

## Under The Influence (Ephesians 5:14-21)

Everyone is deeply influenced. Sometimes we know it, other times we don't, but it always comes out in the decisions we make and the lifestyles we choose. Ephesians 5 instructs us to be filled with the Spirit; to come under the influence of God's presence and power and form habits of expressed dependency on the Spirit that will strengthen and shape us.

### 1. Live wide-awake to Jesus (Ephesians 5:14-17)

The verb "to walk" is commonly used to refer to a *whole way of life*. 5:2 "*walk (live) in love...*" and in 5:7 "*walk (live) as children of light...*"

Then he quotes what some think is a fragment of a hymn / a worship song: 5:14 "*Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.*" = Live thoughtfully; intentionally. It's going to require discipline on your part. "*walk (live) in wisdom...*" "*making the best use of your time*"

### 2. Under the influence of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18-21)

The Spirit is not an impersonal power or force, something to harness and control - on the level of an "it" or "thing." He's distinct from, but equal with, the Father and the Son. There's no such thing as a follower of Jesus without the Spirit. Ephesians 1:13-14

John 14:15-18, 25-26. The Spirit brings conviction, guides us into truth, always glorifies Jesus. He makes Jesus known to us and through us. Brings salvation. Convicts us of sin and leads us to repentance. He brings true change. Brings understanding to the truth of God's Word. He empowers us to be a witness for Jesus. He gives amazing gifts for our good. He himself is a gift and yet he comes with gifts.

Ephesians 5:18 *Do not get drunk with wine...instead be filled with the Spirit.* This is about coming under the Spirit's influence and finding strength and empowerment to walk out our faith in every area of life. We're to do this "*repeatedly, persistently and on every needful occasion!*" Galatians 5:16-17

### 3. Habits of expressed dependency

*"Spirit – fill me! Empower me to live for the glory of Jesus."*

Deliberately looking to the Spirit (God's presence and power) to help us in the midst of our problems, sorrows, fears – and in the midst of joys and success. It requires surrender.

It looks like abiding in Christ. John 15:4-5

It looks like delighting in God's promises and celebrating the truths of the gospel.

It might involve singing, praying, reflecting on God's Word. Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19-21

**QUESTIONS** (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide.)

1. Read Ephesians 4:17-24, 5:1-21. Now read 4:17, 5:2, 5:8 and 5:15 again. What is Paul's desire?
2. Read Ephesians 5:14. Why is imagery of waking out of sleep and rising from the dead a good description of what happens to someone in Christ Jesus? Why would this be a helpful reminder in the middle of an exhortation to walk (live) in a way that reflects Jesus?
3. In Ephesians 5:15-17 mentions living carefully, making the best use of your time and doing all you can to understand God's will. In other words we aren't supposed to live indifferent, unaware and careless lives. How do these instructions encourage and/or challenge you in your life right now?
4. Who is The Spirit? Why was Jesus so eager to give the Spirit to his followers? What are some things the Spirit does?
5. Ephesians 5:18 tells us not to get drunk on wine but to instead *be filled with the Spirit*. What is this about? Since followers of Jesus don't receive more of the Holy Spirit what happens? How common is this supposed to be?
6. Sunday's sermon ended with a challenge to form "*habits of expressed dependency on the Spirit*". Describe what kind of habits that could include. Share "*habits of expressed dependency*" that are part of your life. How are they strengthening and shaping you? What habits can you begin today?

Imagine what will happen if we purpose to live wide-awake to Jesus, under the influence of the Spirit, through habits of expressed dependency? Pray we would do just that individually and corporately in 2022.