

# *“In Everything Give Thanks”*

## *Ephesians 5:18-20*

INTRO:

In **Ephesians 5**, the Apostle Paul lists several commands for us that are connected to our walking in the light. In vs. 15, he tells us ***we must walk carefully and wisely making good use of the time because the days are evil.*** Vs. 17 commands us to *know what the will of God is.* Finally, in vs. 18-21 *he commands us to be filled with the Spirit. “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.”*

Pretty much everyone who has studied this passage agrees being filled with the Spirit involves being controlled by the Holy Spirit of God. This involves yielding as in active obedience to God’s requirements in our lives.

We want to focus on the result in this text to being filled with the Spirit. According to our text it involves three things.

*I. Speaking to Ourselves and Singing to the Lord (v. 19)*

*II. Thanking the Father (v. 20)*

*III. Submitting Ourselves to One Another (v. 21)*

*I. Speaking to Ourselves and Singing to the Lord (v. 19)*

A. If we obey the command become filled with the Spirit, the first result that we will see in our lives is the fruit of joy. As the song says, there is truly ***“Joy in Serving Jesus.”*** We will find our lives filled with joy and that joy will be expressed in two ways.

B. First, we will find ourselves expressing joy one to another. Our joy will be expressed horizontally. Paul says literally, we will be speaking to ourselves, but the mode of expression suggests singing and music. The means of the expression of joy are contained in three distinct yet overlapping forms. **PSALMS:** this word probably means selections from the Old Testament Psalter. These are songs composed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and involve mostly praise to God. **HYMNS:** are usually distinguished as New Testament works of praise and honor to the Lord. The Greek word translated **SONGS:** usually meant secular music so Paul added the adjective to limit its meaning here. **SPIRITUAL SONGS:** are songs of praise about spiritual realities.

1. Why did Paul use these three terms to describe the expressions of joy that we make to one another in response to our Spirit filling? It was most likely so that he could cover every way that we tend to express our joy to God in music. If we let the Lord have

control in our lives, the fullness of joy that we experience cannot remain unexpressed in our hearts. We have to share that joy with our fellow believers.

2. The parallel text in **Colossians 3:16** *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”* adds a dimension to this reality. We will do more than express our joy, we will teach and admonish (train as a child) one another through these means also. Music must have a sound and solid message to be in these three categories.

## *II. Thanking the Father (v. 20)*

A. Paul doesn't stop with the matter of joy in his description of the result of being filled with the Spirit. Not only will we have joy in our hearts, we will have a sense of thankfulness in our spirits. (**Ephesians 5:20**)

*“Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

B. There is some difficulty in understanding what Paul means here. How in the world can we be thankful concerning all things? Does this mean that we should stop and praise God when we have a flat tire on the expressway? What is Paul saying here?

1. It is not really for all things that Paul asks us to give thanks. It is **concerning** all things give thanks. What is this distinction? It means that in the midst of the trouble we can thank God for many things. Not directly for the trouble but for what He is doing in that trouble.

2. But what can we thank God for in the trouble? This is a partial list but it will give us a starting point.

We can thank God for all that He is; **Psalm 30:4** says,  
*“Sing praise to the LORD, you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name.”*

Are we thankful that God is holy? He can never act sinfully toward us.

We can thank Him for His mercy and steadfast love that helps us through the situations in which we find ourselves. Repeatedly in the **Psalm 107** we read,  
*“Thank the LORD for His goodness, for His mercy endures forever.”*

We can thank Him that every good gift in my life comes from Him. **James 1:17** says,  
*“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”*

Finally, although there are many more examples, we can thank Him that in everything He is at work forming and shaping us into the image of His Son. Here come those verses again. **Romans 8:28-29:**

***“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”***

C. Part of being filled with the Spirit is an awareness of God's presence in our lives. Since we are aware of His presence, we are also aware of His working and we are thankful for the blessings that we see Him working in our lives.

### ***III. Submitting Ourselves to One Another (v. 21)***

A. If we are filled with the Spirit of God we will first experience full joy that finds expression in both horizontal and vertical directions. Secondly, if we are filled with the Spirit, we will exhibit a spirit of thankfulness. Finally, if we are filled with the Spirit we will be submitting ourselves to God and to others.

B. The word translated *“submitting yourselves”* is a military term, it means *“to be subject,”* or *“to be obedient”* to someone. We are to serve one to another in the fear of God (or of Christ).

1. What does that mean? The realm in which we are to do this submitting is of first import. We submit one to another because of who God is. We occupy these roles and serve the Lord in this way because of the LORD Jesus.

2. We will submit to others because we first submitted to Christ. That submission involves accepting God's will for our lives.

For HUSBANDS submitting involves accepting responsibility to LOVE my wife and to cherish her and to be responsible for her.

For WIVES submitting means accepting your role as a support and a partner in the marriage, and even letting him do some things wrong sometimes.

For CHILDREN, it means obeying your parents, even when you think that they are too stupid to know right from wrong.

For SERVANTS (i.e. employees), it means doing your very best for your boss, because the Lord Jesus is really your boss.

For BOSSES, it means treating your hired help with respect and fairly, for the Lord is watching what you do.

C. In short then, this submission is recognizing first the role that God has given us and then seeking to fulfill our places in God's plan the very best way that we can. Because God the Holy Spirit is in control of our lives, this will not be drudgery; rather it will be a joy.

Are we filled with the Spirit? Check it out.

1. Do we live lives characterized by joy?
2. Do we find a spirit of thankfulness permeating our lives?
3. Are we happy to carry out our roles in the position that we have been given in life, simply because in doing it we are pleasing our Lord?

If we can answer, "yes," to all of these questions, then we can be sure that the filling of the Holy Spirit is a reality in our lives.