

What Is Meant By "Quench Not The Holy Spirit?"

by Arnold Fruchtenbaum

To quench the Holy Spirit is to prevent believers from exercising their spiritual gifts in the meeting of the church. The purpose of the gifts of the Spirit is for the building up and edification of the Body. The Scriptures do lay down specific rules as to who can use these gifts in the public assembly and how often. Assuming all the rules of order are kept according to the Scripture, to quench the Holy Spirit is to keep believers from rightly exercising their spiritual gifts in the public assembly.

The context of I Thessalonians 5:19 speaks of the quenching of the Holy Spirit. Then verse 20 states: *...despise not prophesyings;...* The Thessalonians apparently were frowning upon any manifestation of the Holy Spirit that was out of the ordinary. In this case, their conduct was the opposite extreme of the Corinthians. The Corinthians' extreme was to "let it all loose" without any order, without any rules or regulations, without any elders exercising authority or restraint. This created disorder with no chain of command and a lack of the testing of the spirits, which is so necessary in that kind of situation.

In local churches today, most services have a set format. Only a few people have total control of what may or may not go on, and only they give any input to the service. The authority and order exercised is often an authority and order that tends to quench the Spirit.

There is no question that the free exercise of gifts must have a degree of control by the spiritual elders. It would not be proper to let just anything go on because that would lead to the Corinthian extreme. But, the Corinthian extreme should not be avoided by going to the Thessalonian extreme. There must be a balance. A time must be given at some point in the meeting of the church to let others use their spiritual gifts. Not to allow people to exercise their spiritual gifts is to commit the sin of quenching the Spirit.

One more thing should be noted concerning this sin. This is not an individual sin, but a congregational sin. In the Greek text, the word quench is in the second person plural meaning: *Quench [ye] not the Spirit.* He is addressing them as a corporate body. As a corporate body, they are guilty of this sin. While an individual believer can be guilty of grieving the Holy Spirit, a local body, congregation, or assembly can also be guilty of quenching the Holy Spirit.

There must be an allowance made for the exercise of a believer's spiritual gifts, whatever they may be, but in accordance with biblical order, rules, and regulations.