acts 4:29–31** and **Ephesians 5:15–20**, how would you explain what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit in your own words? Try to summarize your answer in one simple sentence.

Guide the Conversation

As you lead your Life Group in this question/prompt, ask your fellow group members to compare what they see in both passages before trying to define what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Help them notice that, in Acts 4:29–31, being filled with the Spirit leads to boldness in sharing the gospel, while Ephesians 5:15–20 connects it with wise living, worship, gratitude, healthy relationships, etc. Then challenge everyone to summarize these observations in one simple sentence using their own words rather than repeating a study Bible or commentary. The goal isn't to craft the perfect definition but to capture the heart of what Scripture teaches. As people share, point out the common theme that being filled with the Holy Spirit is **MUCH MORE** than an emotional experience. It's the experience of a life that's increasingly directed, empowered, and transformed by Him.

Deeper Dive

Acts 4:29–31 and Ephesians 5:15–20 provide two pictures of what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

- In Acts 4, the Christians pray for courage in the face of persecution, and God answers by filling them with the Holy Spirit so they boldly share His Word. The Greek verb *pimplēmi* (πίμπλημι), translated “filled” in Acts 4:31, often describes a specific empowering by the Holy Spirit for a particular moment or task. These same believers had already received the Holy Spirit, yet they were filled again for courageous witness.
- In Ephesians 5:18, however, Paul uses a different Greek verb, *plēroō* (πληρώω), and commands believers to “be filled with the Spirit.” The verb is in the present tense and passive voice, which means it carries the idea of continually allowing oneself to be filled or directed by the Holy Spirit (aka, there's never a time where you're not open to the Spirit's leading). Instead of describing a one-time event, Paul teaches about an ongoing way of life marked by consistent dependence on the Spirit's work.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not about receiving more of the Spirit, since every believer already has the Holy Spirit living within them. Instead, it's about the Holy Spirit having greater influence over every part of a Christian's life. Believers should continually surrender to the Spirit, so they have the immense courage to faithfully serve Jesus and reflect His character daily.

Below are some examples of definitions in one simple sentence (don't share these with the group unless you really need to do so):

- Being filled with the Holy Spirit means continually surrendering to His leadership so you can live like Jesus.
- Being filled with the Holy Spirit means letting Him guide and empower you.

- Being filled with the Holy Spirit means depending on the Holy Spirit to help you faithfully follow Jesus every day.
- Being filled with the Holy Spirit means letting Him lead your life.
- Being filled with the Spirit means always surrendering to Him.

In any case, those filled with the Holy Spirit are people who continually surrender to His leadership.

3. How do the three contrasts in [Ephesians 5:15–18](#) prepare us to better understand Paul’s command to “be filled with the Spirit”?

Guide the Conversation

Encourage your group to re-read Ephesians 5:15–18 (because your Life Group probably already read the verses as part of the previous question/prompt) as one complete thought instead of isolating the command to “be filled with the Spirit.” Then, as a Life Group, identify the three contrasts Paul makes:

- Living wisely instead of foolishly.
- Making the most of every opportunity instead of wasting time.
- Being filled with the Spirit instead of getting drunk on wine.

Afterward, discuss how each contrast builds toward Paul’s main point. Help the group see that being filled with the Holy Spirit isn’t simply another command on the list... it’s the way Christians live wisely, use their time well, and honor God in every area of life. As your fellow Life Group members share, emphasize that Paul is describing a lifestyle that’s increasingly shaped by the Holy Spirit’s influence rather than by the world’s values and desires.

Deeper Dive

In Ephesians 5:15–18, Paul builds his command to “be filled with the Spirit” by presenting three important contrasts that help believers understand what a Spirit-directed life looks like.

- First, he says to live “not as unwise but as wise.” The Greek word *sophos* (σοφός), meaning “wise,” describes someone who lives with God’s perspective and applies His truth to everyday decisions.
- Second, Paul urges Christians to “make the most of every opportunity.” The phrase comes from the Greek, which literally means “redeeming the time” or “buying up every opportunity.” The word *kairos* refers not simply to passing time but to strategic moments that God provides.
- Finally, Paul contrasts being drunk with wine with being filled with the Spirit. In Ephesus, drunkenness was common in pagan festivals and religious celebrations, where intoxication was often associated with worship and altered states of consciousness. Paul intentionally contrasts that kind of outside influence with the Holy Spirit’s transforming influence. Instead of allowing alcohol to control a person’s thoughts and behavior, believers are to allow the Holy Spirit to direct every part of their lives.

These three contrasts prepare Christians to understand that Paul's command is about who or what is shaping our lives. Paul is calling believers to continually surrender to the Spirit's leadership so that every decision they make, every opportunity they take, and every relationship they're in reflects God's wisdom rather than culture's values.

4. Paul gives examples of evidence produced from a Spirit-filled life in Ephesians 5:19–20. Which comes most naturally to you?

Guide the Conversation

Instead of asking your fellow Life Group members to focus on themselves, begin by having your group discover the qualities that Paul says characterize a Spirit-filled life in Ephesians 5:19–20. After everyone has observed the passage together, ask them to reflect on which of those qualities they see most consistently in their own lives and why they think that one comes more naturally. Encourage honest answers without comparison.

Deeper Dive

In Ephesians 5:19–20, Paul describes several characteristics that naturally flow from a life continually filled with the Holy Spirit. He mentions speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music to the Lord in our hearts, always giving thanks to God, and, in the following verse, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. These are not a checklist of isolated behaviors but a picture of a heart that is being transformed by the Spirit.

As stated earlier in this lesson, the Greek verb translated as “be filled” is in the present tense, which indicates an ongoing action. The verbs that follow (speaking, singing, making melody, and giving thanks) are participles that describe what a Spirit-filled life looks like. This was crucial for Christians living in Ephesus during the first century because the city was known for wealth, pagan worship, and self-indulgence. Part of Paul's point is that instead of being shaped by the world, Christians are to be shaped by the Spirit.

The question/prompt is for your Life Group members to consider which of these qualities comes most naturally. Then they can recognize how the Holy Spirit is already working in their lives and where He's still growing them. Some Christians naturally express gratitude, while others share God's Word with people or enjoy worshiping through music.

At the same time, these verses remind us that every Christian is called to grow in all of these areas because they are evidence of the Spirit's transforming work. Paul shows that the filling of the Holy Spirit is demonstrated less by extraordinary experiences than by ordinary patterns of Christlike living.

5. Re-read Acts 4:29–31. Before the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit, what exactly did they pray for, and how does God's answer in verse 31 connect to their prayer requests?

Guide the Conversation

Ask your Life Group to slow down and pay close attention to what the Christians actually prayed for before looking at God's response. They should identify each request in verses 29–30, then compare those requests with what happens in verse 31. Help them notice that God answered their prayer in a direct and powerful way by filling them with the Holy Spirit and giving them the boldness to continue sharing His Word. As the conversation develops, point out that in these verses, the believers' focus wasn't about escape but remaining faithful to God's mission. If time allows, consider asking the Life Group to consider what their own prayers reveal about their priorities and whether they are asking God primarily to change their circumstances or to empower them to follow Him faithfully within those circumstances.

Deeper Dive

In Acts 4:29–31, the believers had just faced threats from the Jewish ruling council because they were preaching about Jesus. Instead of praying for safety, comfort, or an escape from persecution, they prayed for three specific things.

- First, they asked God to “consider their threats,” acknowledging the opposition they were facing without allowing it to control them.
- Second, they prayed for “great boldness” to continue speaking God's Word. The Greek word for “boldness” is *parrësia* (παρρησία), which refers to fearless, confident, and open speech. It was often used to describe someone who spoke the truth without fear of consequences.
- Third, they asked God to continue stretching out His hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of Jesus, so that people would see God's power at work.

Their prayers reveal that their highest priority was not personal protection but the advancement of the gospel and the glory of Christ.

God's answer in verse 31 directly corresponds to everything they prayed for. The place where they were gathered was shaken, they were “all filled with the Holy Spirit,” and they “spoke the word of God boldly.” The Greek verb *pimplēmi* (τίμπλημι), translated “filled,” describes a special empowering by the Holy Spirit for a particular task or moment of ministry. God did not remove the persecution or silence their enemies. Instead, He gave them exactly what they had requested: the courage and power to remain faithful in the middle of opposition.

God's answer reminds us that He often meets our greatest needs not by changing our circumstances immediately, but by strengthening us to serve Him faithfully within them.

WITNESS

Give an update about your “one person” (from the first lesson) and ask for an update, if needed, on your Life Group’s outreach project.

As you begin this week’s WITNESS discussion, ask your Life Group to share about the “one person” they have been praying for (and hopefully sharing with) since Week 1, and that they revisited in Week 2 and last week. This question/prompt builds on those earlier conversations by helping members continue looking for opportunities to share the hope they have in Jesus. Ask them to give updates. Before your time together ends, pray for each person in your Life Group and their “one person.”