

Living Under The Influence

The Influence

Rev. Dr. F. Bruce Williams



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Sunday, January 12, 2020

Preacher: Rev. Dr. F. Bruce Williams

Sermon: Living Under The Influence

Scripture: Ephesians 5:18 (NIV)



CURRICULUM
GUIDE



Sermon Summary

Dr. William's message on "Living Under the Influence" reveals how believers ought to be continually filled by The Holy Spirit. By beginning with a survey of Paul's life, his interactions with gentiles in Acts 17, and the context behind his writing of Ephesians, Dr. Williams offers a framework for "living life under the influence" using Paul's life as a model. The sermon concludes with giving practical parameters for how being filled with the Holy Spirit should and should not be seen in the lives of believers. A life lived "under the influence" will:

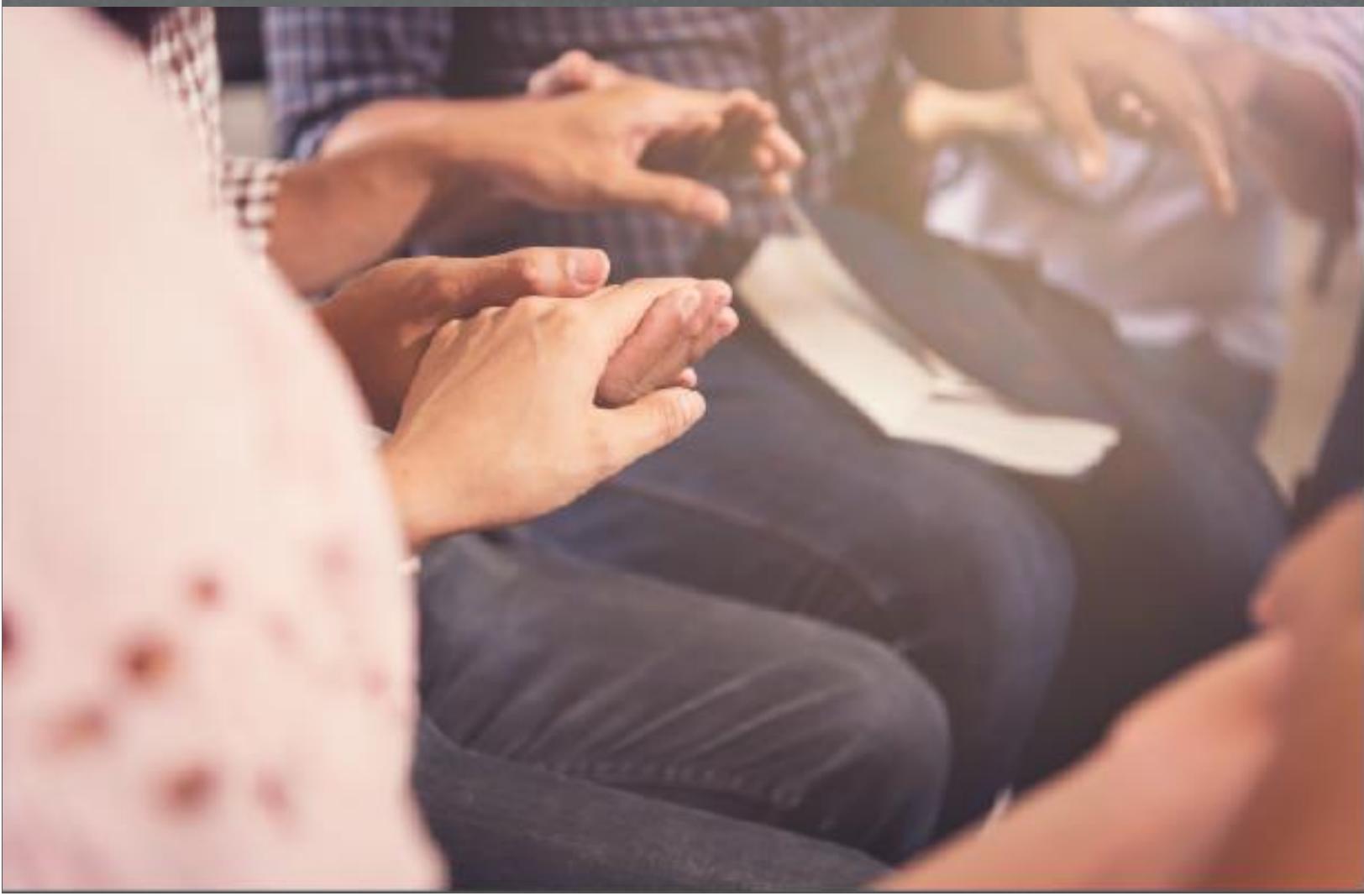
1. Be filled with passion and purpose that persists through life's problems.
2. Repurpose and reframe problematic experiences into tools for positivity.
3. Position yourself to let the presence of the Spirit continually fill and perfect you.

Notes for Facilitators:

As we open the first week of the season, be mindful that the bulk of your time together will be focused on introductions, the Village Icebreaker, reviewing the ground rules established in the Village covenant, and completion of the opening survey. These items are crucial to building a healthy foundation for your group. Even if all of your Villagers are returning, it's still important to set clear expectations. Once you've reviewed the covenant, we invite you to explore this abbreviated curriculum guide.

Getting To Know You Questions:

1. Dr. Williams referenced Paul's strong passion for evangelism. What is something that you're more passionate about than anything else? What part of your walk with God reflects that same kind of passion?
2. It was impossible to discourage Paul because he'd experienced too much of God's grace in his life. What moment in your life represents something you know without a doubt that God was in, that allows you to face difficulty with passion and hope?



Into The Bible Questions:

1. The first half of the book of Ephesians talks about what the church in Ephesus was to believe (doctrine). The second half talks about how to act individually based on what you now believe (duty). Why might it be important to start with belief before teaching about behavior?
2. Dr. Williams said, "the door of opportunity hinges on the obedience of Ephesians 5:18", meaning that our ability to follow God depends on following the Spirit. How do we do this practically?

Life Application Questions:

1. Paul had a penchant for re-interpreting negative circumstances in positive thinking, shown by looking at the armour of the soldiers he was chained to in jail and using it to teach about putting on the armor of God. What life circumstances are you currently experiencing that God can inspire you to think differently about and use to teach you how to live positively?
2. In the sermon, we learned that there are areas of life we give the Holy Spirit control but other areas that we don't give over control. What barriers do we have that make us hesitant to trust God with certain areas of life (finances, relationships, etc.)? How can we begin to trust God more and live more completely under the influence of the Spirit?
3. According to Dr. Williams, it is one thing to believe, it's another thing to behave based on what we believe. Discuss how being filled with the Spirit has led to you making better decisions than you typically made prior to your salvation and spiritual journey with Jesus.



"Can I Push It?"

The modern definition of debauchery (v.18) refers to "sensual pleasures" but an archaic definition refers to "seduction from duty." As Christians, if we are not constantly "living under the influence" of the Holy Spirit we will be drawn away from faithful service to God. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you one sin, one obsession, or one act of rebellion which is blocking your progress toward living as imitators of God. What kinds of things can you do to put yourself in a better position to be "filled with the Spirit"?

Spirit Work:

If you are living in what Paul says is a debauched lifestyle, then you are leaking and not always filled with the "Spirit." Review the following verses to see if you need to make changes in your life using 1 Corinthians 10:13 as your guide.

- a. Ephesians 5:3
- b. Ephesians 5:4
- c. Ephesians 5:5
- d. Ephesians 5:11-12



Additional Question for Married Couples Villages:

Dr. Williams said that we have to learn how to live a little “tipsy” under the influence of the Spirit. Where in our relationships are we more drunk with “spirits” (i.e, gambling, overspending, lying, avoiding Bible reading and daily devotions, etc.) rather than being “filled with the Spirit”?

Additional Question for Young Adult Villages:

The sermon said that because we received all of the Spirit when we accepted Jesus as Lord, it’s not that we need more of the Spirit, but the Spirit needs more of you. In what ways can we practically allow the Holy Spirit to have more control over our lives?

Additional Questions for Parents’ Villages:

Paul was in prison chained to a soldier while writing Ephesians and reframed his negative circumstances into a tool to teach about Jesus and how to live. Being parents, how can you repurpose the negative or less than ideal circumstances, behaviors, or situations in your children’s lives as a teaching tool for following Jesus and living well as God’s children?

Additional Questions for Women Villages:

Dr. Williams referenced the spiritual armor of God in Ephesians 6, which has multiple pieces. What new things will you add to your spiritual armor or wardrobe in 2020 to show that you are an “imitator of Christ” (Eph. 5:1) and filled with the Holy Spirit?