

Subject: Staying on Course: Living in the Power of the Spirit

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I write this, I am praying against the heaviest spiritual attacks I have ever witnessed, I am praying for our marriages and families along with unity in the body of Christ in this trying time. In the midst of these challenging times, we are truly in need of the power of the Holy Spirit that is central to our just completed study in 1 Thessalonians 5:18-28. For those interest in devotions, studies, and other discipleship materials, they are available [[HERE](#)].

Summary: The sermon explored Paul's urgent exhortations to the young church in Thessalonica, focusing particularly on the critical warning against quenching the Holy Spirit. We examined how the early church faced a target-rich environment for spiritual attack, much like we are experiencing today, and how Paul provided them with a roadmap for spiritual victory. The message challenged us to honestly assess whether we are sidelining the very power we desperately need—the Holy Spirit—and called us to yield fully to His work in our lives. We also addressed the ongoing availability of spiritual gifts, including prophecy, and the importance of testing all things while holding fast to God's Word.

Takeaways:

- (1) We are at great risk of quenching the Spirit through nineteen common ways, including persistent sin, busyness, prayerlessness, neglecting God's Word, pride, unforgiveness, and refusing to exercise our spiritual gifts. Ground zero in the spiritual war is our own hearts, revealing our desperate need for the very One we too often sideline.
- (2) The gifts of the Holy Spirit, including prophecy, remain available and necessary for the church today until Christ returns. We must not despise or reject these gifts out of fear or uncertainty, but rather test all things against Scripture, holding fast to what is good and rejecting what is evil.
- (3) God is faithful to complete the sanctification He began in us. We can trust Him fully as He works to set us apart, making us holy as He is holy. Our calling is to be His ambassadors, proclaiming and living by His Word under the leadership and power of His Spirit.

As we move forward this week, I encourage you to prayerfully consider which areas might be quenching the Spirit in your own life. Let us commit to stirring up the gifts God has given us, not for our own glory, but for the building up of His church and the advancement of His kingdom.

May His riches and grace be yours as you come to know and obediently follow Jesus,

Pastor Jim

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Staying on Course Part 2 of Values, Virtues, & Victory 1 Thessalonians 5:19-28

I. Introduction: A Life Preserver in the Spiritual Fog and Storms

1. In our passage today, Paul builds upon a series of exhortations, values, and virtues found in a God-centric church we considered last week with a series of 5 additional exhortations, a sweet and encouraging benediction, and the secure hope found only in Christ.
2. The church in Thessalonica was young, inexperienced, and center stage of a target rich environment for the enemy and every person that stood to gain from their success OR failure. **Because of these things, Paul is using the end of this letter to encourage them while painting them a word picture of what victory looks like...** a life preserver in the midst of cultural and spiritual fog and storms threatening to engulf them.
3. We will spend most of our time today on the first 2 of the exhortations before we wind down with some thoughts on the remainder of the passage.

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II. 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22: Living in the Power of the Spirit of God

1. Rejoice, pray, give thanks, do not despise prophecies, test all things, hold fast to that which is good, abstain from all evil...**in the middle of this great list of exhortations is a GREAT warning and EVEN GREATER encouragement**; we desperately need what we are at great risk of sidelining – the Holy Spirit.

III. 1 Thessalonians 5:19: Quenching the Spirit of God

1. As part of our foundation for today, I think it important to look back into the book of Joel AND to the founding of the church in Acts 2:16-18:

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But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel (in Joel 2:28-29):

¹⁷And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your young men shall see visions,
Your old men shall dream dreams.

¹⁸And on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days;
And they shall prophesy.

2. It was on the day of the church's birth some 2,000 years ago that the Spirit of God, as prophesied in Joel, was poured out on the followers of Jesus Christ. [In what should encourage us greatly, it is this same Spirit that is present with us today.](#)
3. Yet, even a quick look around reveals a whole-of-culture war on marriage, family, life, sexuality, gender, God's word, and Jesus Himself among the host of battles. [What's more, these battle fronts and others are not just "out there" in the world, but have made their way into much of what claims to be the church with personal preferences, selfishness, and self-righteousness trumping Biblical unity, along with rampant false teaching pleasing to man's itching ears, just as we read in end-times passages such as **2 Timothy 4:3-4.**](#)
4. Taken together, we rightly wonder where is the power of the Holy Spirit in the church (which means in you and me, not in the building) and our culture. ["Have we and/or are we quenching Him?" along with "how can we instead yield to Him", become obvious questions for us to wrestle with.](#)
5. To this end, let's first examine the present ministry and work of the Holy Spirit and next consider 19 common ways we quench Him.

The Present Ministry and Work of the Holy Spirit

IN THE WORLD	CORPORATE CHURCH	IN THE INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER
Convicts of Sin	Baptizes and Brings Unity in One Body	Saves and Indwells
Glorifies Christ	Empowers the Church for Witness & Work	Cleanses, Purifies, and Sanctifies
Restrains Evil & Lawlessness	Calls, Leads, & Directs Ministry	Gives Spiritual Gifts
	Sanctifies Believers	Builds Believers Identity in Christ
	Inspires Corporate Worship	Produces Christ-likeness and Fruit
	Illuminates Biblical Truth	Illuminates the Mind to Understand & Accept the things of Christ
		Prays for Believers
		Leads and Guides
		Teaches Truth, Gives Discernment Regarding False Teaching & Doctrine

Nineteen Ways of Quenching the Spirit

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 - A. Persistent Sin. (Eph 4:30, Ps 66:18, Luke 10:38-42)
 - B. Busyness. (2 Thes 3:11; Ecc 4:6)
 - C. Refusing Conviction or Repentance. (Heb 3:7-8; Prov 29:1; Acts 7:51)
- Slide 11 {
 - D. Polytheistic faith. (Exodus 20:3; Is 45:22; 1 Cor 8:5-6)
 - E. Bitterness, Anger, and Unforgiveness. (Eph 4:31-32, Col 3:13; Mt 6:14-15)
 - F. Pride & Self Sufficiency. (Jam 4:6; Prov 16:18; Jn 15:5)
- Slide 12 {
 - G. Neglecting God's Word. (2 Tim 3:16-17; Ps 119: 11; Col 3:16)
 - H. Prayerlessness. (1 Thes 5:17-19; Eph 6:18; Luke 18:1)
 - I. Worldliness and Love of the World. (John 2:15-17; Ro 12:2; Jam 4:4)
- Slide 13 {
 - J. Fear of Man Instead of Obedience to God. (Prov 29:25; Acts 5:29; 2 Tim 1:7)
 - K. Rejecting/Neglecting spiritual gifts. (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6; 1 Pet 4:10)
 - L. Despising Biblical Preaching and Truth. (1 Thes 5:19-20; 2 Tim 4:3-4; Amos 8:11)
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 - M. Division, gossip, and sowing discord. (Eph 4:1-3; Pro 6:16-19; 1 Cor 1:10)
 - N. Lack of Biblical Love (Gal 5:22; 1 Cor 13:1-3; Jn 13:34-35)
 - O. Hypocrisy (Acts 5:1-10; Mt 23:27-28; Jam 1:22)
- Slide 15 {
 - P. Refusing to worship and give thanks (Eph 5:18-20; Ps 95:1-2; Ro 1:21)
 - Q. Unbelief and doubt toward God's promises (Heb 11:6; James 1:6-8; Mk 6:5-6)

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continued

- R. Refusing to obey God (Jam 4:17; Jn 14-15; Ro 8:14)
- S. Ruled by sensuality, including sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:18-20; Eph 5:3-5; 1 Thes 4:3-8)

6. While its easy and cute to say “stop it!”. The reality is this list reflects our creativity and determination of being the god’s of our own lives – it reveals that our hearts are ground zero in the spiritual war. This list reflects our desperate need for the very One we too often quench.

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IV. 1 Thessalonians 5:20-22: Led by the Spirit, we are to...

As we come into verses 20-22, in by being led by the Spirit, we are to...

1. In v20, Paul offers an immediate example of quenching the Spirit of God – Despising Prophecy. There remains great disagreement in the church today regarding the gifts broadly and the more charismatic gifts, including prophecy, specifically.
 - A. Some contend, *I suggest completely out of context of the 1 Corinthian 13:8-13 passage they reference*, that the gift of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge are not for post-bible times.

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Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

¹¹When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹²For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

¹³And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.

I shudder at the interpretation the gifts of the Spirit are not for us today, in some measure because that's is NOT the plain reading of Scripture, AND because (I hope you will agree) we are desperate for His power in our day!

B. Those using this passage to support their view of the gifts ceasing indicate that the “perfect has come” in v10 refers to the completion of the canon of Scripture. And yes, it is true that the bible is without error...it is perfect. Yet, this same passage goes on to tell us just who “the perfect” is in v12 - Jesus - AND when it will be...when we are face to face AND “I shall know just as I also am known” – neither of which have yet happened.

2. I think it a good time to back up for a moment and make sure we have a shared understanding of prophesy. First, Scripture teaches us that prophesy has two main subsections, including “fore-telling” and “forth-telling”.

A. Fore-telling predicts the future (such as the coming of Christ and end-times). It is important to note that this kind of prophesy adds to the canon of Scripture and is expressly prohibited by Scripture...there are no prophets in this sense since the canon of Scripture was completed (Deut 4:2; Rev 22:18-19).

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B. Forth-telling [which is most prophesy) is declaring God’s truth to the present generation (mostly through exhortations, warnings, corrections, encouragements, and other forms of instruction and calls to action). (1 Cor 14:3, 6-7, 22).

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- i. **1 Corinthians 14:3** says it this way “But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.”
- ii. **2 Timothy 1:6** offers a clear reminder that we are to stir up the gifts that the body may fully function;
- iii. In **1 Corinthians 14:1**, directly on the heels of gifts and biblical love discussed in chapters 12 & 13 respectively,

we are told to not despise the gifts. This is not coincidental or a mis-ordering of the Scripture for one day we will not need these gifts BUT we will live in all eternity with faith, hope, and of heavy emphasis here, love (see 1 Cor 13:13).

- iv. At the end of 1 Corinthians 14, the Apostle Paul puts an exclamation point on the availability of the gifts, including prophesy for us today with “Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues”. **1 Corinthians 14:39**

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- 3. A brief summary is in order here...(1) we, I hope, see the desperate need for God’s power in our culture, His church, and in our lives, (2) God gives us a variety of spiritual gifts and desires for us to actively, consistently, and faithfully exercise, (3) these gifts are with us until a yet future time when we are with Christ and we no longer need them, and (4) Paul warns us to not quench the Spirit (and His gifts) precisely because he knows, left to our own devices, we will AND that we are in desperate need for the gifts in combating the evil of our hearts and the world.
- 4. Of course, just as we have heard about or perhaps even witnessed ourselves, Paul too understood that mankind can and will abuse the gifts of God – causing many of us to diminish or outright reject them from fear or uncertainty. Of note, this exhortation is NOT just prophesy or tongues, but any and all of the gifts. We know Paul understood because in v21-22 he addresses this directly with additional explicit exhortations to test all things, holding fast to God’s word and rejecting anything evil.
 - A. In this, we are brought full-circle as Paul tells us to double down with his exhortation to NOT QUENCH THE SPIRIT for we must use other gifts from God, such as faith, discernment, strength, and many others to effectively witness and stand on God’s word in fulfilling our duties and responsibilities to Him and one another.

5. Folks, I understand that many of us have heard this Biblical case for the gifts of God before and yet you remain doubtful, fearful, or even unconvinced this is for you. *If this is you, I ask you to prayerfully reconsider, as the church is walking with little power and the need for God's power is great beyond measure.*

This is a time He has appointed us to carry forward and live out His message of hope and we have demonstrated we cannot do so without His power and gifts. *May we just be His church, obeying His precepts, and following His lead...all for His glory!*

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V. **1 Thessalonians 5:23-28: Powerful Truths To Hold Onto and Live**

As we finish up today, I want to draw your attention to Paul's Benediction and concluding remarks here in 1 Thessalonians.

1. The Benediction found in verses 23-24. *For those unsure, a benediction is a short invocation for divine help, blessing, and guidance, typically given at the end of a worship service.* It can also refer to a specific Christian service that includes the blessing of the congregation. *In this benediction, there are 3 important tightly-woven-together things I want to draw your attention to:*
 - A. First, what started in the Spirit needs to be finished in the Spirit, He is working to set you apart from the world as His holiness is manifest in you.
 - B. Second, this is described as 'sanctification' and its final result is you being holy as He is holy. *God, in His love and wisdom, did not simply declare and make you holy, but He makes the way and invests in you while you must, of your own volition, choose to live your life as His (on His terms) or NOT.*
 - C. Third, in v24, Paul declares a simple truth meant to strengthen us...*it is in His power, wisdom, and design that one can become blameless.* He is faithful! He is trustworthy. We can literally give our lives to him!

2. Our closing point for today is found in v27. It is in God's grace and by His word that we are saved and sanctified...all under the leadership of and by the power of His Spirit. We are to be His ambassadors in receiving and bringing His hope, along with bearing His fruit. It is God's word we are to proclaim, obey, and live...for He is good and He is worthy!

[Prayer]

1 Thessalonians 5:19-28
Staying on Course
Part 2 of Values, Virtues, & Victory

- I. **Introduction: A life Preserver in the Spiritual Fog and Storms**

- II. **1 Thessalonians 5:19-22: Living in the Power of the Spirit of God**

- III. **1 Thessalonians 5:19: Quenching the Spirit of God**
 - Our desperate need for more of the power of God
 - The Spirit's present ministry and work
 - 19 ways of quenching the Spirit

Additional Scripture References: Acts 2:16-18; 2 Ti 4:3-4

- IV. **1 Thessalonians 5:20-22: Led by the Spirit, we are to...**
 - NOT quench the Spirit. NOT despise prophecies, test all things, hold fast to what is good, and reject that which is evil
 - Prophecy: Fore-telling AND Forth-telling

Additional Scripture References: 1 Cor 13:8-13. 14:3; 2 Ti 1:6; 1 Co 14:1, 39

- V. **1 Thessalonians 5:23-28: Powerful Truths to Hold Onto and Live**

5-Day Devotional
1 Thessalonians 5:19-28
Staying on Course
Part 2 of Values, Virtues, & Victory

Day 1: The Fire That Must Not Be Quenched

Reading: 1 Thes 5:19-22; Acts 2:16-18

Devotional: The Holy Spirit, poured out at Pentecost, remains powerfully present in believers today. Yet Paul warns against quenching this divine fire within us. Consider a smoldering campfire—cover it with dirt, and the flames die. Similarly, persistent sin, prayerlessness, and worldliness smother the Spirit's work in our lives. The Spirit convicts, empowers, and transforms us into Christ's likeness. When we silence His voice through busyness or pride, we forfeit the very power we desperately need to navigate our spiritually hostile culture.

Today, ask yourself: What might be dampening the Spirit's flame in my life? Confession and repentance clear the way for His unhindered work. God desires to work powerfully through yielded vessels.

Day 2: Testing and Holding Fast

Reading: 1 Thes 5:20-22; 1 Jn 4:1-3

Devotional: Paul's instruction creates a beautiful tension: don't despise prophecy, but test everything. This isn't contradiction—it's wisdom. God gives spiritual gifts for the church's edification, including prophetic encouragement and exhortation. Yet our enemy disguises himself as an angel of light, making discernment essential. We hold fast to what is good by measuring everything against Scripture's unchanging truth. The Bible is our plumb line, our standard for evaluating all teaching, experiences, and claimed revelations.

This requires us to know God's Word deeply, not superficially. We cannot test what we don't understand. Commit today to growing in biblical literacy. Read with intention. Memorize key passages. Let Scripture become so embedded in your heart that falsehood rings hollow while truth resonates clearly.

Day 3: The Sanctifying Work of God

Reading: 1 Thes 5:23-24; Phil 1:6

Devotional: God's work in you is comprehensive—spirit, soul, and body. Sanctification is not instantaneous but progressive, a lifelong journey of becoming holy as He is holy. This truth should simultaneously humble and encourage us. We cannot sanctify ourselves through willpower or religious performance. Yet God, who called us, is faithful to complete what He began. He doesn't abandon His work mid-process. When you stumble, remember: He who began a good work in you will carry it to completion.

Your part is cooperation—yielding to His Spirit, obeying His Word, and trusting His timing. Holiness is not achieved by gritting your teeth harder but by surrendering more fully to the One who makes you blameless through Christ's righteousness applied to your life.

Day 4: Living in Spiritual Power

Reading: Cor 14:1-5, 39; 2 Ti 1:6-7

Devotional: God has not given us a spirit of timidity but of power, love, and self-discipline. The spiritual gifts are not relics of the early church but present realities for today's battles. We face cultural warfare against truth, marriage, life, and Christ Himself. How can we stand without divine power? Paul urges us to earnestly desire spiritual gifts, particularly prophecy—speaking God's truth for edification, exhortation, and comfort. Fear has paralyzed many believers from embracing the Spirit's full provision.

Perhaps you've witnessed abuse of gifts or heard conflicting teaching. Don't let counterfeits cause you to reject the genuine. Stir up the gift within you. The church desperately needs every member functioning in their Spirit-given capacity. Ask God to reveal and activate the gifts He's placed in you for His glory.

Day 5: The Power of God's Word

Reading: 1 Thes 5:27; 2 Ti 3:16-17; He 4:12

Devotional: Paul charges the Thessalonians to read his letter to all the brothers—God's Word must be proclaimed, not hidden. Scripture is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It is our offensive weapon in spiritual warfare, our lamp in darkness, our source of hope and transformation. Yet many believers remain biblically illiterate, vulnerable to deception and powerless in witness. God's Word reveals His character, exposes our sin, and points us to Christ. It equips us for every good work.

The enemy fears nothing more than believers who know and obey Scripture. Make God's Word central in your life. Read it systematically. Meditate on it deeply. Memorize it faithfully. Obey it completely. Let Scripture shape your thoughts, guide your decisions, and fuel your witness. His Word never returns void.

Small Group Study Guide

1 Thessalonians 5:19-28

Staying on Course

Part 2 of Values, Virtues, & Victory

Opening Prayer: Pray that the Lord would open your eyes to see and understand His word as you discuss the sermon.

Key Takeaways: Query the group for takeaways first...you may stay with one or more of those.

- The Holy Spirit is actively working in the world, the church, and individual believers today
- We can quench the Spirit in numerous ways, often rooted in heart issues
- Spiritual gifts, including prophecy, are for today and desperately needed
- We must test all things against Scripture while remaining open to the Spirit
- God is faithful to complete the sanctification He begins in us
- We need the Spirit's power to be effective witnesses in our culture

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. Review the lists of the Holy Spirit's work in the world, corporate church, and individual believers. Which of these ministries of the Spirit were you most familiar with? Which were new to you or surprising?
2. Why do you think Paul emphasized not quenching the Spirit right in the middle of his list of exhortations? What does this placement tell us about the Spirit's importance in living out the Christian life?
3. Looking at Acts 2:16-18 and Joel's prophecy, how should the reality that we live in the "last days" with the Spirit poured out impact our daily lives and expectations?
4. Review the "19 Ways of Quenching the Spirit" list. Which one or two resonate most with you personally right now? Why?
5. The sermon states that "our hearts are ground zero in the spiritual war." What does this mean practically? How does recognizing this change how we approach spiritual growth?
6. Discuss the difference between "cute" solutions like "just stop it" versus genuine heart transformation. What does real change require?

7. The sermon addresses the controversial topic of spiritual gifts, particularly prophecy. What has been your experience or understanding of prophecy? Has this sermon challenged or confirmed your views?
8. Discuss the difference between "fore-telling" (predicting the future/adding to Scripture) and "forth-telling" (declaring God's truth for edification, exhortation, and comfort). Why is this distinction important?
9. Read 1 Corinthians 14:3, 39 together. How does the church benefit when we embrace rather than despise prophecy and other spiritual gifts? What safeguards does Paul give us in verses 21-22?
10. The sermon states we need God's power desperately in our culture today. Do you agree? What evidence do you see of the church walking "with little power"? What would it look like for us to walk in greater power?
11. Paul tells us to "test all things" and "hold fast to what is good." How do we practically test prophecies, teachings, and spiritual experiences? What is our standard?
12. Why is it dangerous to either (a) reject all spiritual gifts out of fear, or (b) accept everything without testing? How do we find the biblical balance?
13. Read verses 23-24 again. What comfort does Paul's benediction offer us? How does knowing "He who calls you is faithful" impact your confidence in spiritual growth?
14. The sermon emphasizes that sanctification requires both God's power AND our volition (choice). How do we hold these two truths in tension? What is our responsibility versus God's?

Practical Applications: Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. Prayerfully Consider: Which of the 19 ways of quenching the Spirit is God highlighting in my life right now?
2. Prayerfully Consider: What specific step can I take this week to yield more fully to the Holy Spirit?
3. Prayerfully Consider: Am I open to the spiritual gifts God wants to give me and use through me?

Closing Prayer Points:

- Confession of ways we've quenched the Spirit
- Invitation for the Holy Spirit to fill and empower us
- Request for discernment and wisdom to test all things
- Thanksgiving for God's faithfulness to complete His work in us
- Bold prayers for God's power to be manifest in our church and culture

Discussion Questions
1 Thessalonians 5:19-28
Staying on Course
Part 2 of Values, Virtues, & Victory

1. In what specific areas of your life might you be quenching the Holy Spirit, and what practical steps can you take this week to yield to His leading instead?
2. How does the cultural war on biblical values mentioned in the sermon manifest in your workplace, community, or family, and how can you stand firm while remaining loving?
3. Considering the nineteen ways of quenching the Spirit, which two or three resonate most with your current spiritual condition, and why do you think these particular areas are challenging for you?
4. What is your current understanding of spiritual gifts like prophecy, and how might fear or past negative experiences be preventing you from embracing the full power God offers His church?
5. How does the distinction between fore-telling and forth-telling prophecy change your perspective on whether prophetic gifts are active in the church today?
6. In what ways have you witnessed or experienced the church walking with little power, and what would it look like for your local church to operate in the fullness of the Spirit?
7. Paul emphasizes that sanctification is both God's work and our choice to live on His terms. How do you balance trusting God's faithfulness with taking personal responsibility for your spiritual growth?
8. Which of the Holy Spirit's ministries listed in the sermon do you most desperately need in your life right now, and how can you actively invite Him to work in that area?
9. How does persistent sin or prayerlessness create a barrier between you and the power of the Holy Spirit, and what would genuine repentance look like in those areas?
10. Given that we are called to be ambassadors bearing fruit and proclaiming God's word, what would change in your daily life if you fully embraced your identity as Christ's representative in a hostile culture?

Dinner Conversation Starters
1 Thessalonians 5:19-28
Staying on Course
Part 2 of Values, Virtues, & Victory

1. Are We Quenching the Spirit at Home?

The sermon listed many ways we can “quench” the Holy Spirit (busyness, bitterness, neglecting God’s Word, etc.).

- (1) Which of those do you think shows up most often in our home or in your own life?
- (2) What is one small, realistic change we could each make this week to be more open to the Spirit’s leading?

2. Testing What We Hear

Paul said, “Do not despise prophecies...test all things; hold fast what is good.”

- (1) How can we tell if something we hear (at school, online, at church, from friends) is really in line with God’s truth?
- (2) What are some simple ways our family could check things against Scripture together?

3. Living by the Spirit in a Confusing Culture

The sermon talked about a “whole-of-culture war” against God’s design for life, family, and truth.

- (1) What is one cultural message (about success, relationships, identity, etc.) that feels confusing or hard to resist?
- (2) How can relying on the Holy Spirit help us respond differently than the world?

4. Sanctification: God’s Work and Our Choices

We heard that God is faithful to sanctify us, but we still must choose to cooperate with Him.

- (1) Where do you sense God is trying to grow or change you right now (attitude, habits, relationships)?

- (2) How could we as a family pray for and encourage each other in those specific areas?

5. Using Our Spiritual Gifts, Not Hiding Them

The sermon emphasized that God gives spiritual gifts and doesn't want us to neglect or despise them.

- (1) What gifts or abilities do you see in our family that God might want to use to help others or build up the church?
- (2) Is there a gift or talent you've been hesitant to use for God, and what might it look like to "stir it up" this week?

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

1 Thessalonians 5:19-28

Staying on Course

Part 2 of Values, Virtues, & Victory

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Learning to Listen to the Holy Spirit Instead of Just Doing What We Want:** Help your child understand that the Holy Spirit is like a gentle helper who whispers what is right in our hearts—especially when we are about to do something unkind or disobedient.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) When you feel like doing something you know is wrong, what does your heart feel like inside?
- (2) Can you think of a time today when you listened to that “little voice” telling you to do the right thing?
- (3) Next time a friend is being left out, what could the Holy Spirit be telling you to do?

2. **Choosing Thankfulness Instead of Complaining:** Since the sermon talked about not quenching the Spirit and giving thanks, teach that complaining often pushes away a thankful heart, while giving thanks makes our hearts more open to God.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) What is something today that you didn't like but you can still thank God for?
- (2) When you feel like complaining, how can we stop and pray or thank God instead?
- (3) How do you think the Holy Spirit feels when we choose to be thankful?

3. **Being Kind Online (or with Screens) Even When No One is Watching:** Begin simple digital discipleship: God cares about what we watch and do on screens, and the Holy Spirit helps us turn off things that are wrong or unkind.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) If you see a video or game that shows people hurting others or using bad words, what do you think the Holy Spirit wants you to do?
- (2) What are some kinds of shows or games that make your heart feel peaceful and kind?
- (3) How can you ask Mom/Dad for help if you see something online that doesn't feel right?

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Not Quenching the Spirit by Peer Pressure:** Teach that going along with friends who do wrong (at school, on a team, or online) can “quench” the Spirit. God wants them to listen to His truth even if they stand out.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) Can you remember a time your friends were doing something you knew wasn't right? What did you feel inside?
- (2) What might it look like to "hold fast to what is good" when friends are joking in a mean way?
- (3) How could you respond in a group chat if others start making fun of someone?

2. **Testing What You See and Hear on the Internet:** Connect "test all things; hold fast what is good" to digital life: not everything said by influencers, YouTubers, or even "Christian" accounts is true or helpful.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) When you see something online that sounds good but might not match the Bible, what could you do to "test" it?
- (2) Who are safe people you can ask about something confusing you've seen online?
- (3) How can you know if someone is speaking truth that honors God or just sharing their own ideas?

3. **Using Your Gifts to Build Up, Not Tear Down:** Tie spiritual gifts and "forth-telling" (encouraging, comforting, correcting) to real life: using words, talents, and online presence to build others up.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) What are some gifts or talents God has given you (encouraging, drawing, being a good friend, etc.)?
- (2) How could you use those gifts to encourage someone who is lonely at school or online?
- (3) Before you post or share something, what question could you ask to see if it is "good" and honoring to God?

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Standing for Truth in Friend Groups and Digital Spaces:** Connect "do not quench the Spirit" and "do not despise prophecies" to courageously holding to God's Word when culture, friends, or media say the opposite.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) Where do you feel the biggest pressure right now to go along with what everyone else thinks about identity, relationships, or faith?
- (2) What might it look like for you to "hold fast to what is good" in a group chat or on social media without being harsh or rude?
- (3) How can you tell if you're being more afraid of people's opinions than listening to the Holy Spirit?

2. **Guarding Your Heart from Worldliness and Sensuality Online**: Apply the sermon’s warnings about worldliness and being ruled by sensuality to social media, streaming, and private screen use.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) How do you notice your thoughts or desires change after certain shows, accounts, or influencers you follow?
 - (2) What does it practically look like to “abstain from every form of evil” in your digital life?
 - (3) Are there any accounts, apps, or shows that you feel the Holy Spirit nudging you to unfollow, delete, or take a break from?
3. **Practicing Discernment and Courageous Love**: Tie “test all things” and the Spirit’s role in giving discernment to real relationships: loving friends while holding to truth, and refusing gossip or division.

Discussion Questions:

- (1) How can you show real love to a friend who disagrees with what you believe God says, without compromising truth?
- (2) Think of a time you stayed silent when you could have encouraged or defended someone. What kept you quiet? What might the Spirit have wanted you to do?
- (3) What does it mean, in your own words, to “test all things” in relationships—what people say, ask you to do, or confide in you about?

Tips for Parents

- **Be patient and listen:** Give your child time to think and respond.
- **Relate to everyday life:** Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- **Encourage questions:** Let your son or daughter know it’s okay to ask questions, even if things don’t make sense right away.
- **Share personal insights:** Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

1 Thessalonians 5:19-28

Staying on Course

Part 2 of Values, Virtues, & Victory

1. Don't Quench The Spirit Just to Fit In

Bible Reference: 1 Thessalonians 5:19 – “Do not quench the Spirit.”

Application: Ignoring the Holy Spirit's conviction so you can blend in with your friend group or stay “chill” in conversations is one way of quenching Him. The Spirit is trying to lead you into holiness, even when that makes you different.

Scenario: You're in a group chat or hanging out after school. Friends start roasting a classmate, sharing embarrassing screenshots, or hyping up stuff you know is wrong (hookups, vaping, cheating, disrespecting parents/teachers). You feel that “this isn't right” check inside, but you also don't want to be “the weird Christian” or get left out.

Discussion: When was the last time you felt that inner nudge from the Holy Spirit in a group setting, and what would it look like to obey Him next time—even if it costs you some social approval?

2. Test the Trends Don't Just Trust Them

Bible Reference: 1 Thessalonians 5:21–22 – “Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.”

Application: Not every “deep” or popular idea on TikTok, Instagram, or YouTube is true or good. God calls you to test every message by His Word before you adopt it, repost it, or let it shape your beliefs.

Scenario: A reel goes viral saying, “If God loved you, He'd want you to follow your heart and your desires, no matter what the Bible says.” Friends repost it with “THIS!” and it sounds compassionate and freeing. You feel torn between what Scripture says and what everyone online seems to be celebrating.

Discussion: How can you practically “test” a message like that before you repost or agree with it, and what tools (Bible, mentors, Christian friends) do you need in place to help you do that consistently?

3. Use Your Words to Build Not Brand Yourself

Bible Reference: 1 Corinthians 14:3 – “But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.”

Application: “Forth-telling” isn’t just preaching; it’s using your words—online and offline—to build others up with God’s truth, not just build your own image. The Spirit wants your DMs, comments, and convos to be channels of encouragement, challenge, and comfort.

Scenario: Your feed is mostly flexes, aesthetics, and funny posts. Meanwhile, you see a friend’s stories hinting at depression, self-harm, or loneliness. You think about swiping past because it’s “awkward,” or you just react with an emoji instead of actually reaching out with care and truth.

Discussion: What would it look like this week to intentionally use your online presence (posts, comments, DMs) to edify, exhort, or comfort someone instead of just curating your own brand?

4. Refuse Gossip and Drama, Even When It Is “Normal”

Bible Reference: Ephesians 4:31–32 – “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you... and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”

Application: Bitterness, gossip, and “call-out” culture might feel normal, but they grieve and quench the Spirit. You’re called to be different: kind, forgiving, and unwilling to tear people down, even when everyone else is doing it.

Scenario: Your friend group blows up. People are making private stories to drag someone, dropping half-truths in group chats, and collecting receipts to “expose” them. You’re expected to join in, pick a side, and share your screenshots.

Discussion: When drama erupts, what specific choices can you make—about what you say, forward, or like—that show you’re following the Holy Spirit instead of feeding gossip and division?

These points aim to empower Gen Z to live out their faith genuinely and courageously in various aspects of their daily lives, reflecting Biblical integrity, compassion, and steadfastness.