

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

Duties of Believers – Don't Despise Prophecies

1

Introduction

Many churches have minimized the importance of the Holy Spirit and God's Word in the spiritual lives of believers. It is therefore guilty of the same kind of error Paul rebuked the Galatians for: "Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:3). The Holy Spirit's ministry and the Word's power has become secondary to the worldly teachings and the social agenda. Truth does not lie in man's reason or the consensus of society. Only God knows all things and therefore can declare truth. One of the Holy Spirit's roles is to guide us into that truth!

This passage directs believers toward their true responsibilities: to not quench the Spirit, to respond to God's Word, and to be discerning in all things.

2

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies. ²¹ Test all things; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

3

Do Not Quench the Spirit

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Do not quench the Spirit.

Last week we looked at the importance of not quenching the Spirit. The Spirit is instrumental in convicting of sin so that we are willing to accept the gift of salvation purchased by Jesus through the cross.

The Spirit places us into the body of Christ and indwells us as believers. It is the Spirit's role to guide us into Truth and help us to see the glory of Christ. It is the Spirit that draws us deeper into the things of God for maturation and Spiritual growth.

4

Do Not Despise Prophecies

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Do not despise prophecies.

The Word of God is superior to all the words of man. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3, “ ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God’ ” (Matt. 4:4). Respect for the supremacy of the revelation of God in Scripture is what the apostle Paul had in mind when he cautioned the Thessalonians **do not despise prophecies**. The term **despise** carries the strong meaning, “to consider as absolutely nothing,” “to treat with contempt,” or “to look down on.”

5

Do Not Despise Prophecies

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Do not despise prophecies.

The New Testament term for prophecies **can refer either to spoken words or written words**. The **verb** form refers to **speaking or proclaiming to others**. Therefore, this prophecy is the **Spirit-empowered skill of proclaiming God’s Word** (Rom. 12:6). New Testament prophets sometimes delivered a **brand-new revelation directly from God** (Luke 2:29–32; cf. v. 38; Acts 15:23–29). At other times they merely **reiterated a divine proclamation that was already recorded** (cf. Luke 3:5–6; Acts 2:17–21, 25–28, 34–35; 4:25–26; 7:2–53).

6

Do Not Despise Prophecies

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Do not despise prophecies.

Revelatory prophecies were limited to the apostolic era. Scripture has been completely given and does not require any additional “revelation.” However, the **non-revelatory gift of prophecy is permanent,** as preachers are called to “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2).

Prophecy, as a term, is used to refer to God’s written Word. The apostle Peter wrote, “knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:20–21; cf. Matt. 13:14; Rom. 16:25–26).

7

Do Not Despise Prophecies

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Do not despise prophecies.

People should **not despise prophecies** because of Scripture’s essential character. First, it is **authoritative** (Isa. 1:2); second, it is **completely infallible** (Ps. 19:7); third, it is **inerrant in every part** (Prov. 30:5–6; cf. Matt. 5:18); fourth, it is **sufficient for all spiritual needs** (Ps. 19:7–11; 2 Tim. 3:15–17); fifth, it is **absolutely effective** (Isa. 55:11); and sixth, it **reveals one’s spiritual condition** (John 5:24).

8

Do Not Despise Prophecies

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Do not despise prophecies.

Because the Bible (the canon of prophecies) is God's very Word and is "living and powerful" (Heb. 4:12), it is the primary means God has chosen to reveal Himself to us and to shape our lives to know, understand, and follow Him. Engaging and studying the Bible can lead to spiritual growth in several ways.

9

Do Not Despise Prophecies

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Do not despise prophecies.

1. The Bible reveals to us the greatness and goodness of God.

Bible brings spiritual growth in our lives is by telling us about God Himself. Scriptures declares the nature and character of God. From the first verses of the Bible, we understand that God is the perfect Creator and Ruler over all things. We see through the pages of Scripture the character of God as compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion and sin" (Ex. 34:6–7). We also see His justice in condemning sin and humbling the proud. The Scriptures reveal to us God as the Good Shepherd, the Faithful Provider, and the Rock of Refuge for all who will trust in Him. He is demonstrated as the One who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere present.

10

Do Not Despise Prophecies

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Do not despise prophecies.

2. The Bible reveals to us God's plan of salvation.

The Bible points us Jesus, the God-man who came to save us from sin and death through His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. Apart from the Bible, we would not have this understanding of God's nature and work through Christ and the Holy Spirit. As we constantly look at who Christ is through the pages of Scripture, we are transformed into His likeness day by day (2 Cor. 3:18).

11

Do Not Despise Prophecies

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Do not despise prophecies.

3. The Bible renews our minds to think God's thoughts.

The Bible brings spiritual growth to our lives through the working of the Spirit to renew our minds so that we think, understand, and approach all of life from God's perspective, instead of the prevailing notions of culture. When we read, study, and meditate on God's Word, we consistently find ourselves being amazed at the way God does things. He comes to the broken; He rescues the weak; He confounds the wise; He loves His enemies. He is the embodiment of biblical wisdom. Left to ourselves we might be able to manufacture some good ideas about how to live, but we will often do things contrary to God's will.

12

Do Not Despise Prophecies

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Do not despise prophecies.

4. The Bible shows us the need to put others first.

The greatest in the Kingdom of God are the servants, the humble, and the peacemakers. It is the Holy Spirit work through God's Word to remind us of this (John 14:26). Through the Bible, we learn that our neighbor isn't just the person who lives near us, but the neighbor we are to love is the person we'd never choose to associate with. The Bible shows us that freely and generously giving away our treasure is, in fact, the way to store up treasure in heaven. The Bible teaches us that life is found not in our own strength or victory, but by laying down our lives for the sake of Christ.

This transformed thinking is key to growing spiritually, and the Bible is essential for us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, so that we may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:2).

13

Do Not Despise Prophecies

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Do not despise prophecies.

5. The Bible redirects our lives away from sin and towards holiness.

The Bible brings spiritual growth to our lives by showing us what is evil, sinful, and dishonoring to God. As it shows us what sin is, it also tells us what righteous living looks like. We grow spiritually as we see our sin, repent of it, and walk in holiness and righteousness through our faith in Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

14

Do Not Despise Prophecies

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Do not despise prophecies.

6. The Bible shows us a way of life that turns from sin and embraces holiness.

When we see God's goodness and grace through the gospel we are renewed in our minds so our thinking aligns with God's thoughts. We can then act in a way that pleases Him and blesses others. **True spiritual growth is when we become like Jesus in all things** (Rom. 8:28–29). The more we engage and study the Bible, the more we can be transformed and grow!

15

So What ...

How to Get the Most from the Bible.

If the Bible then is essential to our transformation spiritually, one might wonder how to read and study the Bible for maximum growth.

First, as you read the Bible, simply pray and ask God to help you understand what you are reading.

Second, read a book of the Bible one chapter at a time. If you are just starting out with the Bible reading, the Book of Mark is a good place to begin engaging the Bible stories. Another option is to begin a Bible reading plan, which will give you a manageable way to read the Bible every day.

Third, read the Bible with other people. Often the way we grow best is by discussing and asking questions of the Bible with other people. **Come out to one of the Bible studies.**

16

So What ...

Fourth, get a good study Bible. These resources can help explain confusing statements and assist you in interpreting the background, culture, and meaning of the biblical text. Study Bibles also often contain articles that will contribute to engaging your heart in living out the Bible.

Fifth, memorize key verses in the Bible. One of the best ways to grow is to be able to recite key verses in the Bible. Having these Scriptures in your mind and heart, ready at a moment's recall, will give you the confidence to live for God whenever you face temptation and trial. You will have ammunition ready to fire when Satan tempts you to turn away from the truth.

Psalms 119:105 states, "your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path."