



Ever have those days that started off “Spirit filled”? You get up in the morning, have your cup of coffee (or orange juice since you made that New Year’s resolution) you open your bible and spend quality time in personal study. You take time praying over your day and for others. In the shower you begin singing a worship chorus or hymn that’s been stuck in your head. At breakfast you are amazed that God would love you so much to provide for all that you have. You think to yourself, “My spouse is an expression of His love for me, what a gift! My kids are wonderful treasures from the Lord that I get to shepherd and steward, what an honor!” On your way out the door as you begin your day, you can’t believe the kind of life you live.

Then, you get into your car where the radio station is playing one of your favorite songs. As you drive to your destination you’re thinking about people in need, you might even begin praying for them. Then, in a moment, “it” happens. In the middle of your prayer someone cuts you off, almost causes an accident. Suddenly, all that has just transpired earlier that morning between you and the Lord where you felt like your hearts were as one with the Father of Heaven is undone. In response you shake your fist at the offending driver, honk your horn, clench your teeth and maybe even say things under your breath that your mother would not want to hear.

What just happened? In one moment you were “filled with the Spirit” connecting with God, allowing Him to fill you up with His presence. In the next moment, you are filled with something very different and the Spirit’s work is quenched in you.

Being spiritually fit means that we are not just trying harder but it means that we are training smarter. One of the greatest enemies to our spiritual fitness is the lack of actually doing what God’s word tells us. Jesus called this dual way of living hypocrisy. So, how do we live authentic lives that reflect the glory of God? How do we overcome hypocrisy? How do we spiritually train with intention to become the person that God wants us to be?

Read Ephesians 5:15-21, the apostle Paul gives us great insight and direction on how to be spiritually fit.

1. What caution does Paul give to believers? v. 15. Why? v. 16a. Compare with Colossians 4:5-6.
2. Wisdom and intelligence are often thought of as the same thing. What characteristics do wise people have according to verses 15-17? How can you live more wisely?
3. What does Paul mean by: "because the days are evil"? v. 16b. See Galatians 1:4; Philippians 2:14-15.
4. What contrast does Paul make in v. 17? Why?
5. What vivid illustration of living foolishly vs. living wisely does Paul make in this verse? v. 18. See Proverbs 23:31-35; Luke 15:13; 2 Timothy 1:7-10; 1 Peter 4:1-5.
6. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? How often can this happen?
7. How does one know if they are "filled" with the Spirit? vs. 19-20.
8. Paul says the evidence of the filling of the Spirit is in our speech, thoughts, actions and relationships. Where have you seen the Spirit working in your life? Where would you like the Spirit to "fill you up"?
9. In your words, describe what it looks like for a person to "be filled with the Spirit"
10. Read Colossians 3:15-17. What are the parallels with being filled with the Spirit and being filled with the word? What are the implications?
11. How does being filled with the Spirit address the problem of hypocrisy?
12. According to Paul being filled means to be saturated. In what area do you most need to be saturated with the Spirit? What specific steps do you need to take to be filled with the Spirit and live an authentic life?

*Spend time in your small group singing and making music together with "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs". Write a psalm of your own expressing your gratitude to God for the life he's called you to live.