

## **“Under the Influence...” – One Heart - April 11, 2010**

(To be used as extra discussion following Sundays Message)

“How could anyone accuse me of being spiritual unless spirituality comes in unlimited shapes and sizes, unless spirituality looks like whatever you and I look like when we’re thinking about Jesus, when we are trying to find Jesus, when we are trying to figure out what real Christianity looks like in the real world?” (Mike Yaconelli)

“There is no room for pretending in the spiritual life. Unfortunately, in many religious circles, there exists an unwritten rule: PRETEND. Act like God is in control when you don’t believe he is. Give the impression everything is okay in your life when it’s not. PRETEND you believe when you doubt; HIDE our imperfections; maintain the image of a perfect marriage with healthy and well-adjusted children when your family is like any other normal dysfunctional family. And whatever you do, don’t admit that you sin.” (Mike Yaconelli)

### **Focus Text: Ephesians 5.15-21 (NIV) – READ as a GROUP**

**15**Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,  
**16**making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.  
**17**Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.  
**18**Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. **19**Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,  
**20**always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **21**Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

**Author:** The apostle Paul

**Audience:** The church in Ephesus

**Setting:** Paul wrote this letter from Rome while he was in prison. He probably intended this to be a circular letter, to be passed on from the believers in Ephesus to other Christians in the area.

**Central Theme:** Christians are united together in Jesus Christ. We are to do all we can to live in unity with other believers.

**\*As an Introduction it may be beneficial to mention the material presented in Ephesians chapters 1 – 4 in order to place this passage in it’s proper context.**

## **Own the Text** (Barclay):

"Live like wise men." The times in which they were living are evil, times were tough, they were faced with difficult situations – because of the presence of evil; therefore rescue as much time as possible from the "evil" uses of the world.

Paul goes on to draw a contrast between two kinds of gatherings – a pagan gathering and a Christian gathering. "You've got to be filled with something." The pagan will find his/her happiness in filling himself/herself with wine and with all the pleasures which are worldly pleasures; the Christian found his happiness in the fact that he/she was filled with the Spirit.

We can gather certain facts (an executive profile) about the Christian gathering in the early days:

- 1) The early church was a singing church; it's characteristic was psalms and hymns and spiritual songs – they had a happiness which made them sing.
- 2) The early church was a thankful church; their instinct was to give thanks for all things and in all places and at all times.
- 3) The early church was a church where men/women honored and respected each other – because they revered Christ.

### **"Instead - be filled with the Spirit..." (This not a lesson on alcohol)**

We've all heard the term D.U.I. Some of us may have actually experienced the unfortunate experience of being issued a D.U.I. The term "driving under influence" is a common term. It simply means that a driver was driving under the influence of alcohol (driving while intoxicated, drunk driving, operating under the influence, drinking and driving, drunk-driving, impaired driving) or other drugs, is the act of operating a vehicle after consuming alcohol or other drugs. It is a criminal offense in most countries.

While it's not a laughing matter, even if you've not been intoxicated, chances are you've been around someone who has. As you know, it doesn't take long (within 30 seconds) to know when someone is indeed – "under the influence." Quite frankly, it's difficult to hide.

This analogy is simply designed to prompt discussion based on Ephesians 5. "Instead, be filled with the Spirit." We could easily

reference passages such as Romans 8, 2 Peter 1, the entire letter of James, and Galatians 5 to describe what “living under the influence of the Spirit” looks and sounds like...

They all give the “executive summary of the profile of an authentic Spirit-filled, Christ-follower.”

**Next Thought:**

“What would it look like if all those (you and me) who “profess” the name of Jesus Christ actually “lived under the influence of the Spirit?” Stay on topic – this not about debating religion or opinions...

**Simple Main Point:**

It would be absolutely “impossible” to hide! Everyone we came in contact with would wonder what we were filled with. They would know that something was different – that we were indeed “under the influence” of something different than the world.

**Think** – What is holding us (you) back from living “Spirit filled?” And what the honest implications if we don’t? – Two very important thoughts...

**Reflect** – What aspects of this subject stimulate anxiety, fear, embarrassment or even frustration?

**Understand** – How might God be speaking to you through this message? Are you afraid? Convicted? Motivated to make major changes? Maybe even relieved to know that others struggle as well?

**Surrender** – Take a moment in prayer by yourself and as a group to tell God how you’re feeling. Share those same fears, frustrations, or honest struggles with Him. Surrender the thing(s) that are holding you back.

**Take Action** – Decide that you are committed to making honest observations of nobody else but “yourself.” Are you “living under the influence of the Spirit?” Is their obvious evidence of HIM in your life?

**Motivation** – Find someone (multiple someone’s) in your group to pray over you, with you, for you and help hold you accountable for this lifestyle – someone who will be bold with you. Or be that for someone else.

**Encourage Someone** – Stop right not and pray for those in or out of your group by name that are struggling in their journey.

