

Filling of the Holy Spirit

Love is doing the best good for the object of that love. **Grace** is unmerited favor. **Mercy** is unmerited non-punishment.

Then the Lord said, *“My Spirit shall not strive with man forever* (Genesis 6:3; see also 1 Samuel 16:14; Psalm 51:11; 106:33; Nehemiah 9:30-31; 2 Thessalonians 2:6).

There is no end to the love of God. God’s grace and mercy are indeed generous, and God’s patience is longsuffering (Nehemiah 9:30-31). But there comes a point when God says the Holy Spirit has restrained sin long enough, put up with sin long enough, and withheld judgment long enough.

There comes a point where enough is enough, and it’s no longer loving to be gracious and merciful. That point came about in the days of Noah (Genesis 6:3). It also happened with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:20) and the disobedience of Saul (1 Samuel 16:14), and it will come about with this present age (2 Thessalonians 2:6). David, because of his sin, feared the removal of the Holy Spirit from his life (Psalm 51:11). We know that today, in the church age, believers do not lose the indwelling of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19), but we may lose the filling of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), if we test the grace of God by our sin.

The fuel or energy of spiritual growth is the filling of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 reads, *do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit*. The filling of the Spirit is very different from the indwelling of the Spirit.

Indwelling is the once-for-all act done to the believers of this age by the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation. It is not experiential, never repeated, and never revoked. **Filling**, on the other hand, is part of the ongoing spiritual life, can be lost, and needs to be repeated.

The basic Old Testament idea of the filling of the Spirit is connected to the Temple. The glory of God filled the Temple and by so doing sanctified it, setting it apart to God. All sin was outside, holiness was inside (1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chronicles 5:13-14; 7:1-2). The same will be true of Israel’s future millennial Temple (Ezekiel 43:4-5). We see the same setting apart in certain people, such as Joshua (Deuteronomy 34:9); Bezelel (Exodus 31:3; 35:31); and John the Baptist and his parents (Luke 1:15, 41, 67).

In our (church) age, the believer is the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 1 Peter 2:7-9). So the filling of the Holy Spirit is about the experiential on-going sanctification of believers.

*For more information see study book **The Holy Spirit and the Spiritual Life** on Relational Concepts web page: <https://relationalconcepts.org/>*