The Holy Spirit

Do Not Quench the Spirit Lesson 13

I. Introduction:

A. Is it possible that Christians individually, and Christians as a body, struggle because we refuse the help that God offers?

B. How is one "filled with the Spirit"?

C. How does an individual Christian, or a group of Christians, "quench the Spirit"?

II. Being Filled with the Spirit

A. We acknowledge that we cannot find one text which contains a formula for being "filled with the Spirit" (however, neither can we find a single text which lists all the "steps" in salvation).

B. A Logical set (not necessarily a sequence) of "steps" would be:

1. Learn the word - Rom 10:17; Gal 5:16-25; Eph 5:15-18.

2. Believe, and continue in faith - John 7:37-39; Acts 2:38-39, 5:30-32; Eph 1:13-14, I John 4:13-15.

3. Examine ourselves - 2 Cor 13:5; James 1:22-25.

4. Subdue the flesh and submit to the Spirit - Gal 5:16-25

5. Work - Phil 2:12-13

6. Ask - Luke 11:11-13; Eph 1:15-17, 3:14-19; Col 1:9-12.

7. Stop trying to satisfy God by works - 2 Cor 3:3-11; Ga; 3:1-14.

8. Acknowledge God's blessings, and give thanks - Rom 8:5-11

C. The evidence of Spirit-assisted lives tells us when we are filled with the Spirit.

1. Sanctification - 2 Thess 2:13.

2. Fruitbearing - Gal 5:22-23.

3. Renewal and revival - Titus 3:4-6.

4. Life in the body of which we are a part - Eph 2:19-22.

5. Unity of the body of which we are a part - Eph 4:3

III. Quenching the Spirit

A. If the Holy Spirit is God, how could any human being ever succeed in resisting Him?

B. God does not overwhelm our wills; He works in us only to the extent that we allow.

1. Acts 7:51 - "You always resist the Holy Spirit."

2. 1 Thess 5:19 - "Do not put out the Spirit's fire."

C. What does a "quenching" of the Spirit's fire look like? How might it develop? A possible set (not necessarily a sequence) of "steps" would be:

1. Most teachers teach that the Holy Spirit's work ended in the First Century.

2. The rest are fearful of being labeled "Calvinists" or "Pentecostals" so they remain quiet.

3. As a result of lack of teaching, most church members accept the idea that the Holy Spirit's only contribution to our salvation and fruit-bearing is the Word.

4. In response to false teaching, and to the prevalence of immoral conduct in the world around us, the church adopts a doctrine of salvation by works.

5. Amid harried and hectic lives, time spent in the Word and in prayer declines.

6. God's children stop asking Him to give them His Spirit.

7. Convinced that God would never ask them to do what they could not do by their own resources alone, Christians take credit for the church's successes and blame the preacher, elders, or "unsound" brethren for the church's failures.

8. Since it no longer occurs to anyone that the Holy Spirit, and not individual works, might have a part in the success of the church, Christians no longer give thanks or glory to God for His Spirit's work on their behalf.

D. If the Spirit's fire were quenched, what would be the results?

1. The church would be divided, and members would devote most of their efforts to opposing other Christians.

2. Most Christians' activities of service would be devoid of excitement, and would revolve around a few building-related activities.

3. Christians would tend to adopt a "what is the least I can get by with doing" approach to worship and service.

4. Christian living would come to be identified exclusively by the avoidance of certain sins, rather than by positive actions of work and service.

5. Churches would turn increasingly inward, toward a building-centric perspective.

6. Selfishness, materialism, even gossip would become "acceptable" vices.

7. Individual Christians would become ever more confused, frustrated and disillusioned by their individual failures to overcome their weaknesses, and by the increasing factiousness in their churches.

8. Christians (and churches) would experience a decline in the effectiveness of their witness among their neighbors, and they would be distinguishable from non-Christians mostly in spending a few hours a week "going to church."

E. Have we "succeeded" in quenching the Spirit? How does it appear to you?