



Date: _____

Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Jesus Isn't Santa Claus Series, Lesson 32

Lesson Title: New Beginnings... Be Filled with the Holy Spirit

Take Home Point: This New Year—be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Warm-Up:

Suppose a friend of yours says, "I know the President's plan for our nation, and I'm going to be part of it!" You likely would ask, "How do you know? Did you meet him and talk with him? Did he tell you?" "Well, no, I have not talked with him, and we have never met," your friend replies. Somewhat disappointed, you might ask, "Oh, so you've read his writings and understand what he intends to do, how he will do it, and what part you will play." "I haven't done that either," is the response. By now you are exasperated. "How can you say you know his plan and are part of it when you haven't spent time with him or read anything he's written?" Your friend calmly answers, "Oh, I just listen to others talk about him and let my feelings tell me what is true. I don't believe it's necessary to have direct contact." Will you believe he knows the President's plan?

Read: Ephesians 5:15-20

Observation (What happened?):

How are we to live?

What is the most important thing for us to understand?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

What do you think Paul means by "every opportunity" that he wants us to take advantage of?

What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?

Insight:

There are so many things that get in the way of understanding God's will and being filled with his Spirit. One obstacle is the debate that swirls around the exact meaning of "filled with the Spirit." That's too bad, because God never intended for it to be confusing. How does God's Word say to live? Live that way. What about those gray areas? Paul tells us how to handle them in today's reading – live wisely, don't be foolish, be careful. The Bible gives more than enough guidance in so many areas that we can discern how to live in the gray areas, too. As a friend of mine once said, "My problem is not knowledge. I'm educated far beyond my level of obedience." We need to read the Bible to learn what to obey, then submit to God's wise leading and depend on his power to obey in those areas. As we do that, he will guide us through more difficult areas, too. Being filled with the Spirit is a joint activity between God and us. We surrender our will, seek his will in what we know, and he gives us his powerful Spirit to guide, strengthen, encourage, instruct, correct, and renew our minds.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

How do you know you are filled with God's Spirit? What evidence can you give?

Pray for the children in your small group to know how to live wisely as they enter the New Year.