

Instructions to the Spiritual Skeptic

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 NIV

Introduction

Paul, in this paragraph, gives four instructions to those who would tend to be skeptical about manifestations of the Holy Spirit. He then tells them to avoid every form of evil.

There is no reprimand here; only instructions to those in body who are willing to put the operation of the Holy to a scriptural test.

I. Do not put out the Spirit's fire

1 Corinthians 12:7 NIV Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

- A. The purpose of the Spirit's operation
 1. To edify the body of Christ
 2. To empower the body of Christ
 3. To motivate or "build a fire under" the church
- B. The analogy of fire
 1. In proper environs, fire can:
 - a. Provide warmth
 - b. Provide comfort
 - c. Provide power
 2. In wrong environs, a fire can:
 - a. Spread uncontrollably
 - b. Destroy lives and property
 - c. Damage or destroy all it encounters
- C. We are not to put out the Spirit's fire
 1. By refusing to allow Him to operate
 2. By failing to respond to Him
- D. Build a "fireplace" to allow the Holy Spirit to operate effectively

II. Do not treat prophecies with contempt

2 Peter 1:19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.

- A. A prophecy from God is a valuable commodity

- B. We are to hear and act on a genuine word from God

III. Test everything

1 John 4:1 NIV Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether there are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world

- A. When God does anything, it will bear up under scrutiny
- B. We are responsible to scrutinize all alleged manifestations of the Holy Spirit to prove their authenticity
- C. Test things by God's Word

IV. Hold on to the good

Hebrews 4:14 NIV Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

- A. Things of value must be held tightly
- B. Satan would snatch the good from you
- C. We must give careful attention to the things which have passed the test

Hebrews 2:1 NIV We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.