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FIVE COMMANDS THAT ARE IMPERATIVE!

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IMPERATIVE FOR WHAT?

For a successful walk of sanctification, for progress in present tense salvation (see Three Tenses of Salvation), for growth in Christ-likeness. They are **imperative** for pressing (present tense = as our daily, habitual practice) "on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil 3:14-note)

Several general observations that apply to the five **present imperative** commands...

Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:16, Philippians 2:12, Ephesians 4:30 and 1Thessalonians 5:19.

(1) All are to be obeyed all the time

(2) All are Present Tense Salvation

(3) All relate to the ministry of the Holy Spirit

(4) Two are positive and two are negative

(5) Both the positive and negative commands are part of what it means to work out our salvation, so in a sense Phil 2:12-13 is like an "*umbrella*" over the other 4 commands. That said, clearly all five are interrelated. E.g., you cannot walk by the Spirit unless you are filled with the Spirit (illustration - you need gas in the car for it to run).

(1) THE POSITIVE COMMAND: EPHESIANS 5:18

(1) Ephesians 5:18+ - **BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT**

Be filled is [present imperative](#) calling for this to our continuous condition!

Be filled is in the Passive voice = we need to be WILLING to be filled, we need to YIELD to Him. Let the Spirit control you! And remember that fills you WILL SURELY control you (if you are drunk with wine your speech and your walk will be controlled -- that's how police determine if you are "filled." And in the spiritual realm the same principle applies -- your speech and your "walk" will reveal whether you are under the control of the Spirit or the control of the [fallen flesh](#) -- notice that there is no "spiritual middle ground." It is one or the other.)

WHY IS OBEDIENCE TO THIS COMMAND SO CRITICAL?

We cannot obey even one NT command if we are not filled, enabled by and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Oh sure, you can "fake it" for a while, but you cannot fully obey a divine command without divine power.

Dr John MacArthur - "If we do not obey this command (be filled with the Spirit), **we cannot obey any other**—simply because we cannot do any of God's will apart from God's Spirit. Outside of the command for unbelievers to trust in Christ for salvation, there is no more practical and necessary command in Scripture than the one for believers to be filled with the Spirit."

Related Resource:

- [See discussion of the Need for the Holy Spirit to obey NT commands](#) (or "How to Keep All 1642 Commandments in the New Testament!")

WHAT DISCIPLINE CONTRIBUTES TO BEING FILLED?

You ask how can I be filled? Paul addresses this in Colossians. In Col 3:16+ he commands "**Let** the Word of Christ **dwell** ([present imperative](#)) in you richly. (See table comparing effects of being -**filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5-6** and "**filled with**" the Word in **Colossians 3-4**) So being filled with the Spirit is unquestionably, intimately associated with our intake of the Word of God. This begs the question - Are you letting the Word dwell in you richly? If not, perhaps that might explain your lack of experiencing the fruit of being filled with the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23+).

WHAT IS OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE THAT I AM FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT?

Literally, the first word (in Eph 5:19+) after Paul commands us to **"be filled with the Spirit"** is the Greek word *laleo* translated **"speaking"** which is in [present tense](#) which speaks of the general "direction" of our speech. Jesus said "the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart." (Mt 12:34) James said "no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison." (James 3:8+) Paul is teaching that there is One Who can tame our evil tongues (AND ONLY ONE!) and fill our hearts and that is the Holy Spirit. In short, God pleasing speech is a supernatural work of the Spirit and is pleasing to our Father.

(2) THE POSITIVE COMMAND: GALATIANS 5:16-18

(2) Galatians 5:16+ - **WALK BY THE SPIRIT**

WHAT IS THE PARALLEL TERM IN GAL 5:18+?

Led by the Spirit - "Are (being) led ([present tense](#) = continually, passive voice) by the Spirit (If so you are not under the law)."

Remember that the indicates that the passive voice action (in this case "leading") is coming with an outside source. In this case the "outside Source" of course is really "inside" (1Cor 6:19-note) us continually leading us. This begs the question "Am I continually following His lead?" "Am I listening to His voice as I read Scripture or as He speaks to my conscience." "Am I confessed up, repented up, so that I might even be able to hear His "still small voice"?"

Here is an OT picture of a man being led by the Spirit...

The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps. (Pr 16:9)

God's Spirit is ALWAYS leading us (remember **"led"** in Gal 5:18 is in the [present tense](#)) so this begs the question - Am I letting Him lead me or are am I resisting His leading? As discussed below under 1 Th 5:19, to resist His leading is to quench His Spirit!

He leadeth me! O blessed tho't!

O words with heavenly comfort fraught!

Whate'er I do, where'er I be,

Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me!

HOW IMPORTANT IS Galatians 5:16 IN OUR SPIRITUAL LIVES?

Dr. Thomas Constable writes on Gal 5:16 - "This is one of the most important and helpful verses on Christian living in the Bible."

Dr. John MacArthur commenting on Gal 5:16 - "Since all our problems are caused by the flesh, the means by which the flesh is overcome is the solution to everything. That is not an oversimplification but the truth according to God's Word."

Dr. Ray Pritchard comments on Gal 5:16 - "This is one of the most important passages on the Christian life in the New Testament. It answers a question all of us have asked at one time or another: Why is it taking me so long to get better? "I thought by now I wouldn't struggle so much with anger. Why is it taking me so long to get better?" "I still get tempted by pornography. Why is it taking me so long to get better?", etc, etc ([Full Speed Ahead One Step at a Time- How You Can Walk in the Spirit Every Day](#))

WHAT TRANSPIRES IN THE LIFE OF SOMEONE WHO IS BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT? (Ro 8:13-14)

They are habitually ([present tense](#)) putting to death the (sinful) deeds (**praxis** = HABITS) of the body by the Spirit (Ro 8:13+). Are you struggling with some ingrained habit learned before you came to Christ? This truth should encourage you to know that you are not fighting the good fight of faith (1 Ti 6:12+) by yourself, but you have the indwelling omnipotent resurrection power of the Holy Spirit in you and available to you and He is continually "energizing" you, giving you the desire and the power to kill that sin which so easily entangles you and trips you up (Heb 12:1+ , cp Col 3:5+, see [Are You Entangled?](#)). Remember that we don't just need a little "help" to kill that old habit! We need the Spirit, our **"Enabler,"** Who is also our personal Trainer, so to speak, our "Transformer." (2Cor 3:18+). Note that to [help](#) means to give assistance, to contribute to the furtherance of (implying we just need a little "push") while [enable](#) means to render capable or able for some task. Do you see the difference?

WHY IS IT SO CRITICAL THAT WE OBEY PAUL'S COMMAND TO DAILY WALK BY THE SPIRIT?

Because we are in a titanic, unceasing war - our fallen flesh (the "big I" in *sin*, so to speak) continually desires for us to gratify SELF, while the Spirit continually calls us to die to SELF and live to God, walking in a manner which is pleasing to the Father. Since the warfare is ongoing, we need to continually renounce self-reliance and to continually wholly depend on the Holy Spirit. When we fail

to do so (or refuse to do so), we leave ourselves vulnerable to the subtle attacks of our fallen flesh which are continually tempting us (James 1:14+, cf Jesus' warning commands in Mt 26:41+). Notice the order which is critical - first walk by the Spirit which will defeat the desires of the flesh. Don't invert the verse and say "I'll control my flesh today and that will help me to walk by the Spirit!" That will not work and you will be frustrated. In fact, when you begin to come up with a list of "do's and don'ts" you are in effect putting yourself under the power of the law (aka "legalism") which will always blunt the flow of the transforming power of grace. In Galatians 3:3+ Paul asks "Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected (being sanctified, growing in Christ-likeness) by the flesh?" We began by the Spirit (Jn 3:3,7+) and we need now to continually walk by the Spirit!

WHAT DOES BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT GIVE EVIDENCE OF?

You are giving living proof that you are truly SONS OF GOD (Ro 8:14+). And remember that we are speaking of direction, not perfection. One led by the HOLY Spirit will exhibit conduct and lifestyle that is generally HOLY (but not a "holier than thou" attitude).

HOW CAN WE DISCERN WE ARE WALKING IN THE SPIRIT FROM GALATIANS 5:19-23? Is it all subjective? NO!

Decrease in the deeds of the **flesh** in Gal 5:19-21+ (including things like **idols** as well as **enmities**, etc -- you never have trouble with these do you?) and growth of the fruit of the Spirit Gal 5:22-23+, one aspect that is relatively easy to monitor being self-control (really a misnomer because it is ultimately "Spirit control" - see study on self-control - egkrateia). Most of us can discern whether we are "trending" *upward* or *downward* in regard to self-control. And remember as stated earlier this Spirit enabled supernatural life is not about **perfection** but about **direction** -- are we going toward and growing increasingly like Jesus?

HOW DOES INSTRUCTION IN Galatians 5:25 FIT WITH Galatians 5:16, 18?

Paul writes "If we live (present tense = habitually) by the Spirit, let us also walk (**stoicheo** in the **present tense** = as our habitual practice, the general "direction" of our lives) by the Spirit." (NAS). The **NIV** renders the passage "Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit." Notice the NIV substitutes "**Since**" for "**If**" because this truth is not in question. Real (supernatural) life for everyone born again is by the Spirit Who gives us life at the moment of salvation and continually thereafter (Jn 6:63). The first class conditional statement (identified by the "If..." clause) indicates that we do in fact live by the Spirit. And then Paul adds that if we are truly living by the Spirit, we will keep in step with Him, where the term he is uses literally means to walk in line, walk in a straight line, proceed in a row, to follow in someone's footsteps, to march in in file or in battle order. Stoicheo means to be in line with the Person of the Spirit of Jesus (we should walk like Jesus walked - 1Jn 2:6-note) Who is the perfect Standard for our conduct (cp 1Cor 11:1, 1Pe 2:21-note).

Kistemaker explains "If the source of our life is the Spirit, the Spirit must also be allowed to direct our steps, so that we make progress, advancing step by step toward the goal of perfect consecration to the Lord (**Ed**: I would add toward greater conformity to the image of Christ). This walking by the Spirit is the only way to administer the finishing touch to that which has already been dealt a mortal blow. It is the only way to deal with "the flesh along with its passions and desires." (Gal 5:17-note) We should destroy the power of the negative by means of The Invincible Positive, the Holy Spirit." ([Exposition of Galatians - Baker](#))

(3) THE "UMBRELLA" COMMAND: PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13

(3) Phil 2:12-13 **WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION**

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE?

[Jonathan Edwards](#) by most measures the greatest theologian in American history attests to the importance of a proper understanding of Philippians 2:12-13 writing that

"From St. Paul a sentence hit me when I was about twenty-two that has shaped my theology ever since, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you to will and to do his good pleasure"

WHAT "TENSE" OF SALVATION DOES THIS DESCRIBE?

Present Tense Salvation, progressive sanctification, growth in Christ-likeness

HOW ARE WE ABLE TO WORK OUT SALVATION?

God is continually working in us (supernaturally "energizing us") giving us the **DESIRE** & the **POWER**

COMPARE AN OT PARALLEL PASSAGE - HOW DOES THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND WHO IS GIVING IN US ENERGIZING US?

Ezekiel 36:27-note "And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes ("God is working in you..."), and you will

be careful to observe My ordinances (cf "work out your salvation")." This promise is addressed to the Nation of Israel and it awaits full fulfillment when the Messiah returns at the end of this age. Notice that while it does not have the specific wording, this promise is the essence of the New Covenant (cp Jer 31:31-34+ which does use the phrase "New Covenant.") Notice also the first part of the passage speaks of God's provision and the second part of Man's responsibility. In other words, this passage teaches the paradoxical, somewhat mysterious truth, that we are 100% dependent (on the Spirit) and 100% responsible to obey. We can only obey because He enables us to obey and yet we must still exercise our will and obey. In other words this passage is not teaching (and no Bible passage teaches) just "Let go and Let God." The idea is closer to "**Let God and let's go!**"

Related Discussion of the "100/100 Principle" -

Examples of 100% Responsible/100% Dependent

Summary Table of Examples of "100/100 Principle"

WHAT WAS PAUL'S "POP TEST" IN PHP 2:14?

Do all things without grumbling. Notice the qualifier "all things," not some things or most things.

Notice that **DO** = **present imperative** = ALL THINGS, ALL THE TIME!

So let's get practical - Paul is saying love your wife ALL the time **WITHOUT** grumbling! (Eph 5:25-note). He is saying in everything give thanks (even those things for which we are not usually grateful!) (1Th 5:18-note). The point is that Paul is "painting us in a corner" so to speak! There is no way we can do all things without grumbling. Clearly he is calling on us to depend on the enabling desire and power of the Spirit (Phil 2:13-note) and then for us to "work out" (Phil 2:12-note) what the Spirit "works in!"

WHY IS NON-GRUMBLING ATTITUDE SO IMPORTANT ACCORDING TO Phil 2:15-note?

When others observe us NOT grumbling in circumstances that most of humanity would naturally grumble, they have just had an opportunity to witness a "miracle." In short, they have seen a true testimony to the existence and power of the Living God (cf Mt 5:16-note). In other words, our "supernatural" words and deeds will shine in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation and God will be glorified! The Westminster Shorter Catechism says that to glorify God is the chief end of man! So when we don't grumble or dispute we in a sense achieve the highest goal or purpose for which God created us! That is definitely "worth the price of admission" as they say!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WHEN YOU OBEY THE COMMANDS - BE FILLED, WALK BY THE SPIRIT?

Working out your salvation. As discussed earlier, work out your salvation is a general command under which many if not most of the NT commands might be placed.

HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE TO NOT GRUMBLE OR DISPUTER IN EVERYDAY LIFE?

As you have heard me say it is impossible, but it is Him-possible! We must learn (and it is a process of practicing godliness) to RENOUNCE self-reliance and RELY wholly on the Holy Spirit's enablement (His desire and power).

IN SUMMARY - We WORK OUT what God's Spirit has WORKED IN.

WHAT IS SO BAD ABOUT GRUMBLING ACCORDING TO Ps 106:24-25?

This Psalm speaks of Israel's response to God regarding His offer of a promised land, a land of milk and honey.

Ps 106:24 Then they despised the pleasant land; They did not believe in His word,

25 But grumbled in their tents; They did not listen to the voice of the LORD.

GRUMBLING reflects failure to believe God = **UNBELIEF**

How does this work out in our lives. Eg, an unexpected trial (divinely allowed "pop test") comes and we grumble. We are saying to God "You are not really in control or this would not have happened." We question His goodness. We question the truth of Romans 8:28. And we sin against Him and grieve Him!

GRUMBLING kept Israel out of the PROMISED **LAND** = LAND OF MILK & HONEY the **ABUNDANT LAND**

GRUMBLING will keep us from the PROMISED **LIFE** = **ABUNDANT LIFE** (Jn 10:10)

Spurgeon commenting on Psalm 106:25 writes that "Murmuring (grumbling) is a great sin and not a mere weakness; it contains

within itself **unbelief, pride, rebellion**, and a whole host of sins. It is a home sin, and is generally practiced by complainers "in their tents, "but it is just as evil there as in the streets, and will be quite as **grievous** to the Lord (cp Eph 4:30). And hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord. Making a din with their own voices, they refused attention to their best Friend. Murmurers are bad hearers."

Peter Marshall has a quip regarding the **abundant life** - "The problem with most of us is that we are not Christian enough to keep from sinning, but we are sinning too much to enjoy our Christian life." We are caught right in the middle--just Christian enough to be miserable, but not enough to abound in joy. We want the peace, serenity, poise, joy and happiness that the Scriptures promise as a result of our relationship to Christ, but we can't have them unless we are willing to give Jesus Christ every area of our lives, without reservation. We must take down the bars, the little areas of rebellion and resistance that we build which "tie" God's hands (realizing of course His hands are never truly tied being the omnipotent sovereign Ruler of all). But if we do cast off the hindrances to holiness (**Ed**: Including NOT GRUMBLING), we enter into an experience of His rest and His peace, because life is found only in Him (Jn 20:31, 1Jn 5:12, Col 3:4). Then and only then we discover that there is available to us everything that we need to face life and its demands (2Pe1:3,4).

Leon Morris on the **abundant life** - "The "abundant life" does not consist of an abundance of possessions (Lu 12:15). Rather, it consists of an "abundance of grace" (Ro 5:17,20), an abundance of "every good work" (2Co 9:8), an abundance of "consolation" (2Co 1:5), an abounding "love" (1Th 3:12), an "abounding...work of the Lord" (1Co 15:58), and an "abounding" and thankful "faith" (Col 2:7)." Jesus' main purpose was the salvation (health) of the sheep, which He defined as free access to pasture and fullness of life. Under His protection and by His gift they can experience the best life can offer. In the context of John's emphasis on eternal life, this statement takes on new significance. Jesus can give a whole new meaning to living because he provides full satisfaction and perfect guidance (cf. Ezekiel 34:15).

ILLUSTRATION - Why then if believers have EVERYTHING they need to live the ABUNDANT LIFE, that they don't live it?: History tells us that when Crowfoot, the chief of the Blackfoot nation in southern Alberta, gave the Canadian Pacific Railway permission to lay track from Medicine Hat to Calgary, he was given in exchange a lifetime railroad pass. Reportedly, Crowfoot put the pass in a leather pouch and wore it around his neck for the rest of his life—but he never once availed himself of the rights and privileges it spelled out. What a tragedy it is when Christians do the same thing with the Word of God (**Ed**: I would add and the Spirit of God given to us as a gift from the Father and the Son), using it as a decorative badge of Christianity, but never availing themselves of the wealth of access to God's thoughts that it affords."

PONDER THE PREPOSITION "FOR" A VALUABLE "TERM OF EXPLANATION"

WHAT IS SO IMPORTANT ABOUT THE PREPOSITION "FOR" IN PHIL 2:13?

It is clearly a strategically placed **term of explanation**, which should always prompt the question "*What does the **for** explain?*" In this context, the **for** explains how we can work out our salvation. Php 2:12 by itself (out of context) would suggest a "Works based salvation" but the explanatory conjunction "**FOR**" shows that it is Grace based salvation. In other words the **for** explains how it is possible to obey the **present imperative** command to work out one's salvation (Notice it is not translated "work for salvation!"). As an aside, while there are over 9000 uses of **for** (in the NASB), not every one is a term of explanation. A good "rule of thumb" to apply is to substitute the word "**because**" and see if the context still makes good sense. If it does the **for** is most likely a **term of explanation**. See also a discussion of the value of learning to pause and ponder this **term of explanation**.

LET'S LOOK BRIEFLY AT THE SECRET OF SUCCESS OF EZRA - Ezra 7:10-note..

Ezra 7:10 - FOR Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel. (100% EZRA'S RESPONSIBILITY) (Cp another promise associated with setting our heart = 2Chr 16:9)

Ezra 7:9 FOR on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because **the good hand of his God was upon him**. (100% GOD'S PROVISION)

WHAT DOES "FOR" EXPLAIN IN EZRA 7:10?

Observing the context, we see that it explains Ezra's "secret" of spiritual success (so to speak). His success was because the good hand of the Lord was upon him. And as the text explains the good hand of the Lord was upon him, because he (1) set his heart to study the Scriptures, (2) he obeyed what he studied (cf James 1:22), and (3) he taught what he had read and obeyed. This is still a valid "pattern" for spiritual success! Do you desire the good hand of the Lord on your life, your family's life, your work, etc? Who doesn't? Then (even this enabled by the Spirit giving you the desire and the power) do a heart check and make sure the "compass" of your heart points to the Word of God. Then heed what you read. Then teach what He teaches you (you may not be a formal teacher but you can always teach your spouse and your children!) As the writer of Hebrews would exhort us "Be...imitators of those

(like Ezra) who through FAITH and PATIENCE inherit the promises (e.g., the "good hand of the Lord")." (Heb 6:12-note)

See in depth discussion of Ezra 7:10.

PHILIP RYKEN - "This verse is one of the Bible's best summaries of what it means to be a faithful servant of God's Word. It is a wonderful verse for pastors, for seminary students, for theology professors-really, it is a wonderful verse for everyone. I know this from experience because I embraced this verse early in my time at seminary. I wrote it out on a note card and tucked it into the little Bible I carried in my briefcase. From time to time I would pull it out and meditate on it or pray over it. Over time, God used it to shape my understanding of what it meant to be a student and a teacher, a husband and a pastor. By the power of the Holy Spirit, he can use it to shape your life and ministry, too. The logic of this verse is impeccable." (Read the full article entitled "[Ezra, According to the Gospel- Ezra 7:10](#)" in the journal [Themelios](#)).

(4) THE NEGATIVE COMMAND: EPHESIANS 4:30

(4) Ephesians 4:30 DO NOT GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

And **DO NOT GRIEVE** the Holy Spirit of God, by Whom you were sealed (2Co 1:11, Ep 1:13) for the day of redemption.

The verb **do not grieve** (**lupeo**) is a **present imperative with a negative** which means either stop doing this (implying it is ongoing) or do not begin this action!

F B Meyer - "He is a person, and may easily be grieved. The Dove of God is very tender and gentle; and if there are thorns in the nest, He cannot remain."

HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE IMPACT THE SUCCESSFUL WORKING OUT OF OUR SALVATION?

I will not BE FILLED, I will not be able to WALK by the Spirit. In short I will not be able to WORK OUT my salvation if I am grieving the Holy Spirit? **AM I GRIEVING HIM?**

F B Meyer - "There is no secret of the inner life more necessary than to retain the inner presence of an ungrieved Spirit."

IT BEHOOVES US THEREFORE TO FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS TO GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT!

WHAT DOES THE WORD "GRIEVE" SUGGEST ABOUT THE SPIRIT AND OUR RELATIONSHIP TO HIM?

It is a word we use when we have an intimate relationship, a love relationship (cp Romans 5:5-note). We usually are not GRIEVED by strangers but only by those we love. Paul says we are not to deeply wound or cause extreme pain to the Spirit! Does this surprise you somewhat? After all He is God and yet Paul is saying that we can grieve Him!

SO WHAT GRIEVES THE SPIRIT? Sin in general of course grieves Him. Look at OT examples...

(a) Genesis 6:6 The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was **GRIEVED** in His heart.

Context = Ge 6:5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

(b) Ezekiel 6:9 I have been **BROKEN** (crushed, brokenhearted, hurt) over their whoring heart that has departed from Me.

(c) Isa 63:10 But they **REBELLED** and **GRIEVED** (**Septuagint or Lxx** = *apeitheo* , cp Heb 3:18-19 where we see disobedience paired with unbelief) His Holy Spirit; Therefore, He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them. (Likely He will discipline us Heb 12:5-11-note)

(d) Ps 78:40 How often they **REBELLED** against Him in the wilderness, And **GRIEVED** Him in the desert!

Note that grieving the Spirit does not mean He will depart from us so we do not have to pray Ps 51:11. (E.g., Hebrews 13:5 tells us He will never leave us.)

John Piper quotes J C Ryle - Above all, grieve not the Spirit. Quench not the Spirit. Vex not the Spirit. Drive Him not to a distance, *by tampering with small bad habits and little sins*. Little jarrings between husbands and wives make unhappy homes; and petty inconsistencies, known and allowed, will bring in a strangeness between you and the Spirit.... The man who walks with God in Christ most closely, will generally be kept in the greatest peace. The believer who follows the Lord most fully and aims at the highest degree of holiness will ordinarily enjoy the most assured hope, and have the clearest persuasion of his own salvation. ([Holiness - Chapter 8 Assurance](#)) Piper then asks "**Can you really "drive [God] to a distance, by tampering with small bad**

habits"? Do "petty inconsistencies bring strangeness between you and the Spirit"? Is the greatest peace really enjoyed by those who "walk with God most closely"? Is the greatest assurance known by those who "aim at the greatest degree of holiness"? Yes. This is clearly taught in Scripture. "Draw near (Aorist imperative = Do this now! It is an urgent need!) to God and he will draw near to you" (James 4:8-note).

Spurgeon gives a beautiful description of the intimacy of the Holy Spirit with the believer - Our text, moreover, reveals to us the close connection between the Holy Spirit and the believer; He must take a very tender and affectionate interest in us, since He is grieved by our shortcomings and our sins. He is not a God Who reigns in solitary isolation, divided by a great gulf, but He, the blessed Spirit, comes into such near contact with us, takes such minute observations, feels such tender regards, that He can be grieved by our faults and follies. Although

Spurgeon's devotional on "Grieve not the Holy Spirit" Ephesians 4:30 - "All that the believer has must come from Christ, but it comes solely through the channel of the Spirit of grace (Heb 10:29). Moreover, as all blessings thus flow to you through the Holy Spirit, so also no good thing can come out of you in holy thought, devout worship, or gracious act, apart from the sanctifying operation of the same Spirit. Even if the good seed be sown in you, it will lie dormant unless He works in you to give you the desire and power to do what pleases Him (Php 2:13NLT). Do you desire to speak for Jesus—how can you unless the Holy Spirit touches your tongue? Do you desire to pray? Alas! What dull work it is unless the Spirit makes intercession for you! (Ro 8:26-27, cf Eph 6:18) Do you desire to subdue sin? (Ro 8:13) Would you be holy? Would you imitate your Master? Do you desire to rise to superlative heights of spirituality? Are you wanting to be made like the angels of God, full of zeal and ardor for the Master's cause? You cannot without the Spirit—"Without me ye can do nothing." O branch of the Vine, you can have no fruit without the sap! (John 15:5) O child of God, you have no life within you apart from the life which God gives you through His Spirit! (Jn 6:63) Then let us not grieve Him or provoke Him to anger by our sin. Let us not quench Him in even His faintest urgings in our soul; let us foster every suggestion, and be ready to obey every prompting. If the Holy Spirit is indeed so mighty, let us attempt nothing without Him; let us begin no project, and carry on no enterprise, and conclude no transaction, without imploring His blessing. Let us do Him the due homage of feeling our entire weakness apart from Him, and then depending alone upon Him, having this for our prayer, "Father open my heart and my whole being to Your (Spirit's) coming, and sustain me with a willing spirit (Ps 51:12)." (Note: I have lightly edited the original version and added the Scripture references).

WHY DOES PAUL MENTION THE DAY OF REDEMPTION? TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION LET'S FIRST ASK TO WHAT DAY DOES PAUL REFER?

He is speaking of "future tense salvation" of that redemption which occurs when Jesus returns and our mortal bodies are changed to immortal bodies! He is referring to our **Blessed Hope (Believer's Blessed Hope)**? And remember that **Biblical hope** is not "hope so" but "hope sure!" Biblical hope is the promise that God will do good to us in the future and therefore we can be 100% confident in the promise coming to fruition.

WHAT DOES FUTURE HOPE DO TO PRESENT BEHAVIOR? OR TO ASK ANOTHER WAY, WHAT DOES AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DOCTRINE OF IMMINENCY DO TO OUR SENSE OF EXPECTANCY?

He is referring to the day when Jesus returns to take us out here! This glorious future promise serves to motivate us. And in the context of Eph 4:30, this hope of our coming great **day of redemption** serves as a Biblical truth which should cause us to do all we can to avoid grieving the Spirit. And so as we look forward to Jesus' **imminent (See etymology = "overhanging")** return at which time we shall be like Him (the redeemed fully redeemed and like the redeemer! = 1Jn 3:2-note), that mindset (that truth) should motivate us to purify our selves as He is pure (1Jn 3:3-note). (See related discussion on the **doctrine of imminency**).

Read 1Jn 3:1-3 - See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

In other words, **future hope** transforms **present living**. What you are **LOOKING** for should impact what you are **LIVING** for and motivate you to not grieve the Spirit. Or stated more personally, **Who** you are looking for (Jesus), should radically impact **Who** you are living for! Remember we do not belong to ourselves (1Cor 6:19-20-note) but stamped on our hearts are these words "**Property of Jesus!**"

We see this same truth in Romans 8 where Paul describes eager expectancy of those who are looking for Jesus any moment.

Romans 8:23-note And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **WAITING EAGERLY** (see study of this great Greek word **apekdechomai** - and note it is in the **present tense** which describes this as our habitual, daily practice!) for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. 24 For in hope we have been

saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we **WAIT EAGERLY** for it.

The **doctrine of imminency** should always inspire the **delightful duty of expectancy!** The early church lived with this mindset, even crying out **Maranatha**, Our Lord Come!

Are you living today as if He might return today?

EPHESIANS 4:29

LET'S EXAMINE THE CONTEXT TO SEE IF THAT GIVES A CLUE ABOUT WHAT GRIEVES THE SPIRIT...WHAT IS THE FIRST WORD OF EPH 4:30?

AND - This copulative conjunction clearly links the command in Eph 4:30 with the truth in the Eph 4:29. What is the command in Eph 4:29?

Eph 4:29 **Let no** unwholesome word **proceed** from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Now let's look at Eph 4:29 phrase by phrase because a proper understanding of this passage is vital for Spirit filled marriages. And such marriages can only occur when the Spirit is not being grieved!

"LET...PROCEED"

This verb is a **present imperative with a negative** which means either do not let this begin or stop speaking this way. Either way it is a command and it can ONLY be obeyed habitually by renouncing self-reliance and relying wholly on the Holy Spirit!

"NO UNWHOLESOME WORD"

The same Greek word **sapros** describes "rotten (bad) fish" in Mt 13:48. Ponder this for a moment. Would rotten (bad) fish nourish anyone? Instead they would probably make them ill! Not to mention that they smell bad! In short, "rotten words" pollute the atmosphere in the household for all who hear them (think of your kids, friends, neighbors, etc)!

Here is a simple acrostic to help you discern whether your words are wholesome...

T—Is it true?

H—Is it helpful?

I—Is it inspiring?

N—Is it necessary?

K—Is it kind?

When I look at those suggestions, I find that I might not have quite as many things to say.

WHAT IS THE EFFECT (PURPOSE) OF UNWHOLESOME WORDS?

IF GOOD WORDS BUILD UP...ROTTEN WORDS tear down the hearer

SOME EXAMPLES OF UNWHOLESOME WORDS

Name-calling, put down, trading insult for insult, sarcastic remarks, ridicule, mocking, blaming (Ge 3:12 "the woman you gave me, exaggerated attacks ("you always" or "You never"), griping, complaining (murmuring), angry words, threatening words (the "D" word), destructive criticism (critical spirit), POUTING (thrust out the lips).

"GOOD FOR EDIFICATION"

WHAT KIND OF WORDS ARE GOOD FOR BUILDING UP?

(1) **ENCOURAGING WORDS** - 1Th 5:11-note = **Encourage** one another and **build up** one another (Both **present imperative**) (~Work out) Too often, parents only criticize or correct their kids. Instead, catch your kids doing something right and praise them for it! Encourage them in areas where they are doing well. Do the same with your mate.

(2) **WORDS OF APPRECIATION/GRATEFULNESS** - (not flatter or manipulation)

(3) LOVING WORDS - When was last time you told her you loved her? Someone has said, "If we knew that the world would end in ten minutes, everyone would be on the phone telling someone else, 'I love you.'"

(4) PATIENT WORDS - 1Cor 13:4-note - **Makrothumeo** (have a "long fuse")

(a) Notice **love** is defined by **VERBS** not **ADJECTIVES**! Supernatural love is an action! Supernatural love is dynamic!

(b) Notice also that all all the verbs in 1Cor 13:4-7 **present tense** indicating that these are to be practices as our lifestyle, as a continuous choice (active voice = speaks of a choice of my will). Such a selfless, giving, habitual live is simply IMPOSSIBLE in the flesh, but only "**HIM-POSSIBLE**" in the Spirit. We love (100% our responsibility) "according to His power which mightily works within us" (Col 1:29) (100% God's provision) You must continually renounce self-effort and rely on the Spirit's enablement!

Chrysostom, an early church father said of makrothumeo - "It is a word which is used of the man who is wronged and who has it easily in his power to avenge himself but will never do it."

(5) KIND WORDS - 1Cor 13:4-note (Verb = **chresteuomai**) Describes that friendly and helpful spirit that seeks to meet the needs of others thru helpful deeds...especially if they have just "blown it" When it is tempting to be critical or ridicule, true love is sympathetic, helpful

(6) SCRIPTURE GOD HAS USED IN YOUR LIFE

"A verse that God used in my life when I was discouraged was ..."

Acts 20:32 "the word of His grace, which is able to build you up."

"ACCORDING TO NEED OF THE MOMENT"

HOW DO YOU DISCERN ANOTHER'S NEED?

(1) Listen, (2) ask questions (Are you saying...), (3) pick up non-verbal clues.

"GIVE GRACE"

HOW DO YOU GIVE GRACE? WHAT IS GRACE? (undeserved favor)

E.g., say you have been wronged & say "They don't deserve word to build them up, but to tear them down!" Instead you give them UNDESERVED FAVOR.

AFTER 45 YEARS OF MARRIAGE GOD HAS TAUGHT ME THAT I FREQUENTLY NEED TO PRAY THIS PSALM...

Ps 141:3 Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips.

If you are like me and frequently put your foot in your mouth, you might want to do more study on Ephesians 4:29. Here are two sermons I would recommend...

(1) Steven Cole - [Transformed Talk - Ephesians 4:29](#)

(2) John Piper [Make Your Mouth a Means of Grace - Ephesians 4:29-30](#)

LET'S LOOK BRIEFLY AT Ephesians 4:26-27-note

BE ANGRY, AND yet **DO NOT SIN**; **DO** not let the sun **GO DOWN** on your anger, 27 and **DO NOT GIVE** the devil an opportunity (Greek = topos gives us our word "topography").

SO WHAT IS THE DANGER OF GOING TO BED WITH UNCONFESSSED, UNRESOLVED, UNRIGHTEOUS ANGER (ESPECIALLY WITH YOUR SPOUSE)?

Sadly such unresolved anger has a dual effect - (1) It **GIVES** unholy spirit a foothold and (2) It **GRIEVES** the Holy Spirit. This is a very bad "spiritual combination!"

Bishop Moule says that unresolved anger "gives Satan a half open door."

EPHESIANS 4:31

LET'S EXAMINE THE FOLLOWING VERSE (THE CONTEXT) FOR A CLUE TO HELP UNDERSTAND WHAT GRIEVES THE SPIRIT OF GOD...

Eph 4:31-note Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

WHAT ARE WE TO DO WITH EACH OF THESE EVILS?

Put them away! **aorist imperative**, which means "Do it now. Don't delay. It is urgent!" Remember that you cannot not even (truly) obey this command unless the Spirit gives you the DESIRE and the POWER to obey it! And when you do yield to His enablement (choosing to renounce your weak fleshly natural efforts to keep a command that can only be kept supernaturally) what you are doing? You are "WORKING OUT YOUR SALVATION" (Phil 2:12). More accurately, you are "working out" what the Spirit has worked in (Php 2:13NLT)!

(1) **BITTERNESS** (from root word meaning sharp, pointed - gives us a good picture of what bitterness does!)

WHY IS BITTERNESS SO DESTRUCTIVE = Heb 12:15?

Causes trouble and Defiles many. Takes root is in the **present tense** suggesting that if we do not put it away, the root of bitterness grows deeper and deeper!

WHAT IS THE HORTICULTURAL METAPHOR?

Bitterness begins to take root -- that is why Paul gives a command - **Put it away** now! It makes me think of crabgrass beginning to grow in my yard. I had better pull it up quickly and from the deepest roots lest it spread to take over my entire yard (like it has done in years past)! But what applies to a "backyard" far more significantly applies to a home, a church, etc!

Here are a couple of Scriptures that speak of bitterness...

(a) **Col 3:19**-note Husbands, **love** (**present imperative** - calling for this to be our habitual practice -- just try to obey this in your "natural" strength! You need to depend on the Spirit!) your wives, and **do not be embittered** (**present imperative with a negative** with a negative means either stop an action already in process or don't let it begin) against them.

Husbands are specifically commanded TO NOT BE EMBITTERED against their wives! Do you think the Holy Spirit know something about our hearts as husbands? That's a rhetorical question of course! I understand Paul's command for I have been married 45 years! (See commentary)

(b) **Heb 12:15**-note "**See** to it (this verb is in the **present tense** but in context carries the sense of a command) that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up (**present tense** = continuously) causes trouble, and by it many be defiled

The writer of Hebrews gives a strong warning against and a graphic description of the danger of bitterness. The picture of a **root**" (unseen beneath ground, but in a sense "gaining ground") shows that bitterness grows (**present tense** = continuously) insidiously, quietly, like a normal plant root would grow. It needs to be pulled out immediately! The Greek word for bitterness gives us a word picture of this rotten heart attitude. **Pikria** (see word study) gives us our English word "picric acid" which is volatile and even explosive. What a picture of bitterness! Aristotle spoke of this as "the resentful spirit which refuses reconciliation."

Paul says that all of this must go, every trace of such sharpness of spirit, of such temper.

(2) **WRATH** (**thumos** - speaks of violent rage, cf Lk 4:28)

(3) **ANGER** (**orge** - seething anger, brooding, eventually bursting forth)

(4) **CLAMOR** (**krauge** - noisy shouting)

(5) **SLANDER** (**blasphemia** - injure by speaking ill)

(6) **MALICE** (**kakia** conveys the idea of a mean-spirited or vicious attitude or disposition)

WHICH OF OUR MEMBERS IS INVOLVED IN EACH OF THESE PRECEDING SINS?

The TONGUE (cp James 3:8) (Note: one might argue malice does not necessarily involve the tongue, but since it does describe the heart, it invariably impacts what comes out of our mouth - see Mt 12:34).

WHAT IS THE FIRST EVIDENCE OF A SPIRIT FILLED PERSON - WHAT ORGAN IS CONTROLLED?

"SPEAKING" Eph 5:19 - So in Eph 5:18 Paul commands us to be filled with the Spirit and immediately mentions "speaking". Here is the point -- When the Spirit controls our heart (cp Mt 12:34), the first evidence is that He controls our tongue (Js 3:8 No one can tame it EXCEPT the Holy Spirit!)

Life Action Ministry - WHAT WORDS DO - Have you ever walked away from a conversation and thought, I wish I would have said ____, or, I wish I hadn't said ____? Wise people-godly people-try to be selective with their words. They want their words to be life-giving. They have not only the motive to express themselves properly, but also the desire to help the hearer and to exalt God. Our words have consequences, sometimes lingering ones. What we say, or fail to say, often hangs in the hearer's memory and heart. Our communication has given them a dose of life or an inkling of death. We've moved them forward in their pursuit of God, or we've perhaps caused them to stumble over doubt and discouragement. We will be more careful with our words when our focus is first on exalting God, second on loving the listener, and a distant third on saying what's on our mind. Whose words have recently encouraged you and helped you progress in your spiritual life? Reach out to that person and thank them.

EPHESIANS 4:32

Ephesians 4:32-note **Be** (present imperative) **KIND** (**chrestos**) to one another, **TENDER-HEARTED** (**eusplagchnos**), **FORGIVING** (**present tense** = continually) each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

LET'S LOOK SPECIFICALLY AT FORGIVENESS - FORGIVING = present tense. The Greek verb is **charizomai** which is derived from **charis** which means grace. Derived as it is from charis (grace) this verb calls for us to forgive freely. What is the middle word in forgiveness? "GIVE", so we are to forgive graciously not grudgingly!

ILLUSTRATION - When missionaries in northern Alaska were translating the Bible into the language of the Eskimos, they discovered there was no word in that language for forgiveness. After much patient listening, however, they discovered a word that means, "not being able to think about it anymore." That word was used throughout the translation to represent forgiveness, because God's promise to repentant sinners is, "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jer. 31:34).

WHAT DOES THE TENSE OF CHARIZOMAI TELL YOU ABOUT HOW WE CAN ACCOMPLISH FORGIVENESS AS THE HABITUAL PRACTICE (direction, not perfection) OF OUR LIFE?

Clearly we can't obey by ourselves, by relying on our natural strength. We need to be enabled (desire and power) by the Spirit, to "work out our salvation in fear and trembling." (Php 2:13).

Notice the critical phrase **just as** - **Just as** is a **term of comparison** which in this context compares the believer's forgiveness to God's forgiveness for us in Christ! The underlying motive for believers to forgive others is God's action through Christ toward us (cp 1Jn 3:16). The believer's duty (privilege, not legalistic burden) is to forgive, based on the doctrine that we have been forgiven. Revelation always calls for a response from the heart (cp the unforgiving slave in Mt 18:34-35). If the revelation remains in the intellect, we run the risk of becoming modern day Pharisees! What we believe should always determine how we behave. If we believe (and comprehend to some degree the measure of) God's forgiveness, we should behave according to that truth in which we trust. And we forgive just as we have been forgiven!

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE HARBOR A SPIRIT OF UNFORGIVENESS AGAINST SOMEONE, WIFE, CO-WORKER, FRIEND, ETC?

The Holy Spirit of God is grieved. We cannot be filled. We cannot walk supernaturally. We cannot work out our daily sanctification!

LOOK AT THE "DANGEROUS" LINE IN THE DISCIPLE'S PRAYER IN MATTHEW 6

Mt 6:12 And **forgive** us our debts (cf Luke 11:4), **AS** we also **have forgiven** our debtors.

Mt 6:14 For if you **forgive** men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also **forgive** you. 15 But if you do not **forgive** men, then your Father will not **forgive** your transgressions. (See commentary on **Matthew 6:12** and **Matthew 6:14-15**)

Note the **key word** in these passages from the "Disciples Prayer" is **forgive** (6x).

Note also that in Mt 6:14-15 the only text in the prayer on which Jesus gives us "commentary" is the text dealing with forgiveness. Clearly, He knows that unforgiveness is a serious problem for believers. In fact, unforgiveness is the most common problem in churches according to Life Action Ministry (a ministry that goes into churches seeking to bring revival individually and corporately)

Finally note that Jesus uses a different verb for forgive than Paul used. Jesus used **aphiemi** in the Disciple's Prayer, whereas Paul used **charizomai** in Eph 4:32 (cf Col 3:13-note). **Aphiemi** basically means to send away and was used to indicate the legal repayment or cancellation of a debt or the granting of a pardon. It is used in Scripture to refer to God's forgiveness of sin. Through the shedding of His own blood, Jesus Christ actually took the sins of the world upon His own head, as it were, and carried them an infinite distance away from where they could never return. That is the extent of the forgiveness of our trespasses (cp Ps 103:12). We see this same verb used to describe the scapegoat on the Jewish high day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) in Lev 16:10 ("send it" in

Septuagint or Lxx = aphiemi). So even the Jewish day of Atonement was a clear foreshadowing of the Lamb of God Who would take away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29).

WHAT IS THE KEY WORD IN Mt 6:12?

As - It is a **term of comparison**. This is a "dangerous" petition because if we ask God to forgive us just as we do others, and yet we harbor a spirit of unforgiveness, we too will be unforgiven by God! Jesus is not saying we will lose our salvation if we don't forgive! Every believer is 100% justified (declared righteous) before God (forever!). In other words Jesus is not speaking of **judicial** forgiveness but of **familial** forgiveness.

WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD (INCLUDING THE SPIRIT)?

It is hindered! UNFORGIVENESS grieves the Holy Spirit and hinders His effective supernatural work in our life.

You can mark it down...

You are never more like Jesus than when you forgive those who have sinned against you.

You will never fully enter into your freedom in Christ until you learn the freedom of forgiveness.

ILLUSTRATION OF WHEN FORGIVENESS SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE - CORRIE TEN BOOM, author of *The Hiding Place*, was taken captive and spent time in Nazi concentration camps during World War II. While in prison, Corrie saw incredible abuse, even the death of her own dear sister. After the war, God sent Corrie ten Boom on a mission of mercy through the war-torn cities to encourage residents to CHOOSE FORGIVENESS over BITTERNESS. She would motivate her audiences by sharing some of the atrocities she had experienced, implying that if she could forgive such horrors, so could her listeners. One night speaking, she immediately recognized the man who came walking down the aisle as a particularly cruel guard in one of the concentration camps. The man did not recognize her however. As he approached Corrie he said...Fraulein, you don't know me, but I was a guard in one of those camps. After the war, God saved me. I wish I could go back and undo those years. I can't, but I've just been prompted by God to come tonight and ask you, would you please forgive me? Then he extended his hand to her. Can you imagine the horrible thoughts and memories that raced through Corrie's mind as she recognized his face and then even worse, heard his incredible plea for forgiveness? How could she? Corrie said her arms froze at her side and she was literally unable to move. The flashbacks in her mind replaying the atrocities, the death of her sister, the abuse. And then God's Spirit said to her, **(A BEAUTIFUL EXAMPLE OF NOT QUENCHING THE SPIRIT - SEE COMMAND #5 BELOW)** Corrie, what have you been telling everyone else to do? As an act of your will, will you choose to forgive? Corrie went on to explain what happened next... I reached out my hand, and I put it in his, and I said, 'You're forgiven. She later reported that at that moment... It was like a dam broke loose—all the bitterness and resentment—and God set me free.

(5) THE FIFTH COMMAND: 1 THESSALONIANS 5:19

1 Thessalonians 5:19-note **"Do not quench** the Spirit."

Observe that quench is a **present imperative with a negative** which means either stop doing this (implying it is ongoing) or do not begin this action! "Stop putting out the Spirit's fire."

QUENCH (Gk - **sbennumi**) means to put out or extinguish. It is used most often with the literal sense (Mt 12:20, Mt 25:8, Mk 9:48).

Adrian Rogers adds that quench means - "to pour cold water on a fire." The Holy Spirit is like a gentle dove; the Holy Spirit is like a glowing ember. You can frighten away that dove; you can pour water on that ember."

This verb is used in Eph 6:16-note **"extinguish** all the fiery missiles of the evil one." By faith three Hebrew boys "quenched the power of fire." (Heb 11:34, Da 3:23-28). So in one context we are instructed **to quench** (extinguish) the effect of the unholy spirit and on the other **to not quench** the effect of the Holy Spirit!

Let us also recall that the Spirit has several symbolic representations in Scripture. The Spirit is like a **FIRE** (cf Jdg 15:14, Rev 4:5) but He is also portrayed as like a **DOVE** (Mt 3:16). This latter representation suggests that when He speaks, He speaks with a "STILL SMALL VOICE" as Elijah heard and responded to by coming out of the cave (1Ki 19:10-13).

In Hebrews 4:7-note the writer warns first century Jews using an example from their national history - "He again fixes a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, **"TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS."** They were not able to hear His voice because of their "heart disease!" We need to be careful how we walk, not as foolish but as wise men and women, so that we do not allow our hearts to be hardened by repeated refusal to respond to His "still small voice!"

Mark it down - **THE MORE WE OBEY HIM** (especially His Word and urgings in keeping with His Word), **THE BETTER ABLE WE ARE TO "HEAR" HIS VOICE LEADING US** And recall that both Gal 5:18 and Ro 8:14 teach that one of the main ministries of the Spirit is to continually leads us. Of course, He is gentle and will not force us. We have to acquiesce to His lead and be willing to be led. And the more often we yield to His leadership over time (obedience), the better able we will be to hear His still small voice.

Does Scripture really teach that the more we obey Him, the more sensitive we will be to His voice? I think it is clearly taught by Jesus Himself in the following passage.

JOHN 14:21 - "He who has My commandments and **KEEPS** them (**obedience**), he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and **WILL DISCLOSE** (REVEAL, MANIFEST) Myself to him."

How does Jesus disclose Himself to us today? Who did He send as His Representative? Clearly He sent the Spirit, Who is also called the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7) and the Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9). And so to reiterate, if we are to be sensitive to the Spirit leading us, we must be obedient to the clear instructions He gives in Scripture.

Oswald Chambers - The voice of the Spirit is as gentle as a summer breeze, so gentle that unless you are living in complete fellowship and oneness with God, you will never hear it. The sense of warning and restraint that the Spirit gives comes to us in the most extraordinarily gentle ways. And if you are not sensitive enough to detect His voice you will **QUENCH IT**, and your spiritual life will be impaired. His checks (sense of restraint) always come as a still small voice (1Ki 19:12), so faint that no one but a saint of God will notice it.

Led by the Spirit means yielding to Him
In all of the facets of life;
Trying to do all the work on your own
Leads to disorder and strife.
—Hess

ILLUSTRATION OF DANGER OF QUENCHING THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT -Two young women lost their lives in a fire that swept through their apartment as they slept. Their home was equipped with a smoke detector that was in good working order, but it hadn't gone off. Why? Fire inspectors concluded that the device had been deactivated for a party the night before. The unit had been disconnected to keep it from sounding off because of the smoke from cooking and candles. In Acts 5 we have another example of two people who apparently deactivated an alarm system that could have saved their lives. Ananias and Sapphira must have quenched the Holy Spirit by turning a deaf ear to their consciences, believing they had plenty of good reasons for doing what they did. But their action cost them their lives. We need to realize that the Holy Spirit was not given to annoy us like a sensitive smoke detector. He doesn't sound false alarms. When He activates our conscience by bringing to mind a principle or warning from God's Word, it is really His love and wisdom in action. By weighing the warnings of His love against the cost of our foolishness, we'll soon realize that it's always better to be safe than sorry.

In view of the fact that the concept of quenching the Spirit is somewhat nebulous and/or mystical below are several comments from conservative commentators

John Walvoord - Quenching the Spirit is closely related to His guidance. There are many spiritual decisions for which the Word of God does not give specific instruction. The general truths of Scripture must be applied to a given life and circumstance. In this aspect of the truth, the Word of God gives the principles, but the Spirit of God gives the instructions. This is a very precious portion of the believer's heritage and a mark of his sonship (Ro 8:14). Refusal to follow this evident leading is a quenching of the Spirit. Guidance may take various forms and does not follow a regular pattern. The Spirit may lead one into a field of service and exclude another. Guidance usually relates to service and is essential to it. Man was not created with a self-guiding faculty, but is dependent upon God for direction. The Spirit may prohibit a course of action as in forbidding Paul to preach the Gospel in Asia and in Bithynia, only later to direct his steps to these very fields and bless in the ministry of the word (cf. Acts 16:6, 7; 19:10). It is essential to effective service and wise action to follow implicitly and trustingly the ordered steps indicated by divine guidance. The fullness of blessing awaits only in the divinely appointed path.

John MacArthur - What is the difference between **quenching** and **grieving**?" **Quenching** is what you do to the Spirit; **grieving** is how He responds to what you did. **Grieving** speaks of the personal anguish of the Holy Spirit when a believer quenches the holy fire that He has kindled in the heart. You do not quench the Holy Spirit without grieving the Holy Spirit, and you will not grieve the Holy Spirit unless you quench the Holy Spirit. There simply two sides of the same problem; one describes what you do, the other describes what He does.

Oswald Chambers - The voice of the Spirit is as gentle as a summer breeze, so gentle that unless you are living in complete fellowship and oneness with God, you will never hear it. The sense of warning and restraint that the Spirit gives comes to us in the

most extraordinarily gentle ways. And if you are not sensitive enough to detect His voice you will QUENCH IT, and your spiritual life will be impaired. His checks (sense of restraint) always come as a still small voice (1Ki 19:12), so faint that no one but a saint of God will notice it.

Warren Wiersbe - Fire speaks of purity, power, light, warmth, and (if necessary) destruction. When the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives and churches, we have a warmth of love in our hearts, light for our minds, and energy for our wills. He "melts us together" so that there is harmony and cooperation; and He purifies us so that we put away sin. The fire of the Spirit must not go out on the altar of our hearts (**Ed**: Cf Lev 6:12-13); we must maintain that devotion to Christ that motivates and energizes our lives. "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee," Paul wrote to Timothy (2Ti 1:6), and the verb means "stir the fire again into life." Apparently Timothy had been neglecting this gift (1Ti 4:14) and had to be reminded. The believer, and the local assembly, must avoid extremes: the legalist and formalist would put the fire out, while the fanatic would permit the fire to burn everything up!

John Walvoord - It is patently impossible to extinguish the Holy Spirit in the absolute sense, or to put Him out. His abiding presence is assured for all Christians. His Person is indestructible. It is, therefore, quenching in the sense of resisting or opposing His will. Quenching the Spirit may be simply defined as being unyielded to Him, or, saying, "No." The issue is, therefore, the question of willingness to do His will.

Spurgeon on do not quench the Spirit - Do not hinder His movements in yourself; do not try to hinder them in others. **Let His faintest admonitions be obeyed. Whatsoever He says to you do it. Let us cultivate an affectionate dependence upon His power and presence. In all our Christian exercises let us wait upon Him for strength. Let us entreat Him to ignite our prayers and inspire our songs, in both exercises helping our infirmities and encouraging our hearts. Let us continually believe in the Holy Spirit as the true life of all Christian effort;** when we think of our ministries, let us refer them to the Spirit Who gives them, and Who Alone can bless them; and for the diverse works which the church performs, let us only look for success to attend them as the Holy Spirit is pleased to put forth his power by them. Let us take care that we quench not the Spirit, that by our unbelief we restrain not His divine energies; but let us strive, God striving in us (Phil 2:13, cp Col 1:29), after the highest conceivable standard of holiness and of separation from the world. O Spirit of God, do Thou help us that we may be sanctified by Thy grace in spirit, soul, and body (1Th 5:23).

Adrian Rogers - Remember that the Holy Spirit has been given to lead you. He will direct you. God did not mean for you to be left foundering around. The Holy Spirit is like a gentle flame that can be snuffed out. He will lead you if you will let Him.

- A. He never shoves or shouts. He only whispers and leads.
- B. How sensitive we must be because of how sensitive He is.
- C. The man who dropped a coin on the city sidewalk.

The Holy Spirit will tell you to give, witness, to speak, etc.

Adrian Rogers' prayer - Dear Spirit of God. Thank you for making Jesus real to me. Thank you for glorifying Jesus in my heart. Thank you Holy Spirit of God that you drew me to Jesus. Thank you that you convicted me of sin. Thank you that you worked a miracle in my life. Thank you that you sealed me to the day of redemption. I recognize that You live in me. I turn every part of my temple over to You. I am Yours. Now, if there's anything in your heart and in your life that is grieving Him, be done with it. If He's telling you to do something, don't quench Him. Ha. Don't quench Him. If He's telling you to witness to somebody, if He's telling you to give something, if He's telling you to apologize to someone, don't say no to Him. Holy Spirit of God, thank you. Thank you Lord for this service and for letting us be here. In the sweet name of Jesus. Amen

HOW CAN WE QUENCH THE SPIRIT FROM THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT - 1Th 5:18-note, 1Th 5:20-note?

1Th 5:18 - By not **giving thanks in all things**. Instead, if we grumble or complain, we "put out the fire of the Spirit." We stifle His leading, His enabling, His filling, etc.

1Th 5:20 - **Despising** (rejecting) "**PROPHETIC UTTERANCES**" - Today this speaks primarily of reading His Word (e.g., in our quiet time in the AM when God's Spirit speaks to us thru Word and Prayer), as well as through hearing Scripture taught (Bible studies) or preached (sermons). His teaching should not be in one ear and out the other!

John Walvoord adds that " It is evident that refusal to submit to the Word of God is quenching the Spirit, making the fullness of the Spirit impossible."

Peter Masters asks - Do we quench the holy fervor of godly aims kindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit? Do we quench and suppress the promptings of conscience? Is the maintaining of spiritual zeal sometimes inconvenient, because it is contrary to our mood, or too costly for us? Do we therefore turn from praise, prayer, thankfulness, dedication and good works? How can we do this, as Christians? Simply by forgetting that it is the ever-present, mighty Holy Spirit of God who is the author of all godly

sensations. We do not merely have a Divine Visitation, which would be wonderful, but something vastly greater – a Divine Resident who ignites the dying embers of spiritual activity, restoring them to full vigor. But we lose sight of both the doctrine and the reality and smother this reviving, energizing work of God within. ([Sword and Trowel](#))

READ THIS OT PASSAGE - DO YOU SEE A PARALLEL?

Lev 6:12 'And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it. It shall not go out (**Septuagint or Lxx** uses **sbennumi** the same verb as 1Th 5:19), but the priest shall burn wood on it every morning; and he shall lay out the burnt offering on it."

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO US?

SPURGEON answers - "Let us use texts of Scripture as fuel for our heart's fire; they are live coals; let us attend sermons, but above all let us be much alone with Jesus."

Do you begin your day by tending the fire on your heart, like Mary sitting before His Word open to His leading or like Martha distracted and worried by so many things (Lk 10:40-41)?