

## Podcast 229 Be Filled with the Spirit

This directive precedes the larger section of Ephesians 5 about loving our wives as Christ loved the church. We need the filling and equipping that comes from God's Spirit.

Scott Welcome to the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme. I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today. Good morning Steve, how are you today?

Steve I am well, and even though this is the last day of 2019, there'll probably be a couple of months into 2020 before people listen to this. Did you make it through your Bible again this year?

Scott I did I just finished listening this morning because I was up and I was perusing my journals and God has been good. It is cool to mark these moments and realize, "Wow, I've been through the Bible now, I think 10 years in a row. How about you?"

Steve I finished a couple of weeks ago, and I think that was number 43, I started this habit in 1976.

Scott I've read it a few times myself before starting to listen to it, but with the Daily Audio Bible podcast, I think it's been almost 10 years.

Steve I don't know what the percentage is of believers that do it, but I think you're in the minority, so well done.

Scott Thank you.

Steve Yeah, I think it's the best habit I ever made as a Christian. Reading the Bible daily increases my faith. According to Romans 10, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the words of Christ." It gives me an eternal mindset. When I see everything going askew around me, I look in scripture and I think, yeah, thanks have gone awry in the past, but God has restored His people. He's renewed His kingdom and He's restoring the hearts of fathers to children and children to their fathers.

Jesus predicted it's supposed to get rough during the end times. It's going to get tough and we are going to be persecuted. So yeah, having God's word really gives you a heavenly perspective on life. How about you? What does reading your Bible through each year mean to you?

Scott I don't know how I would interpret any of my life. Looking back through my journals, I can see where the world and their mindset was affecting how I viewed everything. And the more I've gotten the Word more into my life, the more I have a godly perspective and I'm able to handle the things that happen. I recognize this problem that I'm facing right now isn't an eternal thing. God is still good. He's still on the throne and I can still trust Him.

Steve Amen. The Word also softens my heart. I can sense it. Jesus said, "Now are you clean through the Word which I've spoken." (John 15:3) My spirit feels differently when I'm in God's word. There are all kinds of perks which come from reading the Bible.

This is our concluding episode in this series on loving your wife as Christ loved the church or biblical husbanding. Let's pray before we go further.

Father, we desperately need your help. Thank you on behalf of Scott and myself that we can raise our Ebenezer and we can declare that you have helped us through this year. Thank you for helping us to read your word and to be exposed and immersed in the inspired word of God. And as we've considered these principles from your word, I pray that you help us to consider these verses today from your word as well. And let them find good soil in our own hearts and bear good fruit in our relationships with our spouses. In Jesus name. Amen.

Scott Raise our Ebenezer. Huh?

Steve This expression comes from the song "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing." Verse 2 begins: "Here I raise my Ebenezer, hither there by thy grace I've come."

In 1 Samuel 7, the Israelites were under attack by the Philistines. They asked the prophet Samuel to pray for them. "As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel. .... Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, 'Till now the LORD has helped us.' (1 Samuel 7:10, 12) In Hebrew, Ebenezer means "stone of help."

When I heard you saying you had been looking back over 2019, and God has helped you, you were raising your Ebenezer.

Scott All right, I didn't know I was doing that.

Steve Well, thanks for stopping me. I don't want to assume people know what I'm talking about.

I'm going to start with the Ephesians 5:25, which we've talked about. "Love your wife as Christ loved the church." Remember that all the verses in Ephesians 5:22 where it says: "Submit to one another" down to 5:33 which we read: "Let the wife see that she respects her husband," whether you're a husband or a wife, follow Ephesians 5:18: "Be filled with the Spirit."

Ephesians 5 is towards the end of the book of Ephesians. The first 4 chapters are about the church, and about grace, and articulate all of God's riches that we have in Christ. For example, Ephesians 3 is very meaningful because this church in Ephesus, mentioned also in Revelation 2, had lost their first love. Paul is working hard to stir them and stimulate their love for God. He prays this great prayer that they would be "rooted and grounded" in God's love. In order for husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church, they need to be loved first.

Two chapters later, Paul continues our preparation for loving our wives, by directing us to be filled with the Spirit. The prayer in Ephesians 3 and the exhortation in Ephesians 5:18 both precede all of the instruction in Ephesians 5:22-33.

God must be the primary motivation in our life because everything that we do flows from our relationship with Him. Remember that Jesus, before he was commissioned for His earthly ministry, was also filled with the Spirit. Consider His baptism. Before He entered into His official ministry, He came out of the water then the Holy Spirit came upon Him and filled Him. This was at the same time, that God told him that He was His beloved son, who brings Him great joy.

Jesus had just completed thirty years of preparation, developing His relationship with God and being loved and nurtured by His Father. Then God filled Him with His Spirit afresh. Not that He didn't have the Spirit before, but the Spirit came upon Him in a new way at His baptism and then He was equipped to do His unique work.

It's the same order for us. We need to be loved before we can love. When I hear the words "be filled with the spirit" two things stick out to me. The first one is to do with this idea of being loved. Romans 5:5: "We know how dearly God loves us because He has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love." In another translation it says, "the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." It is the Holy Spirit that enables us to take in the fact that God not only loves us, but He likes us, and that we belong to Him.

The Spirit of God helps us to assimilate and comprehend how much we mean to God. I often ask people in my seminars and workshops, what is the role of the Holy Spirit. The normally answer: "Well, He convicts us of sin," which is true. You could also say, "He's the one that inspired the writing of the word of God." Which is also true. "He points us to Jesus." This is absolutely true. But He also helps us to develop our relationship with our Father. And this is extremely important because we can't love until we have been loved. 1 John 4:19 says, "We love because he first loved us."

The second thing the Holy spirit helps us to do is the Spirit helps us to lay down our lives. Think of Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her."

He died for her. In Hebrews 9:14 it talks about Christ who "through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God." The NLT renders this passage, "For by the power of the Eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins." The Holy spirit not only helps us to love God by being loved by God, the Holy Spirit also helps us to die and lay our lives down for our wives.

I envision the Holy spirit coming alongside Jesus when He was in the garden of Gethsemane and desperately praying and asking God, "If this be possible, could this cup pass from me?" He did not want to die. And every one of us has the same DNA in our body. We don't want to die. We don't like to die and yet we know we need to die. It's the Spirit of God that comes alongside of us and helps us. In Romans 8:26, which is one verse in an amazing chapter about the Spirit, we read: "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." I believe it was the Holy

Spirit that came alongside Jesus and helped him to say, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." And this is what God calls us to do. He calls us to lay our lives down for our spouses. And it's good work. It's what Jesus did and it's what we can do.

On a little different note. Besides having God's good, wonderful Spirit, we also have our flesh to contend with. We have the natural man. In the plan of God, there is the new creation, Steve, and there's the old man, Steve. There is a war that goes on in my heart daily. Jeremiah 7 informs us that our hearts are deceitful above all things, difficult to understand, desperately sick.

It's part and parcel of the human nature that we twist things. I want to encourage us to not lay your life down for your wife just so your life will be better and you'll have better times of communicating, connecting and she'll be a happier wife. Or that if you lay your life down it will make your life easier. These fruits may follow our obedience, but whether they do or not, we need to keep our eyes on Jesus. We're laying our lives down because this is how our Lord Jesus loved us. He laid down His life for each of us.

We're not dying it so we can get something, we're dying so we can give. Love is not getting. Love doesn't think of itself, love is thinking of the other. So we're going to keep our eyes on Jesus and your wife may appreciate your efforts and she may even recognize them and thank you for them. Or she may not respond well, but our objective is not to do this to see if it works, our objective is to do this because this is what God has given us to do. This is his calling for men. We are to love our wives as Christ loved the church. And Jesus did not love us to get something from us. He loved us freely. He didn't need anything from us. He's God, and He loved us by laying His life down for us. Now He's praying for us to be able to fulfill all the things we've been discussing these past several episodes.

Ephesians 2:10: "We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Loving our wives is one of the best works we can do. These are works that we were created and designed to accomplish. Jesus set his face towards Jerusalem. Jesus was committed. He never gave up. He never swerved from His devotion to marry us, His bride. And we are not going to swerve but we're going to do serve our spouse as unto the Lord. Not because of what we can get out of our marriage but what we can put into it. I believe there are things that will come out of our obedience, but the more we focus on Jesus, the more we're going to be transformed into His image.

We're going to become more like Him. Nathaniel Hawthorn wrote a story called "The Great Stone Face." It is about a young man who grew up hearing his mother telling him about this face of a wise man that was a part of the rocks in New England, which was probably Franconia Notch. Someday a man was going to return who looks just like that face. He's going to be wise, he's going to be godly, he's going to be kind. He's like a Messiah. That earnest young man took in his mother's words and would sit

on the front porch and gaze at that stone face and meditate what that man would be like. After decades of thinking about this coming hero, he became that man. I recommend the story. If we keep our eyes on Jesus, we're going to become what we focus on.

To that end, I think it's important that we "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18) For our heavenly relationship colors all of our earthly relationships. And we can't give what we haven't received. The more we develop and kindle afresh, our relationship with Jesus, the more we're going to be able to love our wives and our children the way Jesus has loved us.

While I think we need to be cognizant of a lot of the how-tos in a marriage relationship, we have to remember that what we do flows out of who we are. If we are becoming more and more rooted and grounded in the love of God, we're going to be able to extend the love of God in the how-tos. If we just do the how-tos without having the convictions and the developing relationship with God in our deepest inner man our actions are going to become duties. Our obedience will become religious duty which is shallow and eventually will be hypocritical. The how-tos that God has given us in His word flow out of our relationship with Jesus. We are His adopted children and we're becoming more like our Savior, the son of God.

John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give to you," this is what we've been talking about this whole series, the new commandment. "A new commandment that you love one another just as I have loved you. You also are to love one another." And then he adds, "by this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another." When we love our wives and others well, the world will know that we are His people.

Since I've been adopting this approach, or as Psalm 16:8 says, "I have set the Lord always before me" I have observed good fruit. I have sought to set Jesus in front of me and focus on knowing Him, loving Him, and being loved by Him. The more I have comprehend how He loved me and how He loved others, the fruit has been that I love God more than I ever had before, which is the first and great commandment. I also know Jesus better than I ever had before, which is the highest achievement. And in the process I'm enabled to fulfill the new commandment and love my wife as Christ loved me.

Scott I've heard this verse so many times, but as we've been talking about this, it's changed something in me in the way that I think about loving. And it's not many times you can listen to something and or hear someone speak and say, "I think I just had love reframed for me." But I think that's part of what's happening here is that when you love someone as you want to be loved, like love your neighbor as yourself, then that's one way of doing it and that's better than not loving them at all.

But when you do what you're saying here, which is to love as you have been loved by Jesus, that's a new level. It is reframing love for me.

Steve I like that word reframing. That's very good. I think about this all the time. Currently I'm working on a project. I released one study in the December newsletter and I'm planning on releasing other studies in the January newsletter. I'm developing meditations on Jesus in light of Christmas. This morning I did one on Jesus as the man of sorrows. He bears our burdens. He's afflicted when we're afflicted. He weeps when we weep. Even if nobody else gets anything out of these studies, they sure are transforming me.

To delve into God's word and discover what it says about Jesus, keeps Jesus in front of me. As you said, this approach helps me reframe how I view love by seeing how Jesus has loved us. Good insight Scott, thank you.

It's the Holy Spirit's work is to help us to take in love and let's thank Him for helping us today. Father, thank You for sending your dear Spirit. Thank You for revealing Yourself and Your Son. Thank You for the work of God that's gone on in all of our lives so that we can even say "Jesus is Lord," and that we can be cognizant of our sin. Thank You that we can read the inspired word of God which the spirit authored through so many men in the past.

I pray now that you will help us by Your Spirit to take in and comprehend Your love for us. Reveal Jesus afresh in our hearts and help us to love as we have been loved in a way that not only nourishes and cherishes and builds up our wives, but is also a testimony to those around us that this is something God has done. God has helped us to love each other. This is not natural. This is something that's going to point to God. Let our marriages be lights and testimonies to those we come in contact with, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Scott Amen. Thanks for joining us for the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme. If you have a question for the show, email Steve at [spdemme@gmail.com](mailto:spdemme@gmail.com). If you have a question for me, you can reach me at [scott@unsocializedmedia.com](mailto:scott@unsocializedmedia.com). Thanks for joining us. Have a great week.