

## Do Not Quench the Spirit

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2 Corinthians 3:6 tells us that the Spirit gives life. The Corinthian brethren didn't need Paul's letter (3:1). Rather, the change in their lives through the Spirit's working was evidence of life in Christ (3:3). That life leads to great boldness in the truth (3:12), which Paul contrasts to the timidity under the law of tablet and stone, "unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away" (3:13). Instead, we are able to look directly at the truths of God. As verse 15 notes, "the veil is taken away." Under this new Spiritual law, man can boldly receive the fullness of God (John 1:17-18). Paul concludes in 2 Corinthians 3:18, "But we all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Life through the Spirit results in transformation. Our mortal body becomes something more glorious. Christ displayed pictorially our change to life when he was transfigured on the mountain (Matthew 17:2). A great change was brought over him. No longer was his nature entirely flesh; there appeared something spiritual. In the same way, man transfigures from the flesh to spirit (note Romans 8:11). It isn't that we leave our mortal bodies, any more than Jesus left his body. Instead, our mortal bodies receive life. The change is in the mind and heart. Our thinking changes: 1 Corinthians 2:12 notes, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given us by God." Our heritage changes: Romans 8:14-15 explains,

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.'"

Our heart changes: John 7:38-39 states, "He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this he spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive."

Paul describes this transformation as being from glory to glory. It is a process. We begin at infancy, but we continue to grow and develop into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Romans 12:2 describes it as a transformation by the renewing of the mind. We begin viewing the happenings of life through the lenses of the Spirit, concerning ourselves with God's will.

Paul explains in 2 Corinthians 5:4-9, "For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life." The flesh was created good by God, but it has its weakness in sin. God promises something better, more perfect in the heavenly realm.

"Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well-pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him."

Paul concludes that it is the Spirit within who prepares us for transformation. It is the presence of God's Spirit which enables us to pursue that which pleases God. It is the Spirit who empowers us to walk beyond our physical sight in the light of faith. This is what Paul means by "just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18). It is through the Spirit that a renewal of the mind takes place.

Paul, therefore, admonishes us, "Do not quench the Holy Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:19). We have to allow our renewal. God's not going to force transformation. He isn't going to purify our hearts against our will. So He urges us to allow his Spirit to do His work.

The flesh knows this won't always be pleasant. It isn't pleasant to be convicted of sin (see Acts 2:37), but that is the Spirit working (John 16:8). It isn't always pleasant to be told "no" (see Acts 8:19-20), but that is the Spirit helping put us in the right spiritual frame of mind. It isn't our flesh's desire to stand out in the crowd because of our faith (see 2 Timothy 1:6-7), but it is evidence of a powerful Spirit living within. The

flesh wants to balk at the idea of trusting God with all our cares and concerns, but it is the Spirit who works through our prayers (Romans 8:26-28).

There is no other way to perfect transformation than by the power of the Holy Spirit. Open your heart and allow Him to blaze forth unto pure holiness.

“For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Romans 8:13-14).