
For, this message is still powerful for salvation (Romans 1:16) and to teach, rebuke, correct, and train us in the way of God's righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12)! Therefore, if we despise these words and dismiss them so that they do not have the effect in our lives God desires, we are still guilty of quenching the Spirit!

We must not let the Spirit be quenched in our lives. Instead, we must humbly receive the word of truth the Spirit has revealed. And, we must receive it in a way that we will be doers of God's word and not just hearers of it (James 1:21-27). For, while there are differences in how the Spirit is working today than how He worked in the past, He is still trying to work in our lives. We must let Him accomplish this work in us through the word of God He has revealed!

Bible Question & Answer Series

Written by Eric Krieg

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Bible Question & Answer

What Does It Mean To Quench The Spirit?



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When the apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonian congregation, he concluded his first letter with many exhortations (1 Thessalonians 5:12-28). Included in these are some instructions concerning the Holy Spirit (vv. 19-22). In this, is the instruction not to quench the Holy Spirit (v. 19). However, different things have been taught concerning how this can be done today.

1) Quenching the Spirit is clearly a possibility. To “quench” refers to stifling, extinguishing, or suppressing something (compare with how the shield of faith extinguishes Satan’s flaming arrows, Ephesians 6:16). In this passage, then, it refers to stifling, extinguishing, or suppressing the Holy Spirit. It is important to note that the Scriptures do not teach that the Holy Spirit takes such control over a person that he/she has no choice but to do whatever the Spirit says and does in him/her. For example, 1 Corinthians 14 demonstrates how those who possessed the miraculous gifts of the Spirit (i.e. tongues and prophesy) could control whether or not

they used the gift – and were even expected to do so (vv. 26-33).

2) It is connected with despising prophecies contextually. The command not to stifle the Spirit is not given as a lone commandment. Rather, the next few verses forbid despising prophecies and command the testing of all things, holding on to what is good and staying away from everything evil (1 Thessalonians 5:20-22). As the Holy Spirit gave people the ability to prophesy, they were not to despise these prophecies by dismissing them as if they were nothing significant. To do so would have made them guilty of quenching how the Spirit was trying to work among them through that teaching. But, they were also not to accept just any message of prophecy either (as some messages were not actually from the Spirit, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2). Instead, they were to put everything to the test to see if it was actually from and approved of God or not (1 John 4:1). If it was, they were to accept that message and let it work powerfully in them. If it was not, they were to reject it.

3) It does not forbid the teaching of the cessation of miraculous spiritual gifts. Some conclude that teaching the cessation of miraculous gifts of the Spirit (i.e. tongues, prophecies, healings, etc.) makes one guilty

of quenching the Spirit today. However, this simply is not true! While there is no denying the fact that the Holy Spirit gave such miraculous gifts to people in the first century, the Bible teaches that these miraculous gifts would cease when the perfect revelation of God’s word would come (1 Corinthians 13:8-13). In the first century, the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were necessary for confirming and teaching the word. Today, we have the perfect word of God completed in written form (James 1:25). This was still being written during the first century when the miraculous gifts were in effect. So, since teaching the cessation of these gifts is what the Holy Spirit teaches, it cannot possibly make someone guilty of quenching the Spirit to believe and teach it!

4) How we can quench the Spirit today. Although there are no new prophecies and messages from the Spirit today, the message that is contained in the Scriptures is the message given by the Holy Spirit through the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 3:3-5). When we hear this message today, it should be the same as those who heard the messages from God’s Spirit in the first century. We should accept it as being the word of God and allow it to work effectively in us (1 Thessalonians 2:13).