

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Do Not Quench The Spirit 1 Thessalonians 5:19 Part 3

We are considering the command found in **V. 19 ... “Do not quench the Spirit.”** Several weeks ago we considered various ways that we can in fact do this. And now we have begun to consider various movements within the Church of Christ that also can in fact do the very same thing.

How can those movements be identified? By identifying those movements which distract professing believers from honestly considering and responding to the truth of God’s Word. We can use this criteria because it is the Word of God that the Spirit of uses to do the work of God. We have already seen the Spirit of God coming into this world in order to build Christ’s church, and we have learned that He does this both numerically and spiritually through His Word. Therefore those movements which would distract professing believers from honestly considering and responding to the truth of God’s Word would in fact be guilty of quenching the Spirit.

Where do we see in the scriptures that it is taught that the Word of God is essential in building the church numerically? **1 Pet. 1:23, “For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding Word of God.** We do not become a child of God apart from the Word of God. We cannot become a member of Christ’s church apart from the **“imperishable seed.”** Therefore it is impossible for the true church to grow numerically apart for God’s Word.

Where do we see in the scriptures that it is taught that the Word of God is essential in building the church spiritually? **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 do not grow into spiritual maturity apart from the Word of God. It is through the Word of God that we grow **“in respect to salvation.”** Therefore it is impossible for truly born again believers to grow spiritually apart from the Word of God. In order to be conformed to Christ we must come to know the truth and the only way that we can truly come to know the truth is through the Scriptures themselves.

Last week we considered the Charismatic movement and how they have through their doctrinal positions opened the door for the Word of God to take a back seat to experience as a measure of truth. I understand that what I shared certainly was controversial but though it might be controversial it is important to expose the problems lest we ourselves might get caught up in something that is unprofitable for ourselves and for the Church of Christ as a whole.

This evening/morning we will now go on to a second movement within the church that I believe is guilty of quenching the Spirit by distracting professing believers from honestly considering and responding to God’s Word and that movement is

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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MOVEMENT

The study of psychology and various applications has expanded explosively upon our 20th century landscape. Whenever people have a problem they are immediately asked, “Have you gone to a counselor?” Have you gone to a therapist? This psychological movement within our society has infiltrated the church. And I believe it’s impact is distracting professing believers from honestly considering and responding to God’s Word and is therefore guilty of contributing to the quenching of the Spirit.

I want to make it very clear that I am not saying that counselors or psychiatrists of various sorts whether Christian or secular cannot offer help to those who are suffering. I believe that any counselor that is not rooted in the Scriptures, and who is not determined to minister those Scriptures in the power of the Spirit to the needs of the people that they are seeking to help, will in effect only be working with those people superficially, and ultimately therefore be guilty of quenching the Spirit. If people truly want to help meet the deepest needs of a person’s life, they can only be met through the Spirit ministering the Scriptures in the life of that individual. If a counseling experience in any way devalues the power of the Scriptures to bring about change in a person’s life that counseling experience is guilty of quenching the Spirit. How bad is the problem?

Let me try and bring this problem alive for you from a recent court case involving Grace Community Church in Panorama City.

In 1980, the church was hit with a lawsuit charging that the pastors on their staff were negligent because they tried to help a suicidal young member in their church by giving him Biblical truth. It was the first clergy malpractice case ever heard in the American court system.

One of the key issues raised was the question of whether churches should have the legal right to counsel troubled people with the Bible.

There are many people who would argue that giving someone advice from Scripture is a simplistic approach to counseling. The Bible may be fine as an encouragement to the average person, they would say, but people who have real problems need a PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERT’S HELP. In other words they are saying the Bible and the truths of the Bible ministered to an individual’s life by those who know the Bible is not sufficient to meet that person’s needs.

This perspective sadly to say is not simply held by the secular world but has within these past few decades become to be held by more and more people within the church. Certainly this was seen in the trial involving Grace Community.

During the trial, a number of “expert psychological witnesses” were called to testify. And what was most disturbing was the fact some of those witnesses were professing “Christian counselors” and “Christian psychiatrists” who were saying that , “The Bible alone does not contain sufficient help to meet people’s deepest personal and emotional needs. These men were actually arguing before a secular court that GOD’S WORD IS NOT AN ADEQUATE RESOURCE FOR COUNSELING PEOPLE ABOUT THEIR SPIRITUAL PROBLEMS! This is horrible! And without a doubt this kind of thinking quenches the Spirit!

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The world and even many in the church are saying that the scriptures are not sufficient to minister to the psychological and emotional needs of people. But what does the scriptures themselves say? 2 Tim. 3:16 Let us consider **Ps. 19:7-9**. In these verses David makes six statements about the Scripture. In revealing the many-faceted general purpose of God’s Word, he calls Scripture “the law of the Lord,” “the testimony of the Lord,” “the precepts of the Word,” “the commandment of the Lord,” “the fear of the Lord” and the judgments of the Lord.” Each of the six statements highlights a characteristic of God’s Word and describes it’s effect in the life of one who embraces it.

“The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul” The word “restore” can mean “converting” “reviving”, “refreshing” or I believe best understood “transforming.” To paraphrase David’s words, Scripture is so powerful and comprehensive that it can convert or transform the entire person, changing someone into precisely the person God wants him to be. God’s Word is sufficient to restore through salvation even the most broken life..... **1 Cor. 1:26-31**.

“The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple” The Hebrew word translated “simple” comes from an expression meaning “an open door.” It portrays an image of a naive person who doesn’t know when to shut his mind to false or impure teaching. He is undiscerning, ignorant, and gullible. But God’s Word makes him wise. “Wise” speaks not of one who merely knows some fact, but of one who is skilled in the art of Godly living.... **Eph. 4:14**.

“The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart” God’s precepts, David said, are “right.” Rather than simply indicating what is right as opposed to wrong, that word has the sense of showing someone the true path. The truths of Scripture lay out the proper path through the difficult maze of life. That’s a wonderful confidence. So many people today are distressed or despondent because they lack direction or purpose. Most seek answers from the wrong sources. God’s Word not only provides the light to our path (Ps. 119:105), but also sets the route before us. And because it steers us through the right course of life, God’s Word brings great joy. If you’re depressed, anxious, fearful, doubting, learn to obey God’s counsel and share in the resulting delight. Don’t turn to self-indulgent pursuits like self-esteem and self-fulfillment.

“The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes” “Pure” could better be translated "lucid" Scripture is not mystifying, confusing, or puzzling. The synonym “clear” is best. Granted there are things in the Scriptures that are hard to understand (2 Pet. 3:16). But taken as a whole, the Bible is not a bewildering book.” It will therefore clearly reveal the blessed, hopeful truths that the world will never see.

“The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever” “fear” speaks of the reverential awe for God that compels us to worship Him. Scripture, in this sense, is God’s manual on how to worship Him. And it is a worship manual which is “clean.” The Scriptures are flawless and will therefore last forever. We can therefore count on them today as much as David did when he wrote the psalm..... And finally

“The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether” Because Scripture is true it is “righteous altogether” (Ps. 19:9), the implication of that phrase is that its truthfulness produces a comprehensive righteousness in those who accept it. There is therefore no need for additional revelations, visions, or words of prophecy.

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In contrast to the theories of men, God's Word is true and absolutely comprehensive. Rather than seeking something more than God's glorious revelation, Christians need only to study and obey what they already have!

There is no greater agent of change than the Word of God, when it is being ministered to our lives by the Spirit of God. **1 Cor. 6:9-11** says, **“Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, not idolaters, not adulterers, not effeminate, nor homosexuals. (10) nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of God.”** These Corinthian believers that Paul was writing to had gloriously messed up people. But they were changed. How? Not through the wisdom of the world but rather through the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

This is also my testimony. I did not come to Jesus as a whole person. I had a lot of baggage from my past. Deep emotional scars, corrupted thinking, destructive behavior patterns. This is what I brought to Jesus, and He has not failed me. Though I may not be the man I want to be, I am not the man I used to be and I am what I am by the Grace of God. For the Spirit of God has taken the Word of God and has progressively used it to renew my mind and meet the needs of my life. And this is also what I have seen in many lives of individuals that make up this fellowship. Those counselors who are relying on anything else besides the Word of God to minister to the personal needs of people from my perspective and from my experience as well as on the basis of God's Word are attacking the problems with a pea shooter. But those individuals who are not so-called professionals but who do not seek to minister the truth of God's Word in the lives of those people, are looking to help with heavy artillery.

I want to make it clear that I am not saying that all counselors are bad. I am saying that any counselor that does not believe that the Scriptures are in and of themselves not sufficient to address the psychological and emotional needs of professing believers are flat out wrong and these counselors certainly should be avoided. Not because they cannot be helpful in the process of behavioral modification or even giving a certain degree of relief from pressing personal problems, but though this may be true those counselors who fail to recognize the proper role of Scriptures in the work of sanctification is truly dealing superficially with the problem.

I would also like to warn you that a person who represents themselves as a “Christian counselor” does not in any form or fashion guarantee that he or she would be a “biblical counselor.” Let me illustrate what I mean. A woman called into a “Christian radio station” for counsel concerning a problem she had with compulsive fornication. She said she felt powerless to change her behavior. The “Christian counselor” on the radio said her conduct is her way of striking back a result of wounds that she had experienced early in childhood from a passive father and an overbearing mother. Thus there would be no simple road to recovery. And that for her to overcome her problem of compulsive fornication she would have to go through extended counseling. Then the suggestion was made that she would find a church that would be tolerant while she worked her way out of her present practices.

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Now this counsel may be represented as Christian but it certainly is not biblical. First, the counselor in effect gave the woman permission to defer obedience to a clear command of Scripture to “flee immorality.” Secondly, he blamed her parents for her present behaviors and justified her vengeance toward them. Thirdly, he seemed to be suggesting that it was okay if she gradually tapered off her fornication and should find a church that would find that acceptable.

Contrast the radio counselor’s advice with the profound, simplicity of **Gal. 5:16** “**Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.**” Do we really think that years of therapy can bring people to the point where they walk by the Spirit? Certainly not if the therapist is someone who infers delayed repentance or who encourages churches to be tolerant of chronic immorality is the solution.

I have no problem with those who use either common sense or social sciences as a helpful observer’s platform to look on human conduct and develop tools to assist people in getting some external controls in their behavior. That may be useful as a first step for getting to the real spiritual cure. But a wise counselor, a biblical counselor realizes that all behavioral therapy stops on the surface - far short of actual solutions for the real needs of the soul, which are resolved only in Christ.

CONCLUSION

How do we apply what we have seen?

First of all and most importantly, we must set our course. We must determine within ourselves that we will seek to discover and apply to our lives biblical solutions to the problems that we encounter in this life.

Secondly, if as we are pressing to go down this course we find ourselves stuck. We will seek out counselors who are knowledgeable of the Word and who give the Word of God it’s proper place in the counseling process. **WHERE WILL WE FIND THESE COUNSELORS?**

We should initially look within our fellowship itself. This is the way the Lord has designed His church to operate. **Romans 15:14, “And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another.”** If you do not know of a person who might be able to help you personally then talk to one of the elders of the church and we will seek to help you find the assistance that you need.

If we are unable to find you the assistance that you need or that assistance needs to be complemented with help from outside of this fellowship then I would encourage you again to work through the elders.

There are many people in the counseling world and this includes the Christian counseling world that are flat out dangerous and we would encourage you to seek out help in making the selection of a counselor.