

# Quench not the Spirit

by William MacDonald

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## Transcript

“Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings.” (1 Th. 5:19, 20)

We usually think of quenching in connection with a fire. We quench the fire when we throw water on it. In so doing, we either douse it completely or greatly reduce its scope and effectiveness.

Fire is used in the Scriptures as a type of the Holy Spirit. He is fervent, burning, enthusiastic. When people are under the control of the Spirit, they are glowing, ardent and overflowing. We quench the Spirit when we suppress the manifestation of the Spirit in the gatherings of God's people.

Paul says, “Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings.” The way in which he links the quenching of the Spirit with the despising of prophesyings leads us to believe that quenching has to do primarily with meetings of the local church.

We quench the Spirit when we make a man ashamed of his testimony for Christ, whether in prayer, worship or ministry of the Word. Constructive criticism is one thing, but when we carp at a man over words or nitpicking details, we are apt to discourage or stumble him in his public ministry.

We also quench the Spirit when we have services so overorganized that He is effectively in a straitjacket. If arrangements are made in prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit, then no one can object. But arrangements that are made on the basis of human cleverness have the effect of leaving the Holy Spirit as a Spectator instead of as the Leader.

God has given many gifts to the Church. He uses different gifts at different times. Perhaps a brother has a word of exhortation for the fellowship. If all public ministry is centralized in some other man, then the Spirit does not have liberty to bring forth the needed message at the appropriate time. This is another way of quenching the Spirit.

Finally, we quench the Spirit when we refuse His promptings in our own lives. Perhaps we are powerfully moved to minister on a certain subject but we hold back because of the fear of man. We feel impelled to lead in public prayer but remain seated because of shyness. We think of a hymn that would be especially appropriate but we lack the courage to give it out.

The net result is that the fire of the Spirit is quenched, our meetings lose their spontaneity and power, and the local body is impoverished.

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