

November 2014 Devotional: The Fullness of the Spirit Produces Stewardship. By Jerry Furniss

That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19)

For those who are wondering how to be filled with the Spirit, the prayer in Ephesians above offers excellent insight. The precise relevance of this passage is obvious, when the concluding purpose of the prayer is noted: *"that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."*

The opening phrases use the language of grace: *"That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory."* Grace is about God at work, **giving** us blessings we cannot deserve. These blessings are in proportion to His glorious spiritual riches. This perspective fits our understanding of the Spirit perfectly, because when the Holy Spirit is at work, He pours out God's grace.

The initial request pertains to an inner working of the Spirit: *"to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man."* Note, this request is made on behalf of those who already have the Spirit residing in their hearts. The specific issue is about **receiving** new measures of spiritual power at the core of our being.

The desired result of this work of the Spirit is *"that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith."* Jesus is present in the heart of every believer. Here, He is being asked to settle down fully and make Himself at home. Jesus is being given free rein to rearrange our innermost being to fit His good pleasure. Allowing Jesus to rule our hearts requires the empowering work of the Holy Spirit to break past spiritual obstacles such as apathy, fear, self-focus, and temptations. To allow Jesus to lead us in His way, we need the Holy Spirit **enabling** us to: **stay** in God's word, **pray** without ceasing, **lay** in worship daily, and **play** in fellowship regularly.

Yes, stewardship means giving up our human ways, desires, and self-centeredness and accepting His ways, His truth, and allowing the Holy Spirit to dwell at the center of our existence. When we begin that journey, a spiritual strength and godly might will overflow in our thoughts, words, and deeds.