

Do You Want to Know God's Will?



Jim Cymbala December 5, 2020

When we look at the Christian landscape today, we see many churches that are doing great things for God — people are finding Christ and being baptized, prayer meetings are bringing down God's blessings, and a spirit of love is pervading the atmosphere. The Spirit of Christ is in those churches, and excitement is in the air.

But we also can see some churches that probably give Jesus Christ a bad name. They're lukewarm and dishonor the Lord because of their actions and attitudes. The inevitable signs that God's Spirit is in control are absent; in fact, a deadly spiritual chill fills the air.

The apostle Paul told the church at Ephesus: "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). If all Christians were already filled with the Spirit at all times, why would there be this strong command from Paul? In just a few verses before this Paul said, "Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is" (5:15-17). It seems that Paul was saying we need to keep on being controlled by the Spirit if we want to live wisely, to understand the Lord's will for our lives, and to make the most of every opportunity. If we're not Spirit controlled, we will miss out on being what God wants us to be.

So here's the question: If the Bible makes it clear that being controlled by the Spirit is so vital, what prevents so many of us from fully surrendering ourselves to the Holy Spirit? Some of us are afraid of opening up to the Holy Spirit because we prefer to stay in control. That's understandable. We're concerned about self-preservation, so giving up control can be scary.

The irony of Spirit-filled living is that we have to give up power in order to gain a greater power. How many times in your Christian walk have you come to a place where you struggled to do something, so you just tried harder? But Christianity is not a self-effort religion but rather one of power — the ability and might of the Spirit.

"For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose" (Philippians 2:13).

Jim Cymbala began the Brooklyn Tabernacle with less than twenty members in a small, rundown building in a difficult part of the city. A native of Brooklyn, he is a longtime friend of both David and Gary Wilkerson.

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