

Divine Intoxication: The Similarities

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18).

As I exited my motel room to go to breakfast on a very cold Virginia morning, I was surprised and alarmed to find a man’s body lying in front of my door. Seeing his broken liquor bottle beside him, I could only conclude that the poor man had fallen in a drunken stupor, passed out, and remained there for several hours. Since the weather was so terrible, I thought it best to call the police, who quickly came and took him away.

Nothing about drunkenness is attractive, is it? Oh yes, the advertising agencies paint a pretty picture in their advertisements for beer, wine and liquor. They always portray happiness, toughness, enjoyment, fulfillment and success. But those who have had to deal with the sorrows and terrors of alcoholism have another picture in their minds. They know the hurt, pain, worry, lies, hunger and tragedy that accompany it.

Why would the Holy Spirit, therefore, use someone who is intoxicated to portray someone who is filled with the Spirit? The only possible answer to the question is that as strong drink dominates the senses, the mind and the body of a drunken individual, so being filled with the Holy Spirit dominates the entire life of a believer. While other parallels could be made, here are a few similarities between physical intoxication and spiritual intoxication.

Divine intoxication sways all our faculties! As strong drink befuddles the mind and influences the desires and actions of an individual, when we are filled with the Holy Spirit every aspect of our lives is divinely dominated. We cannot help but think, walk, talk and act differently than before. Of course, we do not advocate a lack of self-control. Rather, seeing the need of the fullness of the Holy Ghost, we promote the need for Spirit-control.

Divine intoxication subdues all our fears! A drunken person is neither acquainted with the fear of man or the fear of circumstances. In like fashion, a Spirit-filled believer fears no one and nothing but God. Although Christ’s disciples were subdued with fear before and after His crucifixion (see Matt. 26:56; John 20:19), when they were filled with the Spirit they experienced boldness and authority in their service. Formerly timid individuals spoke the word of God “with boldness” (Acts 4:31).

Divine intoxication structures all our fellowship! Although there are exceptions, most drunken individuals congregate with other drunken people. It seems they always find their crowd. Similarly, those who are filled with the Spirit are usually drawn to the fellowship of other Spirit-filled people. The righteous Spirit who fills believers enjoins them to other believers filled with the righteous Spirit. The Spirit of light, Who has no communion with darkness, unites our hearts with others who are filled with His light.

