

**Do Not Quench The Spirit**  
**1 Thessalonians 5:19**  
**Part 2**

I am sure that you remember that we are coming to the end of **1 Thessalonians**. Again I would like to remind you that this section of Scripture extends from **V. 16** through **V. 22** and contains a series of principles or commands dealing with holy living. The principles that are listed fall into two groups: **VV. 16-18** deals with the principles of the inner life; **VV. 19-22** deals with principles for the corporate life of the church and stresses the responsibility of the readers toward the workings of the Spirit in their assembly.

The first group of commands in **VV. 16-18** consisted of the following three commands:

1. **“Rejoice always” in 1 Thess. 5:16**
2. **“Pray without ceasing” in 1 Thess. 5:17**
3. **“In everything give thanks for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.”**

The second group of commands began with **“Do not quench the Spirit”** in **V. 20**. Last week we considered a number of ways that we can personally quench the work of the Spirit within our own lives. We considered a number of ways that we can frustrate Him in the work that He has come to do.

This week I want to expand on this message. I want to explore various movements within the church in general that are threatening to quench the work of the Spirit.

Let us again remind ourselves of exactly what the Spirit of God has come into our lives to do. Certainly we see from Scripture that the Spirit of God has come to teach us and empower us to do the will of God. As He is free to do this in our lives we will grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus and grow into greater conformity to Him. In the simplest possible terms the Holy Spirit has come to build Christ’s church and to lead us down the path of holiness.

Exactly how does the Spirit work to accomplish His work? The answer is very simple. He works through His Word. In **Heb. 4:12** it tells us that **“... the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”** The sword of the Spirit of God is the Word of God and it is through the Word of God that the Spirit works in order to move us down the path of holiness and into greater conformity with Jesus. That is why we are told in **1 Pet. 2:1-2**, **“Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, (2) like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the Word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.”** We cannot grow without a growing understanding and appreciation of the Word of God because it is the Word of God that the Spirit uses to build an ever growing conformity to the will of God.

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If this is true then any action on our part that would distract us from honestly considering and responding to the truth of God's Word would in effect make us guilty of quenching the Spirit making it difficult if not impossible to work in our lives. Or even on a grander scale I believe that I can say with some confidence that any movement within the church that distracts us from honestly considering and responding to the truth of God's Word would be guilty of quenching the Spirit.

I BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE A NUMBER OF MOVEMENTS THAT ARE PRESENTLY BECOMING MORE AND MORE ROOTED IN THE CHURCH THAT FALL INTO THIS CATEGORY.

### I BELIEVE THAT THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT IS GUILTY

I believe that the Charismatic movement is guilty of distracting us from honestly considering and responding to the truth of God's Word and thus is guilty as a movement of quenching the Spirit.

Before I go any further I want you to know that we at Valley Bible Church, though we disagree with Charismatics on a number of different doctrines, consider them brothers in Christ. And in addition to this, though we may disagree with them yet we can rejoice in the fact that the gospel of Christ is being preached and people are being saved. We can also rejoice in the fact that many believers are recognizing a certain new reality in Christ and making sincere commitments to follow the living resurrected Lord. But even though we can we rejoice in these things it does not mean that we believe that the Charismatic movement is not without problems or even significant problems.

Now let us go back to my original statement. I believe that the Charismatic movement is guilty of distracting us from honestly considering and responding to the truth of God's Word and thus they are guilty of quenching the Spirit. How have they done this? They have done this by shifting the emphasis from the Scriptures being the test of experience to experience being the test of Scripture. When experience is exalted over the scriptures in this way it diminishes the importance of careful exegesis and interpretation of the Bible. And when the truth of the Bible becomes of less importance than experience, the Spirit is inevitably denied the opportunity to work in the fullness of His power in our lives and He is quenched.

A Charismatic Baptist, Howard Ervin, has written: "The attempt to interpret the Charismatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit without a Charismatic EXPERIENCE is as fatuous (or foolish) as the application of the Christian ethic apart from a regenerate dynamic." What is he saying? He is saying that experience is more important to determining what is truth than the Scriptures themselves!! Where have they gone wrong? They have gone wrong at the core of their teachings.

### The Second Blessing

At the core of Charismatic doctrine is the doctrine of the "second blessing." It is also known as the "baptism of the Spirit." Those who believe in this doctrine believe that it is a special endowment of supernatural power which not all Christians experience but should. The most common manifestation of this "second blessing" or "baptism" is speaking with tongues. Being empowered in this way will then open up the door to even greater demonstrations of the Spirit's power which will give further evidence of the "anointing."

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Startling things are reported as happening among Christians who believe in this doctrine. Amazing claims abound that God is doing various signs, wonders, and miracles through these “Spirit anointed” believers. These claims are being broadcast by word of mouth, the printed page, television, and radio at a rate so prolific that they can hardly be cataloged, let alone verified.

Fantastic encounters with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are reported as commonplace. Healings of all kinds are reported. It is not unusual to hear of striking testimonies about how God has corrected spinal injuries, lengthened legs and removed cancerous tissue. Some miracles seem almost bizarre: Puppies are raised from the dead; washing machines are “healed;” empty gas tanks are supernaturally filled; people are “slain” (knocked flat) by the Holy Spirit. But no matter how bizarre these experiences they are readily accepted in the Charismatic community as an evidence of the anointing of the Spirit and the unleashing of supernatural power.

The problem with all of this is very basic the root or core doctrine is wrong. What is the truth? When we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. We will at that moment be baptized into the body of Christ by the Spirit of God. In **1 Cor. 12:13** Paul says, **“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether, Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free ...”** How many of those that Paul was talking to were baptized in the Spirit? ALL!! If you have received Jesus as your Lord and Savior then you have been joined to Jesus and because you are joined to Him you are saved. But not only are we joined to Jesus but He is joined to us. What does the verse say? “And we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” If you have received Jesus as your Lord and savior you have the Spirit of God indwelling you. In **Rom. 8:9** it says, **“If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”**

If these things are so, then we are not here in this world at this time trying to get more of the Spirit because we have as much of the Spirit as we will ever have. The issue is not how much of Him do we have but how much of us does He have? Or in other words who has control of our lives (Eph. 5:18)?

And the more of us that He has, we must understand, will not necessarily lead to greater manifestations of power in signs of wonders but rather to greater expressions of holiness which is the fruit of the Spirit. For example a woman at Kaiser who talked with me about the mighty anointing her church had this preoccupation with the miraculous is not helpful to the Spirit in the performance of His work because it is rooted in error and continually fed by an every growing appetite for new supernatural experiences.

The pursuit of various supernatural or extraordinary personal experiences is not the vehicle that the Spirit of God will be using in order to take us down the path of holiness. Rather it is the pursuit of a greater understanding of Him and His will for our lives through His Word that He will use. The pursuit of supernatural experiences as an of an anointing will ironically not be a means to unleash the Spirit, but rather to quench Him. The pursuit of greater knowledge of God and His will as it is recorded for us in God’s Word will not in any way grieve the Spirit but will unleash Him. THIS IS NOT THE ONLY CHARISMATIC DOCTRINE THAT I BELIEVE LEADS TO THE QUENCHING OF THE SPIRIT.

The Charismatic belief in the continuing presence of the gift of prophecy

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The Charismatic movement has at the core of teaching the belief that all of the gifts experienced by the early church continues right up to the present time. And this includes such gifts as the gift of prophecy. This belief has tremendous ramifications for the church and the Work of the Spirit of God among us.

Someone once wrote to the well-known and respected songwriters Bill and Gloria Gaither and asked them for a theological interpretation of their song, “The King is coming.” Following is an excerpt from a reply sent by their secretary:

Regarding, the interpretation of the song, “The King Is Coming,” of all songs that song has been a gift from God. Bill and Gloria do not profess to be theologians. The song came quickly to them and they do not care to discuss the theology of it. In fact, they feel that to dissect the song would be tampering with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who inspired the song.”

Are the Gaithers claiming they received “The King Is Coming” through divine revelation and that its words are “infallible?” Undoubtedly they would not want to put it that strongly, nor can one discern the Gaither’s view of revelation from this brief letter. Still, their secretary’s reply is an illustration of a rather free interpretation of what it means to be under “the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.” This is a popular viewpoint that is being used by various groups today, including those in the Charismatic movement.

Are there prophets that are still speaking today? We do not believe that the Bible teaches us that we should expect to continue to see prophets among us. We at Valley Bible do not believe that there are. In **1 Cor. 13:8** we read , “**Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy they will be done away .....**” Clearly the Bible speaks of a conclusion to the prophetic ministry. But when exactly will that be? Certainly there is considerable debate over this question. But there is no debate over the question concerning the foundational aspect of the prophet's ministry. In **Eph. 2:20** Paul speaking to the believers in Ephesus said to them, “**So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household. (20) having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone.**” The prophets of God were already seen at this point in time as largely having completed their task of having laid the foundation necessary for the church to built. In fact in **Jude 3** it says, “**Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.**” Certainly you would have to say that Jude saw a very clear and abrupt end in respect to God’s continuing revelation and also with Paul in **Eph. 2:20** saw it as imminent.

Some Charismatics would say that people misunderstand what they mean by prophetic utterance and new revelation. No effort is being made to change Scripture or even equal it. What is happening is the “clarifying of Scripture” as it is applied or directed to a contemporary setting, such as the prophecy of Agabus in **Acts 11:28**.

The line between “clarifying Scripture” and paralleling it is indeed a thin one. Besides, Scripture is not “clarified” by listening to someone who thinks he has the gift of prophecy.

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Scripture is understood as it is carefully and diligently studied. Such as we see with the Ethiopian Eunuch in **Acts 8:28-35**.

If we abandon the basic premise of a closed canon or revelation and continue to allow or even encourage people to listening for the voice of God outside the vehicle of His Word then we will wind up in a Neo-orthodox subjectivism, or a form of mysticism. I would like to read you a letter from a young man in the charismatic movement to illustrate what can happen.

He writes: “The greatest experience in love I have ever had was at the foot of the cross as the blood of Jesus Christ poured out over me. He filled me with His Spirit. He brought me across the veil into the City of Jerusalem into the Holy of Holies. There I beheld myself in Him, and He in me. I received the baptism as by fire and from this His love dwells in me. From this I have communion daily. I do not feel the need for study of the Scriptures, for I know Jesus as He has revealed Himself to me within; and as He dwells in me, there is the Word. I go to Scripture, and Scripture is vital and necessary but neither central or crucial, for I have Him -- rather than He has me. Scriptures are only a secondary source. Through the baptism of the Holy Spirit the Word in me (the very spiritual body of Jesus Christ) is primary --- I say this as a living experience out of what He has given me to say.”

The reformers saved Christianity from extrabiblical errors with the cry, “Sola Scriptura” (Scripture only). Now from the Charismatic ranks comes the cry, “Scripture plus something more -- prophetic utterance, new revelation from God!” But the church in the twentieth century must not surrender to a theology which gives tradition and experience equal weight with Scripture.

We must not undermine the uniqueness of God’s revelation in the Bible. We cannot abandon SOLA SCRIPTURA without defying the Bible’s own claim for itself. If we dare to insist we are receiving revelation from “God that matches or exceeds the Scriptures, we travel a perilous path that can only lead to theological chaos, spiritual disaster and the QUENCHING OF THE SPIRIT.

### CONCLUSION

The Charismatic church was born out of the deadness of orthodoxy. Why were churches stagnant, why weren’t people experiencing the power of the Spirit in their lives. It was not because they did not have the second blessing it was because they were not yielding themselves to God’s Word. But if we would do this what will be our experience..... Quote Col. 3:16..... WE DON’T NEED MORE OF THE SPIRIT, THE SPIRIT NEEDS MORE OF US, AS WE YIELD OURSELVES UP TO GOD WITHOUT RESERVATION OR COMPROMISE TO DO HIS WILL AS IT IS REVEALED IN HIS WILL.