

Unquenchable Hope

Unquenchable Hope

Seven UnCharacteristics That Can Change the World in 2017 – Lesson Seven

We finally reached the end of this series I was given to write early this year. The mission was to challenge us as Christians to be the *living proof* the world longs to see in us and experience when they interact with us. It is too often apparent that our culture is winning the war for the hearts and minds, not only of unbelievers as we would expect, but also weak and weary Christians whose faith has been dampened and resolve diminished.

Yet when you are in Christ, there is always hope. We close this series with words that will challenge and encourage the hearts of every believer. For your convenience and referral, links to the first six lessons are listed below.

- **Unconditional love** – *Because He first loved us.*
- **Undying gratitude** – *Because He saved us from our sins.*
- **Unspeakable joy** – *Because we cannot forget the first two.*
- **Unwavering faith** – *Because it makes the impossible possible.*
- **Unmistakable Power** – *Because we can do nothing (for Him) without it.*
- **Unceasing Praise-Prayer** – *Because we do not want to be embarrassed by rocks!*

Unquenchable Hope – Many Christians are familiar with this verse from the Apostle Paul:

“Do not quench the Spirit.” (1 Thessalonians 5: 19)

Quenching the Spirit used in this verse has been known to confuse or puzzle Christians. I want to give you three examples, and their consequences, to help clarify the verse and relate it directly to this

last characteristic – *unquenchable hope*.

On previous occasions, I used examples from the early part of my professional life working in the area of biomaterials and metallurgy. Many excellent analogies exist between terms used to produce or form metals and how God, the Holy Spirit, works in and on our lives. The word *quench* represents one.

Quenching is the process of quickly bringing a very hot, nearly molten, metal to room temperature. The metal is plunged into water (or other coolant) rapidly dropping the temperature. This results in a metal with **a very hard, often brittle, surface**. Keep that in mind as we consider more traditional uses of the word.

In more typical uses of *quench*, two applications come to mind:

- *Quenching thirsts* means we quickly satisfy them by drinking down all we can.
- *Quenching a fire* means we drown it with water to make sure to extinguish every last flame.

It should be obvious where we are going with this. From these examples, we learned three things about the quenching process that readily apply to our spiritual lives and Paul's admonition. Quenching the Spirit:

- *Hardens us on the outside often to avoid changing us on the inside.*
- *Removes our thirst for things of the Lord.*
- *Extinguishes the fire within.*

Hardens us on the outside often to avoid changing us on the inside.

We do not typically think of Christians as *hard-hearted*, yet we know it is an issue because God warns His people throughout the Bible of the consequences of becoming so.

“Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until

*the end. Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "Today if you hear His voice, **Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me...**" (Hebrews 3: 6-8)*

If you jump to the conclusion, *this is not your problem*, I suggest you do as I do and take it before the Lord to see if there are people to whom you have become hardened. Such transparency and willingness to hear what the Holy Spirit may teach you goes a long way to avoid the *quenching* process.

Removes our thirst for things of the Lord.

We are instructed to hunger and thirst after the Lord—His righteousness. So often today, we find ways to quench our thirsts (lusts) with all kinds of *refreshments* the world has to offer. They only make us thirstier for more of that which can never satisfy. Jesus made it clear, He alone offers **living water** that quenches in a way we will never thirst again.

"Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." (John 4: 13-14)

Extinguishes the fire within.

When I wrote this, the two followers of Christ on the road to Emmaus came to mind. Remember their conversation after Jesus left them?

*"They said to one another, "Were not **our hearts burning within us** while (Jesus) was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24: 32 NASB)*

Brothers, let me ask you two questions. Does your heart still burn within you as you study the Word of God and allow the Holy Spirit to instruct and move your heart? Or has that fire been quenched by the "things of this world that choke the Word" as Jesus warned?

Hopelessness. Lost people have no true hope because *human hope is based on the action or behavior of other people or things*, i.e., people are basically good and good things happen. Sad place to put one's hope. Eventually, they run into bad people or things and hope is lost. Some become desperate for anything they think will restore it or help them forget. Many of the men with whom I have worked at the mission or prison over the years speak to these as reasons leading to their addictions or incarceration.

The Apostle Paul reminded one of his church plants where they were BC (before Christ).

*“remember that you were at that time separated from Christ...and strangers to the covenants of promise, **having no hope and without God in the world.**”* (Ephesians 2: 12 ESV)

Biblical hope is based completely in God and the truth of His Word. Otherwise, our faith is in vane and we serve a dead man. So, when Christians “quench the Holy Spirit”, we quench our only Hope. Whether you quench the Spirit as outlined here or take a slower path to the same hopeless destination, I want to encourage with these words-***in Christ there is always hope.***

No matter what you have done. No matter where you are. No matter how low or hopeless you feel, our good Father is ready to redeem, receive, or restore you because of the work of Jesus on the Cross.

As we approach another season in which we celebrate the glorious resurrection of our Savior, in Whom we have our only hope, there is no better time to start over – this time full of *unquenchable hope* because you realize for the first time or remember again the words of the prophet Jeremiah,

*“But this I call to mind, and **therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end.**”* (Lamentations 3: 21-22 NASB)

My dear friend, you are precious in the sight of the Lord God. Hope in His steadfast, unconditional love. Hope in His unending mercies

and grace extended to all who call upon Him with repentant hearts. The object of our hope determines our outlook and outcome. Hope in the Lord and find peace with Him today!

*“Now may the **God of hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by **the power of the Holy Spirit** you may **abound in hope.**”* (Romans 15: 13 NASB)

Walter