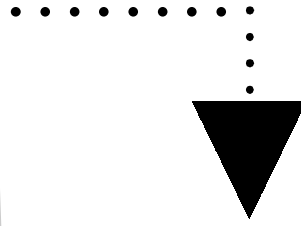


The GAME of LIFE



Power

501

How To Honour

WELCOME TO THE GAME OF LIFE SERIES

"POWER"

This is the fifth basic class at Abundant Life. It's our goal to help you continue to grow in Christ by giving you greater and greater understanding of the Lord. In class 101 you made commitments to the ABC's of this church, class 201 to grow in your personal relationship with God, 301 to discover your SHAPE, and 401 you learned how to share your faith. Now, you're ready to move on to the next commitment found in the 501 class, which is to have a powerful worship life.

Remember how many times Jesus would take simple illustrations from His day and use them as spiritual pictures so others could understand great truths of God. So, we are using the game of hockey to quickly represent what we are about.

Hockey is a very popular Canadian sport. Almost everyone in Canada is aware that the object of the game is to put the puck in the opponent's net. This game works well to express to Canadians what they need to do to be a people set free to live to the glory of God.

Our strategy is simple...

The **LORD GOD IS THE OWNER** of the Team.
He enlists **PLAYERS** to His team
Players show up for **PRACTICE**
He gives them their **POSITION** on the Team
His players **PLAY** to win, which is to make disciples
All this is accomplished in and through His **POWER**
Winning is guided by proper **PRODECURE**

The Game Of Life

We believe the Lord wants us to be a TEAM, a congregation playing the Game of Life together, encouraging and strengthening each other in the Lord.

We also believe there are basics each person should know to really walk with the Lord. We have put these basics into short training classes.

101 - **PLAYERS:** HOW TO BELONG

- A** - Absolute Lordship
- B** - Basic Beliefs
- C** - Church's Vision

201 - **PRACTICE:** HOW TO GROW

- F** - Faithful To The Lord
- I** - Involved In Giving
- T** - Tied Into A Small Group

301 - **POSITION:** HOW TO SERVE

- C** - Congregational Unity
- A** - Applying Your Gifts
- L** - Loving A Ministry
- L** - Leading Others To Greatness

401 - **PLAY:** HOW TO TELL

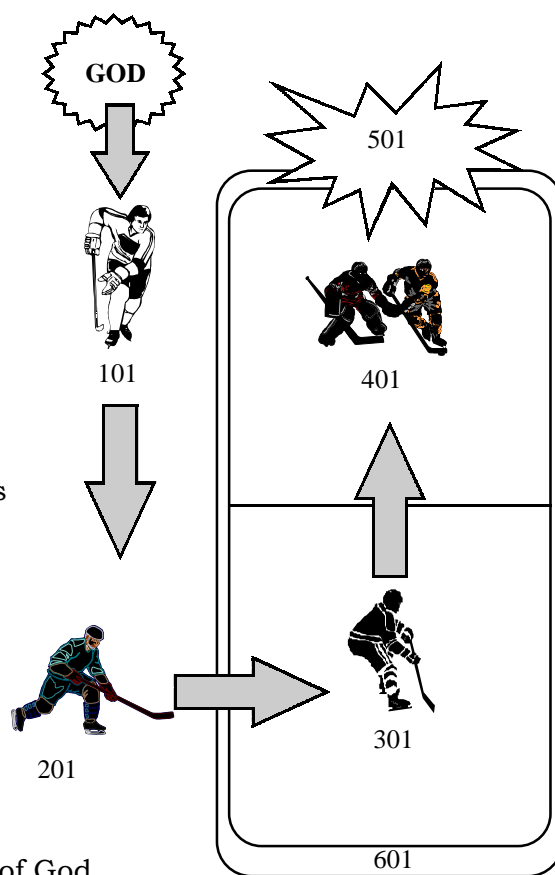
- W** - Witnessing To Others
- I** - Involved In Missions
- N** - New Players to Mentor

501 - **POWER:** HOW TO HONOUR

- A** - Awareness of the Power of God
- W** - Worshipping with the People of God
- E** - Experiencing the Presence of God

601 - **PROCEDURE:** HOW TO MANAGE

- G** - General Overview
- O** - Overall Team
- A** - Answer the Question
- L** - Leading Out



THE GAME OF LIFE

Our Core Values

The true foundation of any organization is its value system. Values are what one believes deep within. These truths drive a church and create the dynamic for a healthy or unhealthy congregation. Our church **MUST** live by God-centred values.

Abundant Life has agreed to live by God's values, values that unite us in a common vision. We desire health at the core of who we are.

These four values are the most important to us.

We remember them as the **TREE of Life!**



T—Truth Will Set Us Free.

We believe Truth brings freedom. Truth is a Person — His name is Jesus. For mankind to truly be set free they must come to Truth. We present this Truth in various ways such as preaching and teaching. The revelation of Christ is found in His Word. Scripture is practical for instruction in everyday life.

R—Relationships Are The Key

We believe the two greatest relationships are with God and people. We must have deep relationships with both. We connect to God with passion and honesty. We connect with others by being real and open. Christ-like attitudes towards others are extremely important.

E—Evangelism Is The Priority

We believe mankind is in great danger if they do not come to know Jesus Christ in an intimate way. Man is in spiritual darkness and lost without Christ. It is the church's responsibility to warn and encourage man to accept the truth of his condition, repent and live for God. Churches are God's means to reach the lost.

E—Empowerment Of The People

We believe every person who comes to God is given a spiritual gift so they may serve Him in love. Leaders equip followers in the ways of the Lord to do good works. Every believer should be having and doing a ministry of service to God. Spiritual leadership is critical to the church's health.

These values shape our thinking and actions. We desire to live them out at the core of who we are as a congregation.

KEY TRUTHS:

1. The church is a **TEAM**.
2. God wants you to be **a part** of His Team.
3. A Christian without a church is like a **hockey player** without a team.

It would not matter if you were the greatest player in hockey, if you did not belong and play with a team, you would lose very quickly against even the weakest team. At the end of this course you will be given an opportunity to join the Abundant Life TEAM!

The key verse for this class is Ephesians 5:17-21. Let's read it together:

"So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."

(Ephesians 5:17-21 NAS)

Circle the words, "the will of the Lord, be filled with the Spirit, with your heart, and speaking to one another." This verse tells us three things:

1. A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE IS GOD'S WILL

We're to understand what the will of the Lord is. And what is that? To be filled with the Spirit. It's not an option. It's God's will. To not be filled with the Spirit is to be in sin. It's a command.

2. EVERY SPIRIT-FILLED PERSON WILL HAVE A HEART TO WORSHIP

What is the result of being filled with the Spirit? "Speaking...in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody **with your heart** to the Lord." When you're filled with the Spirit you have a heart that wants to worship. And music is the language of the heart. When the Spirit of God fills your heart, the natural response of that heart is to sing and worship the Lord.



3. SPIRIT-FILLED WORSHIP ALWAYS INVOLVES OTHERS

He says, "speaking **to one another**" and "be subject **to one another**." Have you ever heard someone say, "I don't need church. I can go out in the woods and worship God all by myself"? But the Bible says that worship involves other people in the body of Christ. You have a heart to worship personally, but you also want to be a part of a worshipping community.

THE GOAL OF THIS CLASS:

The goal of this class is to encourage you to live a life that honours your Lord. We honour Him by giving Him the worship due His name. We really stand in AWE of Him. He has saved us, redeemed us and called us His own. We love Him, so it is natural for a child of God to desire to worship Him.

WHAT MAKES ABUNDANT LIFE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP A PEOPLE OF WORSHIP?

Understanding the **A**wareness of the Power of God

Understanding the **W**orshipping with the People of God

Understanding the **E**xperiencing the Presence of God

And now,...

...Let's Play the GAME OF LIFE!

UNDERSTANDING THE AWARENESS OF THE POWER OF GOD

Worship: Intimacy with God



The power of God is with God and with God is where His people desire to be. In worship of God we become aware of His presence among us. He is with His people.

True worship seeks nothing but God. It is all about God from the beginning to the end. True worship does not seek the gifts, the power or the authority of walking with God: its focal, its end is God. To be one,... one in heart, one in mind and one in purpose. Worship is love responding to love.

John Wimber was used of the Lord to wake up the church to worship. He started the Vineyard work out of a sense to come back to worship. To encounter the true God.

Here are some excerpts of the comments he made as he attempted to realign the church in its understanding of worship. Some of his statements ring so true to the spirit of worshippers everywhere.

“Worship, the act of freely giving love to God, forms and informs every activity of the Christian’s life. It is for God alone and not just a vehicle of preparation for the pastor’s sermon.”

"A result of our worshipping and blessing God is being blessed by Him. We don't worship God in order to get blessed, but we are blessed as we worship Him. He visits His people with manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Thus worship has a twofold aspect: **communication with God** through the basic means of singing and praying, and **communication from God** through teaching and preaching the word, prophecy, exhortation, etc. We lift Him up and exalt Him, and as a result are drawn into His presence where He speaks to us."

Definition of Worship

Worship is the act of freely giving love to God. Indeed, in Psalm 18:1 we read, "I love you, O Lord, my strength." Worship is also an expression of awe, submission, and respect toward God: If we don't worship God we'll worship something or someone else.

Five Basic Phases in the Heart of a True Worshipper

Not only is it helpful to understand why and how we worship God, it is also helpful to understand what happens when we worship God. Keep in mind that as we pass through these phases we are headed toward one goal: intimacy with God.

First Phase: is the call to worship, which is a message directed toward the people or toward God. It is an invitation to worship.

Second Phase: is the engagement, which is the electrifying dynamic of connection to God and to each other. Expressions of love, adoration, praise, jubilation, intercession, petition – all of the dynamics of prayer are interlocked with worship – come forth from one's heart.

Third Phase: is the expression.

As we move further in the engagement phase, we move more and more into loving and intimate language. Being in God's presence excites our hearts and minds and we want to praise Him for the deeds He has done, for how He has moved in history, for His character and attributes.

This phase in which we have been awakened to His presence is called expression. Physical and emotional expression in worship can result in body movement. This is an appropriate response to God if the church is on that crest. If we do not exalt God in our private lives, jubilation becomes a phony exercise in corporate worship.

Fourth Phase: is the visitation. Expression then moves to a zenith, a climactic point. Visitation: the almighty God visits His people. His visitation is a by-product of worship. We don't worship in order to gain His presence. He is worthy to be worshipped whether or not He visits us. But God "dwells in the praises of His people." So we should always come to worship prepared for an audience with the King.

Fifth phase: of worship is the giving of substance. The church knows so little about giving, yet the Bible exhorts us to give to God. It is so sad to see people preparing for ministry who don't know how to give. That is like an athlete entering a race, yet he doesn't know how to run. If we haven't learned to give money, time, energy, we haven't learned anything. Ministry is a life of giving.

Awareness of the power of the Lord is the beginning of an encounter with the Him. If you come expecting to meet God, He wants to fulfill the desires of your heart. We have been given the privilege to honour and love the King of kings and the Lord of lords! We can experience God,... our Creator! Could there be something of greater value? Could there be something else that should take up our time and energy?

The Lord God Almighty, He alone is worthy to be praised, honoured and exalted!

UNDERSTANDING WORSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD

*"Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together."
(Psalm 34:3)*

"Magnify the Lord with me..." The idea is that I am magnifying the Lord already, and then I come together with others who magnify the Lord with me, and we exalt His name together. Our public worship is always an outgrowth of our private worship. If you're not having a meaningful personal worship life, then you're not going to get much out of worship at church. But if you're communing with God in daily personal worship, then you'll not only enjoy worshipping with the church, you'll long for it and seek it out.

So, let's talk about how to get the most out of your worship times with the church, and then I want to say something about the way we worship at Abundant Life.

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM WORSHIP WITH THE CHURCH

"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God." (Ephesians 5:18-21)

THREE ELEMENTS OF WORSHIP

1. The Celebration of Worship

People who think that worship is supposed to be sad and mournful must not be Spirit-filled because the Bible says that *"the fruit of the Spirit is...joy."* (Galatians 5:22) And when Paul describes the Spirit-filled Christian, he describes someone who's joyous, someone who sings and makes melody in their heart. And they're not singing the blues! They're singing songs of praise and songs of joy, because worship is a celebration when you're filled with the Spirit.



"Worship the Lord with gladness, come before Him with joyful songs." (Psalm 100:2 NIV)

"Let them praise His name with dancing and make music to Him with tambourine and harp." (Psalm 149:3 NIV)

"Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy." (Psalm 47:1 NIV)

2. The Sounds of Worship

Paul says that when Spirit-filled believers worship with other Christians in church, that they "[speak] to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in [their] hearts to the Lord." A Spirit-filled Christian worship service has sounds in it, musical sounds. In fact, church worship has three kinds of music in it:

THREE KINDS OF MUSIC IN CHURCH

1) CONGREGATIONAL MUSIC

"...speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs..."

1. Psalms - They had set the Scriptures, the Psalms, to music. And we still have what we call *scripture songs*. Any song that's Scripture set to music is appropriate for worship.

2. Hymns - Any song that is written to glorify God is appropriate to use in church, whether it's a contemporary song like "You Are My All In All" or a classic like "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee," so long as it's sound doctrinally.

3. Spiritual Songs - These were spontaneous songs that rose out of the spirit as one would sing to the Lord. In other words, they were songs which spoke, not to the head, but to the heart. The Psalms and hymns touch a person on an intellectual level, but spiritual songs touch the spirit of a person. And this is what our praise and worship choruses are.

NOTE: If you grew up in church you probably have some worship songs that are very dear to your heart because they remind you of key people, places or events in your life. But we need to be careful not to fall into the trap of thinking that those songs and the kind of music we grew up hearing in church are more sacred and more worshipful than any other style. They may really move you personally, but the fact is that what makes a song sacred is not the music or the memories, but the message. Music is just rhythm and pitch, that's all. It's not the music or the style, but the lyrics that make a song sacred and worshipful.

2) VOCAL MUSIC

When a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, that person will be joyful, and the most natural thing in the world for a human being to do when he or she is filled with joy is to sing. The Bible talks about singing or songs 260 times! There's no way around it, the Word of God says that a worshipful Christian is a singing Christian.

"...with singing lips my mouth will praise You...Because You are my help, I sing in the shadow of Your wings." (Psalm 63:5,7 NIV)

3) INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

The word "Psalm" comes from this word - a "psalm" is a song accompanied by the plucking of a musical instrument. And so, it's appropriate to have all kinds of instruments played in worship.

3. The Sincerity of Worship

Paul says that the sounds we make in worship - the congregational music, the vocal music, and the instrumental music - are to be made *"in your heart to the Lord"*.

TWO CONDITIONS FOR MUSICAL PRAISE

1) IT'S TO BE FROM THE HEART.

There's an outer demonstration -you're displaying and expressing gladness and joy with music. But as you do that, there's an inner motivation - you do it "in your heart," or better, "**from** your heart" or "**with** your heart." In other words, it's not just singing from the lips out or playing from the fingers out, but from the heart out.



2) IT'S TO BE TO THE LORD.

You've got it wrong if you think that the people on the platform at church are the performers and the people in the pews are the audience. The truth is that we're all the performers and God is the audience. Our praise and worship is to the Lord.

When we sing in church, we're not singing to one another. We're not performing for other people's entertainment or approval. We're singing to God, playing to God, lifting our hands or clapping or whatever we're doing in worship to God to bless and please and honour Him. That's why it's called *the sacrifice of praise*.

"...let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips, giving thanks to His name." (Hebrews 13:15)

FOUR REALITIES OF CORPORATE WORSHIP

1. There's a tension between the individual and the group.

In a church worship time, we worship as individuals on the one hand, but on the other hand we also worship as a part of a collective. As an individual, I want to have a meaningful personal experience with God in worship, because why worship with other Christians if it doesn't do anything for me personally? But at the same time I can't and shouldn't impose our my tastes and preferences in worship on everyone else so that they all have to worship my way. It's a tension.

2. The only way it can work is if there's mutual submission.

Paul says there must be a *"submitting to one another in the fear of God."* The Greek word for "submit" is a military term. It means "to rank under." It means that you place yourself in a rank under others. You make everyone else a general, and yourself a private. In other words, you consider others as more important than yourself. In fact, the Contemporary English Version translates this verse: *"Honour Christ and **put others first.**"*

*"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you **regard one another as more important than himself**; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."* (Philippians 2:3-4 NASV)

3. First priority in a Spirit-filled worship service is edification.

What it means to be Spirit-filled is that self has been crucified and others come first. So, more important than getting a blessing is being a blessing to others. I want to experience God myself in worship, but it means more to me that you experience God in worship. And I don't want to do anything that would hinder that. In fact, I want to seek your good. I want to build you up.

"When you meet to worship, you must do everything for the good of everyone there." (1Cor.14:26 CEV)

4. Flexibility is an absolute must.

When I'm having my personal worship time, I can totally focus on doing all those things that I enjoy and that build me up in my fellowship with God. But when I join with other Christians for a group worship time, I go into it understanding that it's not all about me; it's all about others and doing everything for the good of everyone there and not just myself. So, obviously, I'm going to have to be willing to bend and be flexible when it comes to musical styles and order of service and the kind of Bible translations that are used and things like that, because, again, it's all about the whole body of worshippers and not just me as an individual worshipper.

This is the reason we do not practice the gift of tongues in the corporate worship services. People speaking in tongues do not understand what they are saying nor do those around them unless they have the gift of interpretation. Often this just confuses visitors and Christians alike. We recognize the gift of tongues but ask people to speak at their private homes where they are alone with the Lord.

The gift of tongues can be compared to a marriage. There are many things we can do as married couples but some things even though they would not be inappropriate in a private setting can be very inappropriate if practiced publicly. There are some experiences the Lord gives His children that do not have to be practiced in public and pushed to the forefront.

WHAT WE KNOW WORSHIP DOES

1. WORSHIP REACHES THE UNCHURCHED



"If an unsaved person...comes to church and hears you all talking in other languages, he is likely to think you are crazy. But if you prophesy, preaching God's Word, [even though such preaching is mostly for believers]..., all these sermons will convince him of the fact that he is a sinner, and his conscience will be pricked by everything he hears. As he listens, his secret thoughts will be laid bare and he will fall down on his knees and worship God, declaring that God is really there among you." (1 Corinthians 14:23-26 Living Bible)

In other words, be careful how the worship service impacts unbelievers in attendance. If we do it right, our worship can actually reach unchurched people when they see that God is really there among us. Now, worship is primarily for believers, no doubt about it. In fact, only believers can truly worship. But unbelievers are nevertheless attracted and intrigued by worship, especially those who are seeking more meaning in life.

That's why we don't point out our visitors or ask them to give money to the offering, why we "dress down" in the early service, why we use the kind of music we do, and don't have a lot of heavy doctrinal sermons or go verse by verse through books of the Bible on Sunday mornings.

2. WORSHIP IS HOW MOST PEOPLE ENTER THE CHURCH

When the average unchurched person decides to check out our church, the overwhelming majority come to a worship service. Very few come to Sunday School or some other ministry of our church first and then stay for the worship time. They come to the worship, and often that's the only thing they come to for awhile, and later they will check out a Sunday School class.

Barna Research found that 74% of all unchurched Canadians are most likely to become involved in a church through the Sunday worship service.

3. WORSHIP CAN BE AN OBSTACLE FOR THE UNCHURCHED

While the worship service is the number one thing that attracts people to church, it can also be the number one obstacle. The top five reasons why most people don't attend church are:

1. Churches are always asking for money.
2. Church services are boring and lifeless.
3. Church services are predictable and repetitive.
4. Sermons are irrelevant to daily life as it's lived in the real world.
5. The pastor makes me feel guilty and ignorant, so I leave feeling worse than when I came.



4. WORSHIP IS OFTEN THE DECIDING FACTOR FOR CHOOSING A CHURCH

It used to be that people chose a church based on its proximity to their homes and its denominational affiliation. Today, neither distance nor doctrine matter when people choose a church. The number one deciding factor is the worship, and the quality of ministry is second. And, particularly, it's the style of worship. People are not only looking for a church that has great worship, but great worship in the style that most appeals to them.

"I become all things to all men, that I may save some of them by any means possible." (1 Corinthians 9:22 TEV)

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

"Don't drink too much wine, for many evils lie along that path; be filled instead with the Holy Spirit, and controlled by Him." (Ephesians 5:18 LB)

Experiencing the Presence of the Lord is found in the filling of His Spirit

When we talk about being Spirit-filled, the first thing we need to understand is the relationship between the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the filling of the Holy Spirit.

1. THE HOLY SPIRIT INDWELLS EVERY CHRISTIAN

*"Jesus shouted to the crowds, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. For the Scriptures declare that rivers of living water shall flow from the inmost being of anyone who believes in Me.' (He was speaking of the Holy Spirit, **who would be given to everyone believing in Him...**" (John 7:37-39 Living Bible)*

To whom did Jesus say the Holy Spirit would be given? To everyone believing in Him. So what happens whenever any person believes in Jesus and is saved? They are given the Holy Spirit in their innermost being. So the Holy Spirit indwells, or lives in, every person who believes in Jesus.

The Bible calls this "**the baptism of the Holy Spirit.**" It's not a special experience that only certain Christians have. We were all baptized by the Spirit and given the Spirit when we were saved and placed into the body of Christ.

*"For we were **all** baptized by one Spirit into one body...and **we were all given the one Spirit** to drink." (1 Corinthians 12:13)*

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. (Romans 8:9)

You can't say that you don't have the Holy Spirit living inside you if you are a Christian. The Holy Spirit indwells every Christian.

2. THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS PERMANENT

In other words, it's a one time experience that's never repeated. Once the Holy Spirit comes into you, He never comes in again because He comes in to stay. He doesn't come and go.

*"Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water **and the Spirit**. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but **the Spirit gives birth to spirit.**"* (John 3:5-6)

If we didn't have the Holy Spirit, we wouldn't be alive spiritually, because He's the one who gives birth to the spirit. Without the Holy Spirit you couldn't be saved or stay saved because His abiding presence in you is what brings life to your dead spirit.

"This is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit He gave us." (1 John 3:24)

When you're born again and the Spirit indwells you, Jesus indwells you and He belongs to you. If you didn't have the Holy Spirit, Christ wouldn't belong to us because He's the Spirit of Jesus

3. WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT WE WOULD NOT BELONG TO CHRIST

"If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ." (Romans 8:9)



The Holy Spirit is the mark of Christ's ownership of you. In fact, the Bible says that when you believed, you were marked with the Holy Spirit.

*"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, **you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance...**"* (Ephesians 1:13-14)

In New Testament times, people would set their insignia in a wax seal and mark their ownership of some possession. And that verse says that when we heard the gospel and believed, we were marked with a seal of ownership, and that seal is the Holy Spirit. His presence in your life says, "This person belongs to Jesus." And without Him in you, there's not that mark of ownership.

So, every Christian is permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Otherwise we wouldn't be born again, Jesus wouldn't belong to us and we wouldn't belong to Jesus.

THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

TWO FACTS ABOUT THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. NOT EVERY BELIEVER IS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

In Ephesians 5:18, Paul commands us to be filled with the Spirit. If every believer was already filled with the Spirit, then this would have been an unnecessary command. And Paul didn't give unnecessary commands. So, obviously, not every believer is filled with the Spirit even though every believer is indwelt by the Spirit. In other words, you can be indwelt but not filled.

All you have to do is look around at the lives that many Christians live to realize that this is true. If every believer was filled with the Holy Spirit, they'd live better, more victorious and holy lives. But many Christians are not Spirit-filled or they are not Spirit-filled anymore. That's because...

2. THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NOT PERMANENT

The filling of the Spirit isn't like the indwelling or baptism of the Spirit. The indwelling happens one time, when you're saved. The Spirit comes in and He's there permanently. But the filling of the Spirit is not a one-time experience where once you're Spirit-filled, you're Spirit-filled from then on.

In the Greek, "**be filled** with the Spirit," is literally, "be being filled," or "be continuously filled with the Spirit." It's not permanent; it's continuous. In other words, it's not something that happens once and that's it, but it's something that happens on an ongoing basis.

Paul often talks about "walking by the Spirit." Walking isn't a one-time experience, where you take one step and that's it. No, walking is a continuous, ongoing process. And the filling of the Holy Spirit is like that. It's not a leap and it's over. It's a constant walk.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SPIRIT'S INDWELLING AND FILLING

They're different, but they're related.

The Spirit's Indwelling Is How We Enter the Christian Life

When we believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit gives our spirit a new birth, places us in the body of Christ, and Christ takes up residence inside of us through His Spirit. If that didn't happen, we wouldn't be saved. The indwelling of the Spirit is how we enter the Christian life.

The Spirit's Filling Is How We Live the Christian Life

Becoming a Christian and entering the Christian life is essential, but the Christian life isn't meant to be simply entered; it's meant to be lived. So God gave us the Holy Spirit, not just to provide us with a new identity, but to give us the strength to live a new life.

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13 NASV)

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God..." (Galatians 2:20)

Imagine that I have a glove and I say, "Glove, pick up my Bible." And it just lays there. So I fuss at it, but still it does nothing. I nag at it, but it's never going to pick up that Bible. Why? It can't. It has no strength in itself to do what I want it to do. But what if I slip my hand in that glove? Then it can do anything I want it to do because it's not the glove, but my hand in the glove. And that's what the filling of the Holy Spirit is. It is Christ living out His life in and through us.

So, do you see how they work together? Without the indwelling, there couldn't be the filling but without the filling there couldn't be a victorious Christian life. Since He's already there in our lives, He is able to empower us if we are open to Him. Some people are and some are not.

WHAT IS THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT?

"Be very careful, then, **how you live** - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand **what the Lord's will is**. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, **be filled with the Spirit**. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." (Ephesians 5:15-21)

FOUR FACTS ABOUT THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT

1. IT HAS TO DO WITH HOW WE LIVE.



He says, "Be careful, then, **how you live...**" Some people think that the filling of the Spirit is **only an experience** where you have a powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit where He comes upon you and overwhelms you, and perhaps you speak in tongues or fall to the ground or have some kind of overpowering emotional episode.

Now, you **may have a powerful experience** when you are filled with the Spirit, or you might not. It depends on the condition of your life when you're filled. If you've allowed a lot of sin to accumulate in your life, then when the Holy Spirit takes possession of you, He's going to do a lot of housecleaning. The dust will fly and until everything is cleaned out, there may very well be some upheavals. Or it may be more a feeling of deeper peace and a richer and fuller realization of His presence.

But whatever kind of experience you have is a by-product of the filling and not the goal of the filling. The filling of the Holy Spirit is not an experience or an emotion, it's power for living your life. The whole fifth chapter of Ephesians is talking about how we are to live. In verses 1-2, he says to "*live a life of love*." In verses 3-7, he says not to have any hint of sexual immorality or any kind of impurity or greed, no obscene talk or dirty jokes. In verses 8-14, he says to "*live as children of light*" displaying goodness, righteousness, and truth. Then he says to "*be careful, then, how you live...*" And how can I do that? "*Be filled with the Spirit.*" The filling of the Spirit has to do with how we live our daily lives.

2. IT IS THE LORD'S WILL.

He says, "...*understand what the Lord's will is.*" What is the Lord's will? The next verse tells us: "*Do not get drunk on wine...but be filled with the Spirit.*" If we're not filled with the Spirit, we can't have the power to live our daily lives the way God wants us to. So, being filled with the Spirit is not an option. It's God's will. Not to be filled with the Spirit, then, is sin. If you are not filled with the Spirit, you are in disobedience to the clear will of God. It's the Lord's will.

3. IT IS A CONTROL ISSUE.

Some people think that being filled with the Holy Spirit is getting more of the Holy Spirit into you, like filling an empty glass. But the Holy Spirit is a Person, and you can't get more of a person. That would be like if I came into your house and you said, "I just want more of you in my house." Well, how can you have more of me? When you have me, you have all of me! You can get to know me better, but you can't have more of me. And when the Holy Spirit indwells you, He's a person; and you have all of Him that there is.

Well then, what does the filling of the Spirit mean? The original Greek word has three shades of meaning which, together, give us an understanding of what the filling of the Holy Spirit is like.

THREE THINGS THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS LIKE

1. IT'S LIKE WIND FILLING A SAIL



Without the wind, a sailboat just sits in the water and drifts. It has no power of its own to move along. But when the wind fills the sails, the wind carries the boat along. And being filled with the Spirit is like that. We have no power of our own to move along in the Christian life with victory, but we can ask the Holy Spirit to fill us so that we're moved along in our Christian life by the power of God Himself.

2. IT'S LIKE SALT PERMEATING MEAT

In New Testament times, they would rub salt into meat to flavor it and preserve it. The salt would fill the meat. That is, the salt would go down into every part of it and have a flavoring, preserving influence. And that's what the filling of the Holy Spirit is. It's not you getting more of the Spirit; it's the Spirit getting more of you. It's God's Spirit permeating your life, controlling and influencing every part of you in all that you think and say and do.

3. IT'S LIKE WINE CONTROLLING A DRUNK

When a person is drunk on wine, they are under the control of the alcohol. But we're not to live our lives under the control of alcohol, which, in fact, leads to an out-of-control life. Instead, we're to live a life that is under the control of the Holy Spirit. When you're filled with the Holy Spirit, it means that your life is under the Spirit's control; He's guiding and leading you.

So, the filling of the Holy Spirit isn't a matter of getting filled up with the Spirit, but it's the Holy Spirit taking control of every part of your life and moving your life at the impulse of God's will.

4. IT AFFECTS OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD AND HIS PEOPLE.

Being filled with God's Spirit affects our relationship to God. Look at verses 19 and 20 again: "*Sing and make music in your heart **to the Lord**, always giving thanks **to God the Father** for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" How do you know if you're filled with the Spirit? **Because you want to worship God.** You want to sing and make music in your heart to the Lord. And you become more thankful to God for everything He does for you.

Being filled with the Spirit also affects our relationship to God's people. Verse 19 says, "*Speak **to one another** with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs..*" Verse 21 says, "*Submit **to one another** out of reverence for Christ.*" You can't be filled with the Spirit and not want to be part of a worshipping community. You want to worship God in relationship with other Christians.

So, the filling of the Spirit is about living our lives under the total control of the Holy Spirit. And when we do, it puts us in a worshipping relationship with God and other believers.

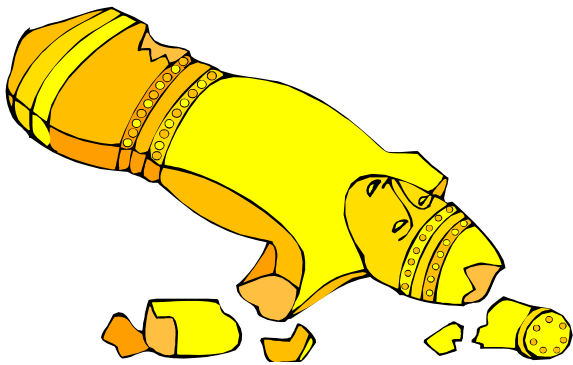
Now, all the things we've talked about so far are things we need to know about the filling of the Holy Spirit. But none of them will do us any good unless we actually become filled with the Spirit and live daily in that filling. So let's get down to the nitty gritty and talk about...

HOW TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

The first thing to understand is that we can't fill ourselves with the Holy Spirit. It's not, "Fill yourself with the Spirit," but "Be filled with the Spirit." It's a passive act; it's something that's done to you. Who fills you? The Holy Spirit. What do you do, then? You put yourself in a place where the Holy Spirit can and will fill you. And there are two ways to do that.

TWO CONDITIONS FOR THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT

1. CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE



What is confession? The word literally means "**saying the same thing.**" It's saying the same thing about our sin that God says. It's seeing our sin as God does and feeling about it the way He feels.

So, we must acknowledge our sin. We must admit to God that we've sinned and own up to the things we've done that violate His will and agree that they are repulsive and hate them as God does. And God promises that if we will do that, He will forgive and cleanse us.

*"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and **to cleanse** us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9 NASV)

What is repentance? The word literally means "**a complete and total change of mind.**" It means renouncing our sin. Confessing our sin is the start, but if that's all we do, it's not enough. We must take the next step by turning from it and turning to Christ and His will.

It's like changing clothes. If you're wearing old, filthy rags, what do you need to do? You begin by acknowledging that what you're wearing is no good. But that's not enough, is it? You need to follow through on that by taking them off for good and then putting on new, clean clothes.

*"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to **put off** your old self...and to **put on** the new self...Therefore each of you must **put off falsehood** and **speak truthfully** to his neighbor...He who has been stealing must **steal no longer**, but must **work**...Do not let any **unwholesome talk** come out of your mouths, but only what is **helpful for building others up**... And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God...**Get rid of bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander**, along with every form of **malice**. Be **kind and compassionate** to one another, **forgiving** each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (Ephesians 4:22-32)*

What did that verse say? It said that we must put off the old and put on the new. If you've lied, confess it - "I have lied" - and then repent of it by not lying anymore but speaking the truth. If you stole, confess it and then repent of it by stealing no more but doing honest work. If you tore people down with your mouth, confess it and repent of it by building people up with your mouth. If you were bitter or angry, if you fought and slandered other people or had malice toward others, confess that and repent of it by being kind and compassionate and forgiving.

You see? It's not just feeling sorry for what we've done, even admitting that it was sin. We have to take the next step, which is turning from it and replacing wrong actions with right actions

The Five Steps of Confession and Repentance

1. Ask The Holy Spirit To Reveal Every Sin.

Get a notepad and a pen and get alone. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you every un-confessed sin in your life. And, as He does write them down. Be as specific as possible. Don't just include things that you think are sin, but things that God says are sin. If any action or attitude violates God's Word, it is sin. Don't forget sins of commission and omission. Sins of commission are sins you committed, wrong things you should not have done. Sins of omission are right things you should have done but didn't do, or omitted.

2. Confess Each Sin Individually To The Lord.

Ask Him to help you see it His way and to hate it the way He does. Name each sin and admit that it is sin, that it is repulsive and vile, and that you don't want it in your life any more.

3. Seek Cleansing, Healing, And Deliverance From The Source Of The Sin.

Ask God to show you where this sin comes from. Why do you do it? How did it get to have such a hold on you? Is there an attitude that you have developed that leads you to be involved in this sin? Seek a renewal of your mind by "reprogramming" your thought processes with the Word of God. Adjust your thinking to the truth of God's Word. Is there some sin in your past that you've never dealt with that is at the root of your current sinfulness? Seek cleansing from the root sin. For example, the Bible talks about "the root of bitterness." Many sins come from a root of bitterness over some long ago hurt that you've never dealt with. Let God heal that hurt with forgiveness and grace. Let Him deliver you from the past and from the source of sins.

4. Right All Wrongs As God Leads.

God's Word tells us that if we realize that we have offended someone, we are to make it right.

"If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift."
(Matthew 5:23-24)

If God shows you that you have offended someone, you need to do two things: 1) Make it right with God, and 2) Make it right with those you have offended. How?

HOW TO RIGHT WRONGS WITH THOSE YOU HAVE OFFENDED

-Confess it to God and the Offended Party, and Ask Forgiveness.

You don't have to get detailed in your confession, just name the basic offense and ask forgiveness. By the way, the circle of confession should only be as large as the circle of offense. For example, if you've sinned against your wife, you don't need to confess it to the whole church!
-Make Restitution.



If you stole something, return it. If you told a lie, confess it. If you gossiped or slandered someone, try to set the record straight with those you gossiped or slandered to.

-Set it Right with Yourself.

Accept God's forgiveness and forgive yourself, then seek cleansing from the cause of the sin.

5. Thank God For His Forgiveness.

Take the paper on which you listed your sins and tear it up and throw it away, or carefully set it on fire and watch it burn, thanking God for His forgiveness that remembers your sins no more.

So, the first condition for the filling of the Spirit to come is confession and repentance of sin. The second condition is...

2. COOPERATION AND RESISTANCE.

After we have become cleansed, we are in a position for the Holy Spirit to take control of our lives, but this doesn't come in an overwhelming instantaneous spiritual experience. **It comes as a process.** We are the microwave society. And we want instant spirituality. We want to just be able to have an experience with the Holy Spirit that immediately makes us Spirit-filled without us having to go through a process. But that's not how it works.

The Greek verb translated "be filled" is in the present tense which means it's a continuous action. As we said before, it's not something that happens to you once and then you're Spirit-filled from then on. It's like walking. In Galatians 5, Paul talks about "walking by the Spirit."

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." (Gal.5:16)

"Walking by the Spirit" doesn't have anything to do with taking a walk. It means you "live your life by the Spirit." Like walking, living is a moment-by-moment process. And being under the Holy Spirit's control is something that happens step-by-step through the constantly passing moments of life. Each day, each moment of the day, we say, "Lord, this is Your day. I want the Holy Spirit to control every thought and action of my life as I go through this day." And then throughout the day, you consciously remain fixed on that desire and commitment.

Let me explain the principle of "drift." Most Christians don't get away from God and get into blatant sin all at once. They don't run away; they drift away. Have you ever been to the ocean? You put your stuff there on the beach and get into the water and start swimming. After awhile you look up around and say, "Where's my stuff?!" It's waaaayyyy back there. How did you get so far away? You drifted away. So, what do you do? You go back to where you belong. And how do you keep from drifting so far away again? You get focused on where your stuff is and remain fixed on it and stay alert. When you notice that you're drifting, you immediately correct your position so that you remain in the place where you have committed to be.

That is exactly what it means to walk by the Spirit. That is the Christian walk, the Spirit-filled walk. Now, there are two things we have to do quite consistently in our life to keep from drifting.

COOPERATION

"So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature....Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit." (Galatians 5:16,25)

We must keep in step with the Spirit. What does that mean? Well, you are not a marionette that the Holy Spirit controls without any cooperation or work on your part. He will work in you, but you must take the initiative to do the things that put you in step with the Spirit.

"...continue to **work out your salvation** with fear and trembling, for it is **God who works in you** to will and to act according to His good purpose."
(Philippians 2:12-13)

RESISTANCE

"Submit yourselves, then, to God. **Resist** the devil, and he will flee from you."
(James 4:7)



Obviously, if we're going to continue to be filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit, there must be an ongoing battle against sin. We must not only let God cleanse our lives of past sin, but we must seek to avoid sin in the present and in the future. If we sin, we need to confess it and forsake it right then and there. But, more than that, we need to make every effort to not sin.

And a key scripture that tells us how to avoid a lot of the sin in our lives is Romans 13:14: "*But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.*"

Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ is the act of cooperating with the Spirit, which we just talked about. Fill your mind and heart with the Word of God, pray always, focus on the Lord Jesus and His will for your life, check yourself for drift, stay constantly fixed on Him. Then, make no provision for the lusts of the flesh, that is, for the gratification of your lower urges.

Do you know what "**provisions**" are? They are the supplies you need to survive and thrive. If you go on a camping trip, you bring provisions... food, water, a tent, matches, sleeping bag, etc. If you had your provisions taken away, you'd probably have to go home. Now, if we want our lower urges to be strong, what should we do? Feed them. Give them the provisions they need to survive and thrive. But if we want them to be weakened, what should we do? Don't give them the provisions they need. Starve them! If you have a problem with sexual lust, for example, get rid of all the dirty magazines in the house, get off the Internet, cancel the cable channels that run dirty movies, and get someone that you can be accountable to. Job 31:1 says, "*I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.*"

It would be nice if when we get saved, we lose our sinful urges but we don't. It's a lifelong fight. But there's God's promise that if we will walk in the Spirit and cooperate with Him and resist the sinful urges, we will in no way fulfill the desires of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)

It's a constant struggle where we cooperate with the Spirit and resist the urges of the flesh. And when we're confessed up and we're correcting our course by repenting of sin and making wrongs right, and we're living daily in step with the Spirit, cooperating with His work and resisting our sinful urges, so that He has total control of our lives, that's the filling of the Holy Spirit.

NOT FEELING, BUT FAITH

One last thing about the filling of the Holy Spirit. You may, as we said before, have strong feelings associated with the filling of the Spirit or you may not. But remember this, the filling of the Holy Spirit is not a matter of feeling; it is a matter of faith. How do I know that I'm filled with the Spirit? By trusting God's promises. If you have fulfilled the Scriptural requirements for being filled with the Spirit, then you can say, "By faith I know that I am filled with the Holy Spirit. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for being in control of my life."

I pray that you will take these steps we've discussed and become a Spirit-filled, Spirit-controlled Christian. In fact, let's pray together about that right now:

"Heavenly Father, I recognize my need for Your control over my life. In myself I am weak and inadequate. But I believe that, through Your strength, I can do all things. I commit myself before You to confess my sins and to repent of them. I will make right everything that is wrong in my life. I want to be clean so You can fill me and use me. I will cooperate with You by working out my salvation with fear and trembling. I will resist sin in my life by making no provision for my flesh. Thank You for Your promise to fill me and control me. "

WHAT NOW?

You now go to the sixth stage, Class 601 **The PROCEDURE**

How does the church really work? Who's doing what? Where does the money go that is given? Who is responsible for what? If you have asked these questions and more the 601 class is to answer, what are the church's procedures.

The 601 class is the final one. Sign up and we'll see you there!

Contact the church office to find class times or if you have any questions. (250)492-0131

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