**The comparison between the companion passages of** [**Ephesians 5:18-20**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+5.18-20&t=NKJV) **and** [**Colossians 3:16**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+3.16&t=NKJV) **confirms that a Christian is “*filled* [controlled] *with the Spirit*” when “*the Word of Christ dwells in him richly*.”**

**Being Filled with the Holy Spirit
By Charles Strong of** [**Bible One**](http://www.bibleone.net/)

Although the mandate of Scripture for every Christian is to be “*filled with the Holy Spirit*,” as seen in [Ephesians 5:18b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+5.18b&t=NKJV) (“. . *. be filled with the* [Holy] *Spirit*”), it is a process and goal *often misunderstood* by *Christians*, both *laity* and *clergy* or *student* and *professor* alike.

There are those who believe it is a “second act” of God bestowed *upon His children*, much like that of being “*born again* [from above]” ([John 3:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.3&t=NKJV)), the grace-gift of salvation that God bestows on any person who will “*believes on the Lord Jesus Christ*”([Acts 16:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.31&t=NKJV)) — which is to say anyone who by faith alone accepts the payment for sin that only Jesus Christ could and did pay at Calvary — and is thereby instantly and permanently “*passed from* [spiritual] *death into* [spiritual] *life*” ([John 5:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+5.24&t=NKJV)). And once this “second act” occurs, the Christian is empowered to speak in an unknown spiritual language and/or enabled to perform miraculous healings, both unsupported by correct interpretation of Scripture.

Then there are those who believe the “filling with the Holy Spirit” is bestowed *on the believer* *the moment* he “believes on the Lord Jesus Christ,” but which *can be taken from him* when there is unconfessed sin in his life, also unsupported by correct interpretation of Scripture.

So the question remains, “What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?” And to properly understand the answer, *one should first properly understand God’s complete plan of redemption for man*, a brief outlay of such follows.

(For a comprehensive study of God’s complete plan of redemption for man [spirit, soul, and body], see Charles Strong's [Bible Facts Little Understood by Christians](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-two.php#Bible%20Facts%20Little%20Understood%20by%20Christians) in this site.)

The Christian life and all that pertains to it is a product of God’s *grace* (His unmerited favor toward mankind). *God’s plan of salvation for man*, unlike what many in Christendom teach, is actually *a three-fold prospect*, *i.e*., salvation of the *spirit*, salvation of the *soul*, and salvation of the *body* ([1 Thessalonians 5:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+5.23&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 4:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+4.12&t=NKJV)).

**In brief:**

1. Salvation of the spirit is the *one-time and never to be retracted gift of eternal life to an individual*. It is totally based on the Person (Deity) and work — *atoning sacrifice on the cross of Calvary* — *of Jesus Christ*. It *cannot* be associated with any merit or self-effort by man. And it can *only* be apprehended (entered into through a “birth from above”) by *faith* (a genuine willful act of trust) alone. To put it succinctly, salvation of the spirit, which is normally referred to by fundamental Christianity by the general term “salvation,” is *by faith alone in Christ alone* ([Acts 16:30-31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.30-31&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 2:8-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.8-9&t=NKJV)).

2. Salvation of the soul, at times addressed *insufficiently* as “sanctification” within theological presentations within Christendom, and although is based on the person and *work of Jesus Christ*, is that part of man’s composition that *represents his life lived as a Christian*, which *connects him to the material world*, and which *is adjudicated at the Judgment Seat of Christ with only millennial varieties in view* ([James 1:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.21&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 10:39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.39&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 1:8-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+1.8-9&t=NKJV); [Matthew 16:24-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.24-27&t=NKJV); [24:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.13&t=NKJV)).

3. Salvation of the body, which any Christian can easily understand, takes place *subsequent* to his placement of faith in Christ’s finished work on the cross for his eternal (spirit) salvation. The body continues *to exist in a state of degradation* (*i.e*., death), *only to be redeemed* (saved) at its resurrection ([1 Corinthians 15:48-54](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+15.48-54&t=NKJV)).

At the salvation (of the *spirit*) experience a person is *instantaneously* and *permanently* subject to *several actions of and by the Holy Spirit*.

• The believer is *baptized* (immersed) into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit, which is in fact his *unification* with Jesus Christ. ([Matthew 3:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+3.11&t=NKJV); [Mark 1:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+1.8&t=NKJV); [Acts 1:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+1.5&t=NKJV); [1 Corinthians 12:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+12.13&t=NKJV); [Galatians 3:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.27&t=NKJV))

• The believer is *indwelt* by the Holy Spirit, *i.e*., the Holy Spirit in whole takes up *residence within the believer*. ([John 14:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+14.7&t=NKJV); [Romans 8:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.9&t=NKJV); [1 Corinthians 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.16&t=NKJV); [6:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+6.19&t=NKJV); [Galatians 4:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+4.6&t=NKJV); [1 John 2:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+2.27&t=NKJV); [3:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+3.24&t=NKJV))

• The believer is *sealed* with and by the Holy Spirit. This is the believer’s *assurance* (“guarantee”) *of eternal security*.**\*\*** ([2 Corinthians 1:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+1.22&t=NKJV); [5:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.5&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 1:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+1.13-14&t=NKJV); [4:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+4.30&t=NKJV))

• The believer is *granted* one or more spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit, which is/are to *be used in God’s service*. ([1 Corinthians 12:4-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+12.4-11&t=NKJV))

**\*\***(Aside by Pat: The seal and the earnest [guarantee] can be likened to a real estate transaction. The seal is similar to being qualified [opportunity] to purchase the property. The earnest guarantees that the property is set aside waiting for your completion [closing] of the transaction! [[Ephesians 1:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+1.13-14&t=NKJV)])

These actions of and by the Holy Spirit are *permanent*, *never to be retracted* under any circumstances by God or *nullified* by man. In addition with these permanent actions *of* and *by* the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is *available* to the believer to lead and guide, and, in fact, *work through* the believer in the Christian life.

The believer really only has *two* choices after the salvation experience. He may attempt *to live for Christ under his own power* (self-efforts and works), which (self) righteousness is “as filthy rags” in the sight of God ([Isaiah 64:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+64.6&t=NKJV)) and will *only* produce “human good” (works) that are characterized in Scripture as “wood, hay and straw” to later be *consumed* by God’s fiery judgment; *or*, he may *live being filled with the Holy Spirit* and thereby *produce* “divine good” (works) that are characterized in Scripture as “gold, silver and precious stones,” which *will not be consumed by God’s fiery judgment* and for which *he will be rewarded* ([1 Corinthians 3:11-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.11-15&t=NKJV)).

To live for Christ under one’s *own power* will be *severely self-defeating* when the Christian *appears before the Judgment Seat of Christ* ([2 Corinthians 5:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.10&t=NKJV); [Romans 14:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+14.10&t=NKJV); [Revelation 22:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.12&t=NKJV)); and issues and determinations at that time will *exclude him* from being a *part of* the “bride of Christ,” *excluding* him from *ruling and reigning with Christ in His millennial kingdom*. On the other hand, *to be filled with the Spirit*, *to allow Christ to live through Him*; the Christian *will fare well at Christ’s Judgment Seat*, will *become part of Christ’s bride and will rule and reign with Him during the coming millennial kingdom* ([2 Timothy 2:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.12&t=NKJV); [Revelation 19:7-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.7-9&t=NKJV)).

The Holy Spirit and His works *were present* at the Creation, were *prevalent* throughout the Old Testament and will be *a permanent part of the Christian throughout eternity*. Even though the Holy Spirit *initiated a unique ministry toward the believer* (permanently baptizing, indwelling and sealing) at Pentecost, *He temporarily filled individuals prior to this time* ([Luke 1:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+1.15&t=NKJV)).

**What is the filling with the Holy Spirit?**

The words “fill” or “full” as they relate to the Holy Spirit and the believer come from the Greek word *pleroo*, which in essence means to be *completely* influenced and empowered by. In effect it is a *condition* that exists when the Holy Spirit *controls* a believer *both* inwardly (his thoughts and motives) and outwardly (his actions). A person who *is filled* with the Holy Spirit evidences the “fruit of the Spirit,” which is “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” ([Galatians 5:22-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+5.22-23&t=NKJV)).

Some of the phraseology used in the New Testament that represents the concept of the *fullness* with the Holy Spirit follows:

• Filled with/of the Spirit ([Luke 1:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+1.15&t=NKJV); [4:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+4.1&t=NKJV); [Acts 2:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+2.4&t=NKJV); [6:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+6.3&t=NKJV); [7:55](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+7.55&t=NKJV); [11:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+11.24&t=NKJV); [13:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+13.9&t=NKJV), [52](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+13.52&t=NKJV), [Ephesians 5:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+5.18&t=NKJV))

• Led by/of the Spirit ([Luke 4:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+4.1&t=NKJV); [Galatians 5:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+5.18&t=NKJV))

• Walk in the Spirit ([Galatians 5:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+5.16&t=NKJV); [5:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+5.25&t=NKJV))

• Moved by the Spirit ([2 Peter 1:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+1.21&t=NKJV))

• Walk in Christ ([Colossians 2:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+2.6&t=NKJV))

• Christ dwell [be at home or “full residence”] in your heart ([Ephesians 3:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+3.17&t=NKJV))

**The Key**

For certain, Christians are commanded to be “*filled with* [‘walk in’] *the Spirit*” ([Ephesians 5:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+5.18&t=NKJV); [Galatians 5:16-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+5.16-25&t=NKJV)), but to properly understand this requires one to “compare Scripture with Scripture.” Comparing [Ephesians 5:18-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+5.18-20&t=NKJV) with its companion passage in [Colossians 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+3.16&t=NKJV) reveals that to be “filled with the Spirit” is comparable to (the same as) letting “*the Word of Christ dwell in you richly*.”

To say it in another way, the *more* we allow God’s Word to permeate us (*i.e*., the more of it we *take in*, the more *we believe* what God says about a matter, and the *more of it* we put into *practice* [[James 1:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.22&t=NKJV)]), the more *we are transformed* by it ([Romans 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+12.2&t=NKJV)), the more God’s Spirit *can influence* our thoughts and actions, the more we *are able* to “walk” in Christ ([Colossians 2:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+2.6&t=NKJV)), and the more we *are able* to focus on Christ (the Author and Finisher [Perfecter] of our faith [[Hebrews 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.2&t=NKJV)]) until Christ *is formed in us* ([Galatians 4:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+4.19&t=NKJV)). This is essentially what Christ meant when, as He was praying for His disciples, He said, “*Sanctify* (set apart [to holiness]) *them by Your truth*, *Your Word is truth*” ([John 17:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+17.17&t=NKJV)).

Simply put, the filling with the Spirit is *the degree* in which the Christian *absorbs* God’s Word *throughout* his life, *i.e*., *receives* and *believes* it. As he reads, studies, and believes God’s Word; the more he *is transformed by the Word*, *resulting in Christ being formed in him*.

Again, how is the Christian filled with the Spirit? There is only one way. Since there is a unique and definite link between Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, and the written (God-breathed) Word of God (the One reflecting the Other), the Christian is *to immerse* himself in the “implanted Word,” which *will transform* him progressively to spiritual maturity, as he *obediently works out his own salvation with fear and trembling* ([Philippians 2:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+2.12&t=NKJV)), and *the eventual salvation of his soul*, the “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” ([1 Peter 1:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+1.5&t=NKJV)). The comparison between the companion passages of [Ephesians 5:18-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+5.18-20&t=NKJV) and [Colossians 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+3.16&t=NKJV) confirms that a Christian is “*filled* [controlled] *with the Spirit*” when “*the Word of Christ dwells in him richly*.”

*Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls.* ([James 1:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.21&t=NKJV))

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God* (*lit*. God-breathed), *and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete* [mature], *thoroughly equipped for every good work.* ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+3.16-17&t=NKJV))

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.* ([Romans 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+12.2&t=NKJV))

**What impedes the filling with the Holy Spirit?**

The filling with the Holy Spirit in any believer can only be impeded or hampered by *sin*. When the believer, who *always* has the God-given ability to exercise choice, *selects* to sin against God, he thereby *quenches* (Greek: *sbennumi*, to extinguish; to dampen, hinder or repress) and *grieves* (Greek: *lupo*, to cause sorrow or emotional pain to) the Holy Spirit. This in effect *limits* the Holy Spirit’s *influence* in the believer’s life. In other words, the Holy Spirit when *confronted by willful sin in the believer withdraws His ability to empower and lead the believer.*

For this, there is only *one remedy*:

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*. ([1 John 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+1.9&t=NKJV))

To confess sin is *not* penitence. It is *calling sin what it is*, to *own up to it*, *not* making any excuse for it. When a Christian who recognizes that he has sinned against God takes *responsibility* for it before God, then God *immediately* forgives it. And regarding the sin, the believer *should make every effort to never return to it*.

*Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,*

*as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby,*

*if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.* ([1 Peter 2:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.1-3&t=NKJV))

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[Bible One - Charles Strong's Being Filled with the Holy Spirit](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CPat%5CDocuments%5CEnvisioneer%204.5%20Express)