

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Quench not the Spirit.

Analysis

Quench not the Spirit—to pneuma mē sbennyte (τὸ πνεῦμα μὴ σβέννυτε, 'the Spirit do not quench'). Sbennymi (σβέννυμι, 'to quench/extinguish') is used of putting out fires—firefighters 'quench' flames. The Holy Spirit is likened to fire (Acts 2:3; Matt 3:11)—purifying, illuminating, energizing. Believers can 'quench' (suppress, stifle, extinguish) the Spirit's work through

1. resisting conviction of sin
2. ignoring promptings toward holiness
3. despising prophetic utterances (v. 20)
4. rejecting spiritual gifts
5. choosing fleshly desires over Spirit's leading (Gal 5:16-17).

This warning presumes the Spirit's presence (all believers possess the Spirit, Rom 8:9) but acknowledges possibility of resistance.

We can 'grieve' the Spirit (Eph 4:30) through sin or 'quench' the Spirit through suppression. The context (vv. 19-22) emphasizes charismatic ministry—prophesying (v. 20), testing prophecies (v. 21), discerning good and evil (v. 22). Don't quench the Spirit by despising spiritual gifts or suppressing charismatic expressions. Equally, don't presume all spiritual manifestations are genuine—test everything (v. 21). Balance requires both openness (not quenching) and discernment (testing).

Historical Context

Early church worship was charismatic—prophesying (Acts 11:27-28; 21:9-11), speaking in tongues (1 Cor 14), healing (Acts 3:1-10), miracles (Acts 5:12-16). Some apparently despised these manifestations or suppressed them through rigid formalism. Paul commands: don't quench the Spirit by rejecting charismatic gifts. Yet Corinthian abuses (1 Cor 14) required regulation—not everything claimed as 'Spirit-led' was genuine. Hence Paul balances 'quench not the Spirit' (openness) with 'prove all things' (discernment). Churches still struggle with this tension: some quench the Spirit through cessationism or formalism; others abandon discernment through naive acceptance of all manifestations.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How do you practically 'not quench the Spirit' in personal obedience and corporate worship?
2. What specific actions or attitudes 'quench' the Spirit's work in your life, and how do you avoid them?
3. How do you balance openness to the Spirit's work ('quench not') with careful discernment ('prove all things')?

Interlinear Text

τὸ	πνεῦμα	μὴ	σβέννυτε
G3588	the Spirit	not	Quench
	G4151	G3361	G4570

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 4:30 (Spirit): And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Acts 7:51 (Spirit): Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

2 Timothy 1:6 (Parallel theme): Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

1 Timothy 4:14 (Parallel theme): Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

Isaiah 63:10 (Spirit): But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

Nehemiah 9:30 (Spirit): Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands.

Psalms 51:11 (Spirit): Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

Genesis 6:3 (Spirit): And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

Ephesians 6:16 (Parallel theme): Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

1 Corinthians 14:30 (Parallel theme): If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.