

DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Grieving and Quenching the Holy Spirit

Lesson 15

In this lesson we will look at grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit. It is important that we do not hinder the Spirit's work in our life or the lives of others, for without the Holy Spirit's assistance we can do nothing that pleases God. Many, not knowing this, live their lives in the power of the flesh, never experiencing the spiritual blessing which comes from walking and being filled with the Spirit. Therefore, it is critical that we not do things that contradict what the Holy Spirit would have us do, thereby quenching or grieving the Spirit. In this lesson we will discover why it is so important to not grieve or quench the Spirit of Grace.

I. DEFINITION OF GRIEVING AND QUENCHING THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. Thomas Watson in *The Godly Man's Picture*: "How do we grieve the Spirit? When we unkindly repel His motions. The Spirit sometimes whispers in our ears and calls to us as God did to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel" (**Gen. 35:1**). So the Spirit says, "Arise, go to prayer, retire to meet your God." Now when we stifle these motions and entertain temptations to vanity, this is grieving the Spirit. If we check the motions of the Spirit, we shall lose the comforts of the Spirit. We grieve the Spirit when we deny the work of the Spirit in our hearts. If someone gives another person a gift, and he should deny it and say he never received it, this would be to abuse the love of his friend. So, Christian, when God has given you His Spirit, witnessed by those meltings of heart and passionate desires for heaven -- yet you deny that you ever had any renewing work of the Spirit in you, this is base ingratitude and grieves the good Spirit. Renounce the sinful works of the flesh -- but do not deny the gracious work of the Spirit."¹
- B. Herbert Lockyer in *All About the Holy Spirit*: "By grieving Him we do not lose the seal nor drive the Holy Spirit out of our hearts, which of course is impossible. When we grieve the Spirit we lose the joy, power, and assurance of the saved state."²
- C. Thomas Manton in *The Works of Thomas Manton*: "Many have had strong resolutions, but they die away without this. They have a great many previous workings of the Spirit, as, much knowledge of the will of God, much sense of sin, fear of punishment, many thoughts about their freedom and deliverance, some hopes of pardon, some kind of care and desire; but then they would drown these things again by the cares and pleasures of this world, and so they are to no purpose. This is called by the apostle "quenching of the Spirit," **I Thes. 6:19**."³

¹Thomas Watson, *The Godly Man's Picture*, public domain Libronix electronic edition.

²Herbert Lockyer, *All About the Holy Spirit*, pg. 212.

³Thomas Manton, *a Practical Exposition upon the 53rd Chapter of Isaiah*, Vol. 3, Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books, 217.

- D. John Walvoord said in *The Holy Spirit*: “The expression, “quench not the Spirit,” found in **I Thessalonians 5:19**, is nowhere formally explained in Scripture. Quenching is often used in the Bible in its proper physical sense, as illustrated in **Matthew 12:20**, where Christ spoke of not quenching flax, and in **Hebrews 11:34**, the heroes of the faith are revealed to have quenched the violence of fire.” In **Ephesians 6:16**, the shield of faith is said to “be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” In I Thessalonians, however, it is used in a metaphorical sense, meaning according to Thayer, “to suppress, stifle.”⁴
- E. John Walvoord also notes in *The Holy Spirit*: “The Scriptures often testify to the fact that the spirit of God is holy and that He is a person. The indwelling presence of this holy person constitutes in the body of a believer a temple of God. In the nature of the case, the presence of sin in any form grieves the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, when the Christian is exhorted to “grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption” (**Eph. 4:30**), it is an appeal to allow nothing in his life contrary to the holiness of the Spirit. It is clear that the one cause of grieving the Holy Spirit is sin.”⁵

II. THOUGHTS TO PONDER ABOUT GRIEVING AND QUENCHING THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. Thomas Watson in *A Body of Divinity*: “Sin mingles with our duties and graces. It makes a child of God weary of his life, and makes him water his couch with his tears, to think that sin is so strong a party, and he often offends the God he loves. This made Paul cry out, “O wretched man that I am!” He did not cry out for his affliction, or his prison-chain, but for the body of sin. Now a believer at death is freed from sin, he is not taken away in, but from his sins; he shall never have a vain, proud thought any more; he shall never grieve the Spirit of God any more. Sin brought death into the world, and death shall carry sin out of the world.”⁶
- B. A. W. Pink in *An Exposition of Hebrews*: “To abound in fervent praise unto God is the abiding duty of the Christian. But for that there must be the regular exercise of faith. Calling into question the promises of God quenches the spirit of worship; doubts snap the strings of our harps; unbelief is the deadly enemy of praise. To praise God continually requires us to be in daily communion with Him. It is not to be wondered at that the joy of many believers is so sickly, when we consider how little fellowship they have with the Lord: if there be so little heat around the bulb of their thermometer, how can the mercury rise higher!”⁷

⁴John F. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, pg. 196.

⁵John F. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, pg. 200.

⁶Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, public domain, Libronix electronic books, 248.

⁷Arthur W. Pink, *An Exposition of Hebrews*, public domain, Libronix electronic book, Heb. 13:15-16.

- C. Herbert Lockyer in *All About the Holy Spirit*: “To resist presupposes the Holy Spirit coming to storm the citadel of the soul. To grieve presupposes the residence of the Spirit as comforter. To quench presupposes the presence of the Spirit as a fire.” These three sins, then, suggest the Spirit as force, friend, and fire.”⁸

- D. John Walvoord in *The Holy Spirit*: “The child of God who desires to live without quenching the Spirit must know the sweetness of submission to the will of God. . . Yieldedness to the Spirit includes, then, submission to the plain teachings of the Word of God, obedience to the guidance of the Spirit, and acceptance in faith of the providential acts of God. All of these are a part of the moment-by-moment experience of living in the will of God with an indwelling Spirit who is unquenched.”⁹

III. SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF GRIEVING AND QUENCHING THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. **Gen. 6:3, 6** Then the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” . . . 6 The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

- B. **Isa. 63:8-10** For He said, “Surely, they are My people, Sons who will not deal falsely.” So He became their Savior. 9 In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the angel of His presence saved them; In His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, And He lifted them and carried them all the days of old. 10 But they rebelled And grieved His Holy Spirit; Therefore He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them.

- C. **Acts 7:51**¹⁰ “You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.

- D. **Acts 9:31** So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

⁸Herbert Lockyer commenting on what G. Campbell Morgan said, *All About the Holy Spirit*, pg. 219.

⁹John F. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, pg. 199.

¹⁰The act of resisting is not synonymous with quenching or grieving but is one of the ways men sin against the Spirit. Resisting emphasizes men’s unwillingness to believe and be saved. But it relates to believers in that often we live and think like unbelievers even though we have the Spirit in us.

- E. **Eph. 4:30-32**¹¹ Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

- F. **I Thess. 5:19**¹² Do not quench the Spirit;

IV. **ERRORS CONCERNING GRIEVING AND QUENCHING THE HOLY SPIRIT**

- A. Error – It is okay to live as if we did not have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us or that sin is of no consequence to the Holy Spirit in our life.

- B. Error – It is okay to submit to the Holy Spirit in some parts of our lives but not all of them.

- C. Error – We don't need to worry about sinning against the Holy Spirit because we have already been forgiven in Christ.

- D. Error – If we take a stand against anyone in the church, doing anything they want, we are quenching the Spirit.

- E. Error – Grieving the Holy Spirit is not grieving a person but it is choosing not to use the spiritual force that is in each of us.

- F. Error – Being better than the average Christian is all it takes to not grieve or quench the Spirit.

V. **APPLICATION OF GRIEVING AND QUENCHING THE HOLY SPIRIT**

- A. The very fact that we can grieve the Spirit proves that He is a person and must be treated as such.

- B. We must be careful not to treat new believers too harshly for acting without knowledge. We should correct them with the Word, but not too harshly, lest we quench the Spirit's work in their lives.

¹¹ It is interesting to note that Paul gives a long list of things which can easily be observed to verify that we are or are not grieving the Holy Spirit who cannot be seen. This list can also be compared to the deeds of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:16ff and Paul's description of love in I Cor. 13:4ff.

¹²It should be noted that this same word translated "quench" in this verse is used in the parable of the ten virgins to describe the lamps of some "going out" (Matt. 25:8). It is used in Mark 9:48 where Jesus describes hell as a place where fire is not "quenched," in Eph. 6:16 where the shield of faith is able to "extinguish" the fiery darts of the devil, and of the heroes of the faith who "quenched" the power of fire. Its basic meaning of "quench" is to put out of the fire, extinguish, or stop from burning.

- C. We must be careful not to forbid people from exercising their spiritual gifts or serving in certain ministries they are passionate about because we fear that previous abuses might be repeated.
- D. As believers we must feed the fire of the Spirit with the word of the Word of God, fellowship of the saints, worship of God, obedience out of love, and thankfulness to God in order to keep the Spirit burning in our lives.
- E. As believers we must avoid the waters of sin which put out the fires of the Holy Spirit within us.
- F. We must remember not to live in the fear of men and what they might do to us, but in the power of the Spirit who gives us boldness, confidence, and assurance.
- G. Billy Graham gives a helpful four-part list he got from Ruth Paxson about how to test if our behavior grieves the Holy Spirit:
 - 1. **Is it of the truth?** Anything false, deceitful, or hypocritical grieves Him (**John 14:17**).
 - 2. **Is it of faith?** Doubt, distrust, anxiety, worry, or fretting grieve Him (**II Cor. 4:13**).
 - 3. **Is it by grace?** Whatever in us is hard, bitter, malicious, ungracious, unforgiving, or unloving grieves Him (**Heb. 10:29**).
 - 4. **Holiness (Rom.1:4)**; so anything unclean, defiling or degrading grieves Him.¹³

Charles Spurgeon commenting on, “**Grieve not the Holy Spirit**” – Ephesians 4:30, said:

All that the believer has must come from Christ, but it comes solely through the channel of the Spirit of grace. 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 sanctified operation of the same Spirit. Even if the good seed was to be sown in you, it lies dormant except the Spirit work in you to will and to do of his own good pleasure.

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

¹³ Billy Graham, *The Holy Spirit*, pgs. 158-159.

intercession for you! You desire to subdue sin? 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 order for the master's cause? You cannot without the Spirit – "Without me you can do nothing."

Old branch of the vine, you can have no fruit without a sap! Oh child of God, you have no life within you apart from the life, which God gives you through his Spirit! Then let us not grieve him or provoke him to anger by our sin. Let us not quench him in one of his faintest motions in our soul; let us foster every suggestion, and be ready to obey every prompting. If the Holy Spirit be 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 to do him the due homage of feeling our entire weakness apart from him, and then depending alone upon him, having this for our prayer, "Open my heart and my whole being to your incoming, and uphold me with your free Spirit when I shall have received that Spirit in my inward parts."¹⁴

¹⁴Charles Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*, Morning Nov., 21st, electronic ed., Libronix Bible Software.