

HOLY SPIRIT: QUENCHING THE SPIRIT

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies” (I Thessalonians 5:16-20). This cluster of verses provides clues to the sin of quenching the Spirit. The Spirit is grieved when sins are not acknowledged and confessed. The Spirit is quenched when we resist the will of God or the Word of God. It is the will of God to rejoice always, pray always, give thanks always, and not to despise (scoff at) prophecies (i.e. the counsel of God). The filling of the Spirit is necessary to obey the will of God with the right attitude. Obeying the commands mentioned in this passage are always God’s will. Rejoicing always, praying always, and giving thanks always are commands of the Holy Spirit who gave the counsel of God’s word (II Peter 1:21). When we quench the Spirit we hinder his operations. We quench the Spirit by self-will, the refusal to submit to His ways by overlooking or ignoring His commands. When the Spirit is quenched we will receive no further leading from Him until we obey. When we refuse to follow the leading of the Spirit, the impulses of the flesh usurp first place in our lives. The central issue in our spiritual lives is that of accepting and doing the will of God. Where we stop, the Spirit stops. Failure to follow the Spirit results in the sin of quenching the Spirit. Without the Spirit we have no ability to do the will of God. “For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). “The initial act is a surrender to the will of God, after which the human will may be depended upon to fulfill its responsibility as empowered by the Holy Spirit” (Charles Ryrie). The Holy Spirit will not and cannot work through us until we surrender our wills to God to do His will, not ours.