

Bible Studies

Grieving the Spirit

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30

What does this verse tell us about the Holy Spirit?



It tells us that the Holy Spirit is, 'of God' and It highlights His importance to us, because we are 'sealed' by Him. Most of all it tells us that the Holy Spirit is capable of being grieved.

There are people today who see the Holy Spirit as some sort of a force or an impersonal power. The Bible clearly shows that the Holy Spirit is personal in the same way that the Father and the Son are personal. You cannot grieve electricity, nor can you make the wind angry.

What does grieve mean in this context?

Grief means to afflict sorrow or deep trouble, but the Greek *Lupeo* also signifies pain of body or mind as well as distress, sorrow or heaviness.



- Does being grieved imply disappointment?**
- Does being grieved imply the loss of something you had hoped for?**
- What is the difference between being grieved and being angry?**
- How do each of these questions apply to the Holy Spirit and us?**

How does this relate to sin against God?

If you get a speeding ticket the policeman will not grieve, he will just do his job. The judge may get angry but he won't grieve. It requires someone to be hurt by your actions before grief is involved. When we sin against God, we do not just transgress an inanimate, unfeeling law, we offend a personal, caring God. Psalm 51v4.

This verse tells us that the Holy Spirit is personally involved with us. He is not indifferent or unconcerned. It also tells us that the Holy Spirit has an expectation within our lives. Grieving the Holy Spirit is an offence against love, not against law, power or control. It is a personal thing.

What is the Holy Spirit's attitude towards us? Romans 15v30

What are we to have in, or with the Spirit? Phil 2v1, 2 Cor 13v14

It is interesting how often love is referred to as a attribute of the Holy Spirit. Romans 5v5, Galatians 5v22, Colossians 1v8, 2 Timothy 1v7. Is it this that enables us to grieve the Spirit?

In a sermon Charles Spurgeon wrote on this verse, he asks the question, "do you love the Holy Spirit?" **Should we love the Spirit?**

What do you love about the Holy Spirit?

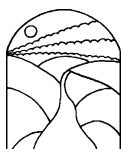
What do these verses teach about the Holy Spirit?

Hebrews 10v29	
Matthew 12v31	
Acts 5v3	
Acts 5v9	
Acts 7v51	
1 Thessalonians 5v19	

Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them. Isaiah 63:10



- Read Ephesians 4v21-32**
- What context is this warning given in?**



Waiuku AG
Ray Moxham
www.wag.org.nz

WaiukuAG
@maxnet.co.nz

How do you think that we can grieve the Holy Spirit?

To answer this question you need to think of the things the Holy Spirit works to promote in our lives and in the Church.



What pleases the Holy Spirit?

The immediate context of Ephesians 4v30 is the misuse of the tongue, perhaps this is especially irksome as the Holy Spirit has a special claim on our speech. Eph 5v18, Acts 2v4.

What are the things in my life that grieve the Holy Spirit?

Why do you think Paul highlights the danger of grieving the Spirit not the Father?



Read 1 Corinthians 6v19-20

What does this mean?

What effect should it have on us?



Some examples of grieving

While Jesus was preaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath, He saw a man with a withered arm, Jesus wanted to heal him. One group of the Pharisees believed this to be a sin. It says that Jesus was *'grieved by the hardness of their hearts'* Mark 3:5 NKJV (deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts NIV).

The Children of Israel's behaviour in the Exodus, was a source of grieve to God. Psalm 95v10. *How often they rebelled against him in the desert and grieved him in the wasteland! Psalms 78:40.* As was the behaviour of mankind before the flood. Genesis 6v3,6.

How is the Spirit described in Romans 1v4?

Not only does the Holy Spirit personify the Holiness of God, It is also His job to promote the work of Holiness in us. It is the Holy Spirit who forms Christ's image in us, and produces the fruit of the Spirit in us.

Romans 15v16

1 Corinthians 6v11

2 Thessalonians 2v13

1 Peter 1v2

What is sanctification?

Paul's object in Ephesians 4v30 is to encourage us to reject sin. There are many ways that he could have described the seriousness of sin or it's effects on God and our relationship with Him. The phrase *'to grieve the Holy Spirit'* is very vivid and emotive. It brings home to us clearly the consequences of sin.

What is the danger of grieving the Holy Spirit?



Read Psalm 51v11-12

How do you understand v11b?

How do you think David understood it?

Do you think there is a link between *'the joy of Your salvation'* and *'sealed for the day of redemption'*?

I do not believe that for the sin of grieving the Holy Spirit, God will remove His Holy Spirit from us, in that He will, revoke our Salvation, or take away the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. I do believe that grieving the Spirit will inhibit the Spirit's work in our live whether that be, the gifts, fruit, sanctification, guidance or the other manifold works of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Bible Studies

Quenching the Spirit

The term 'quenching the Spirit' comes from the KJV, to quench simply means to stifle, suppress or extinguish, the NIV translates this;

Do not put out the Spirit's fire; 1 Thessalonians 5:19

Clearly this is a serious warning.



Quenching the Spirit's fire

What does it mean to quench the Spirit?

Why do you think this is a bad thing?

What actions of ours are likely to quench the Spirit?

What is the difference between quenching the Spirit and grieving the Spirit?

Fire is often associated with the Holy Spirit, here it means the Holy Spirit's activity and work among the believers. To *quench the Spirit*, means to suppress or stop the Spirit's work. This could be His work in us as individuals, or as it seems to have been in Thessalonica, in the church as a whole. There are several ways that we may quench the Spirit.



Read 1 Thessalonians 4v16-24



Prophecy with contempt

Do not treat prophecies with contempt. 1 Thessalonians 5:20

Perhaps because there had already been false prophecies, 2 Thes 2v2, this caused people to discount all prophecy. Paul rated prophecy very highly, 1 Cor 14v1. It is necessary for building up the church, it strengthens, encourages and comforts. It allows God to speak directly into our services. To treat it with contempt is to lose the cutting edge of our faith.



Read Nehemiah 9v30

What was the result of ignoring the Spirit's voice?

How can you treat prophecy with contempt?

Not pay attention

Ignore it

Reject it out of hand

Dismiss it as of human origin.

Treating it lightly

Not asking if it is relevant to you

Not obeying it.

Forgetting it.

What are the dangers of treating prophecy with contempt?

Why is prophecy so important to us?

Does this mean that the moment someone claims a word to have been from God, we all accept it without question for fear of quenching the Spirit? No, Paul continues, *Test everything. Hold on to the good.* 1 Thessalonians 5:21. Prophecy must be tested, 1 Corinthians 14v29. Not all fire is the Holy Spirit, Leviticus 10v1. Not to test prophecy is to quench the Spirit, in its self.

Do you think this applies to other gifts of the Spirit?

Unbelief is a great way to quench the Spirit.

Is it possible to quench the Spirit without even realising it?

What tell tail signs might there be?

We need to encourage one another to use the Spiritual gifts we have received.



Feeding the Fire

A good way to put a fire out, is not to feed it. Maybe this is why Jesus told the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, Matthew 25. Psalm 18:28. We are told to be continually filled with the Spirit.

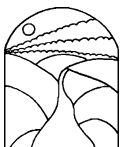
Is, not feeding the fire, the same as quenching the fire?

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Ray Moxham
www.wag.org.nz

WaiukuAG
@maxnet.co.nz



Do you think Timothy may have been guilty of this?

1 Timothy 4v14, 2 Timothy 1v6

If God has given us a spiritual gift, whether it is tongues, prophecy, faith or encouragement, and we fail to continue to use that gift, then we are guilty of quenching the Spirit. The most common area where we see this, is with the gift tongues.

How do we feed the fire?



Read Galatians 5v16-18

What response should we have to the Spirit?

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. Romans 8v5



Resisting the Spirit

If the Holy Spirit gives you a word and you fail to give it, or an instruction and you fail to obey it, then you are quenching the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is patient with us, while we are learning to hear and obey His voice, He give us latitude. But we must be careful to obey, what the Holy Spirit has said maybe of great importance to some one else present.

If an appeal is given and you know you should go forward but refuse, you are in danger of quenching the Spirit. If God is working on an area of your life and you won't cooperate, you are in danger of quenching the Spirit.

The Bible warns of those who resist the Spirit Acts 7v51, Hebrews 3, it is important that we remain sensitive to the moving of the Spirit in our lives

Does the Holy Spirit have the right to tell us what to do?

Why might we be slow or reluctant to obey the Spirit?

What should we do if there is an area in our lives where we have resisted the Spirit?



Forbidding Tongues

Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. 1 Cor 14:39

Paul warned against forbidding people to speak in tongues, in the same chapter he also warns about over emphasising the use of tongues. It appears that the Corinthian Church over used tongues in their services to their own detriment, we must find the right balance.



Read 1 Corinthians 14v2-4,9&16.

Why does Paul warn against over use of tongues?

Why do some people want to forbid tongues?



Impurity

Another good way to put out a fire is to pour water on it or cover it with dirt. Our sin and worldliness does just this. Hosea 7v1. I wonder how often we prevent ourselves from being used by the Spirit because of our impurity.



Read 2 Timothy 2v20-21

How does this apply to the Holy Spirit in our lives?

The danger in all this is that if we continue to quench the Spirit we will put His fire out in our lives. Paul makes a very interesting comment in 1 Corinthians 14:12, he says. *try to excel in gifts that build up the church.* While it is God who distributes His gifts as He sees fit, the word *try*, suggest that we have a part to play in receiving them.

We quench the Spirit

When our rules about how church is done stop Him for moving.

When we rely only on ourselves.

When we don't stop to listen to His direction.

How can we stir up or fan the Spirits flames?



Bible Studies

Blaspheming the Spirit

And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Matthew 12:31



The sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is one that has caused Christians much lost sleep. It seems that at sometime in each of our lives the Enemy will try to persuade us, that we have committed the unpardonable sin. Since Satan is not above misusing scripture for his own ends, it seems sensible that we study this sin systematically to find out if he is telling the truth.

What is the positive part of the above verse?

Is this forgiveness automatic?

Sometimes people talk about, *sin against the Holy Spirit*, being unforgivable. **Is this true?**

We have already seen that there are many kinds of sin against the Spirit, lying, grieving, quenching, resisting etc. It is only blasphemy against the spirit that Jesus isolates as a sin that will not be forgiven. Clearly Jesus had a specific sin in mind.



Read Leviticus 24v16 and Numbers 21v5&7 cf Leviticus 5v19
What distinction is made between these verses?

What is blasphemy?

Blasphemy has three meanings;



1 It means to use God's name as a swear word. Lev 24v11



2 It means to say something in the Lord's name that is untrue or to use God's name in a vow and then not fulfil the vow. The Jews probably understood the third command in this way. At it's broadest, living a hypocritical life and dishonouring God in our actions, can be considered blasphemy, because we bear His Name. Romans 2v24



3 It's widest meaning is to speak against or insult, rail at or revile, slander or defame, speak evil, or contemptuously of. This is it's most common meaning. 2 Kings 19v22
Can you be forgiven if you blaspheme God?

Jesus emphasises that **every** sin can be forgiven, except **one**. If there is only one sin for which there is no atonement, it seems obvious (some theologians miss this point), that all passages in scripture that talk of an unforgivable sin must be referring to the same sin.



Read 1 John 5v16-17.

John identifies two kinds of sin, one that leads to death and one that does not lead to death. Notice that John uses the singular *'there is a sin that leads to death'*. It is clear that he has a specific sin in mind.

This verse encouraged much speculation on possible categories of sin. Starting with the apostolic father (2nd Cent. On), finding it's heyday in the Middle ages and still part of Roman Catholic theology today, a list of *seven deadly sins* was drawn up. These were called cardinal, capital or root sins and they led to a much longer list, defining what the church recognised as sin. This is clearly not what John intended.

All Sin is deadly

The Old Testament lists some sin for which death was the punishment. (Exodus 21v12, 31v15, Leviticus 20v9, 24v23.) This was not to create a distinction in sin, but rather to uphold social order. The Bible makes no distinction, a white lie is just as much sin, as murder.

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death."

Ezekiel 18:4 "The soul who sins is the one who will die."

Genesis 2:17 "you must not eat from the tree of knowledge... when you eat of it you will surely die."

Romans 7:11 "For sin, seizing the opportunity... and... through the commandment put me to death."

The connection between sin and death is fundamental and inescapable.

What sins then do not lead to death?

John gives us the answer in **1 John 1v9**. Sin that is forgiven no longer leads to death. We should not be surprised that there is a sin that leads to death, but rather marvel that sin does not have to lead to death.

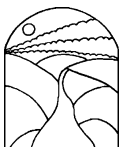
John possibly has the group of people mentioned in 1 John 2v19-23, in mind. This seems

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Ray Moxham
www.wag.org.nz

WaiukuAG
@maxnet.co.nz

to be a group who knew Jesus, but chose to reject Him, or at least the truth about Him. John does not forbid people to pray, rather he seems to stress that such prayer is futile. A similar situation is found in Jeremiah 7v16, 11v14, 14v11.

Why do you think John encourages us to pray for sinners?

Galatians 6v1, 1 Samuel 12v23, James 5v19-20.



Read Matthew 12v15-32 & Mark 3v22-30

Matthew identifies Jesus as the one who would be uniquely empowered by the Spirit v18b (Isaiah 42v1, 60v1, 11v2) Jesus words and actions made this conclusion inescapable. The Sanhedrin seem to have already recognised this, all be it in secret. John 3v2.



What did the Pharisees accuse Jesus of?

Why did they make this accusation?

Were they believers in Jesus or not?

Who did they make the accusation to?

What was the Pharisees intention when they made this accusation?

Was their attack primarily against Jesus or the Spirit?

What explanation did Jesus give as a defence?

Who did Jesus attribute His work to?

Did Jesus directly say that the Pharisees had committed this sin?

The Pharisees spoke against Jesus, and only indirectly against the Holy Spirit. It was not the accusation that Jesus was in league with Satan, that drew the response from Him, (Mark 3v22) rather the attribution of what was so obviously the work of the finger (or Spirit) of God to that of an unclean Spirit. They set themselves to oppose what they knew to be true.

You could say their words were a symptom of the sin, not the sin itself. Jesus does not say directly that they had already committed this sin. What he says comes across as a warning of where the path they are on will take them.

This is not a case of the Jewish leaders making a mistake, or being full of unbelief. They knew that Jesus was from God but still refused to believe Him. They were in the condition described in Isaiah 5v10 of putting good for evil and evil for good. cf John 3v19. This was a sin from outside the church, not inside.

In addition to this the Pharisees intention was to cause people to doubt or reject Jesus as Messiah. In another place, this by itself provoked Jesus to give a serious warning. Matthew 18v6, Mark 9v42, Luke 17v2. It was a sin associated with a position of influence.



Read Mark 3v20-21, 31-33

Were Jesus family guilty of this sin?

What were the differences between Jesus family and the Pharisees?

Later we find Jesus brothers believed, James even became a leader in the Church. Gal 1v9.

Why weren't they guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?

Paul was a great persecutor of the Church, Acts 9v1, 1 Corinthians 15v9, he even spoke of himself as a blasphemer, 1 Timothy 1v13.

Did he commit this sin? 1 Timothy 1v13b.

What mitigating circumstances were there?

Had he ignored his Damascus revelation would he have been guilty of this sin?



What would be a modern day expression of this sin?

The specifics of this sin make it surprisingly hard to duplicate. You need to know the truth and then reject it as truth. It needs to be from an unbeliever in a position of authority and it needs to be intended to mislead others. This is not the kind of sin you could commit by accident, in ignorance or unintentionally.

Matthew and Mark write of the sin against the Holy Spirit in the context of unbelievers. Two passages we will look at next week put it in the context of believers.

According to these two passages blasphemy against the Spirit is a determined rejection of known truth. A deliberate apostasy. As we will see next week there is one further criteria that is necessary to make this apostasy unforgivable.

As is often pointed out there is only one sin that will subject a person to hell, that sin is a failure to accept Jesus, God's provision of salvation.

From what we have learned so far is Satan telling the truth?

Bible Studies

Blaspheming the Spirit II

We saw last week that Matthew and Mark define the sin against the Holy Spirit as a knowing and determined rejection of God. This sin was evident in the Pharisees when they ascribed the work of the Holy Spirit to that of an unclean spirit.

Why was blasphemy against the Son excusable, when blasphemy against the Spirit was not. Clearly many ordinary people failed to recognise who Jesus was, for that they could be excused, (even if their leaders could not), but to denounce the works that Jesus did, as being from the devil, was without excuse.

The Bible portrays the Spirit as the person of the trinity most open to offence. Others have suggested that it is because it is the Holy Spirit who calls us to Christ, who convicts us and sanctifies us. To blaspheme the Spirit is to cut ourselves off from the very one who can restore us. This is the age when God is present in His people through the Holy Spirit. The unforgivable sin is not exclusively, reckoning the Holy Spirit's work to be from Satan, but it is one way this apostasy can be seen.



Read Luke 12v8-12

Luke records the sin against the Holy Spirit in an entirely different context. Luke places it between two other statements. Neither statement is directly identified with this sin, but both have a bearing on it and perhaps lead to it.

Is Luke talking to believers or unbelievers? 12v1



Disowning Jesus (Matt 10v32-33)

Jesus says that He will disown those who disown Him. 2 Timothy 2v11-13.

Peter disowned Christ, did he sin against the Holy Spirit?

Mark 14v27-31, 66-72, John 21v15-19.

Was he eternally damned for it?

The question is what did Jesus mean by disown? If He meant in a moment of weakness to fail and fall, then Peter was guilty, and so are many of us. But Peter was forgiven, obviously Jesus meant something more.

To disown Jesus, is not repeating a formula of words rejecting Him. Nor is it to deny our faith, and realising what we have done, repent. Rather it refers to the course of one's life. Matt 7v21. This is a deliberate and continued disowning of Jesus. Again we can see a connection here to a determined rejection of Jesus. The word in the English language we use to describe this is apostasy.

What does apostasy mean?

What is the difference between backsliding and apostasy?

Jesus' words may seem hard, but in reality Jesus is simply saying that He will ratify our own choice, on the day of Judgement. This verse does not describe Jesus cutting Himself off from us, but us cutting ourselves off from Him. No one is forced to go to heaven!

If we chose to, do we have the freedom to walk away from Christ?

Does the enemy have the power to make this happen? John 10v29



Refusing the Spirit's help

How does verse 12 describe the Holy Spirit?

We might ask the question, 'if I were put on trial for my life, would I be strong enough to remain faithful to Jesus?' Jesus assures us that in such an event the Holy Spirit will teach us what to say, ie He will give us the power to remain faithful. If having received that power, we then make a choice not to use it and disown Christ, that puts us in **danger** of committing this sin.

2 Timothy 2v13 makes a distinction between denying Christ and being faithless.

Do you see a difference between the two?



An eternal sin

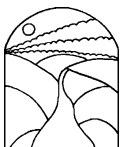
Luke makes it appear easier to commit this sin than perhaps you had thought. It is time to emphasize that this sin really is different from all other sins. *It requires that you continue in it.* Mark describes it as an eternal sin, 4v29. (Matt 12v32 can be translated *keeps speaking against*). It is not as though this sin is more serious than any other sin. It is not as though it is beyond the power of Jesus to forgive. (1 John 1v7 all sin) *It cannot be*

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Ray Moxham
www.wag.org.nz

WaiukuAG
@maxnet.co.nz

forgiven because by it's nature it refuses to repent and therefore put itself outside forgiveness. The Bible does not call this sin unforgivable, it only says, it will not be forgiven.

What is the difference?

Is there such a thing as an unforgivable sin?

All sin is forgivable, but forgiveness is only possible where there is repentance. This is a sin that puts you beyond repentance, not beyond forgiveness. Repentance is a gift from God, Acts 5v31, 11v18, 2 Timothy 2v25. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts of sin, John 16v8. If you are sorry for your sin and have a desire to change, then it is obvious that you are not cut off from the Holy Spirit.

Maybe there was a time when you;

Attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan's work. Backslide

Denied that you believed in Jesus Deliberately turned your back of Christ

If you were willing to ask for forgiveness, then you have been forgiven.



Read Hebrews 6v4-9

Who is this passage addressed to believer or unbeliever?

The author clearly has mature believers in mind. The phrase 'fall away' sounds casual, in fact the Greek tense used implies *complete falling away* (Guthrie). This is not just backsliding or faithlessness, this is the same deliberate apostasy that the Gospels talked about. *Having been believers, they are now taking their stand with those who crucified Jesus, joining as the crowd that said 'away with him, we have no king, we will not have this man'.*

Does this passage say it is impossible for them to be forgiven?

What in fact the passage says is, that it is impossible for them to come back to **repentance**, exactly the point we made earlier. The problem is not that God won't accept them back, it is that they won't come back. Some of us are living proof that God does accept prodigal sons back into the family.



Verses 7&8 give a parable to explain this.

What is the land? What is the rain? What are the two crops?

The land is us, the rain is God's blessings (the Holy Spirit?) The crops are either belief or unbelief, along the works that both produce.

Are those who turn their back on Jesus cursed?

They are in *danger* of being cursed, ie if they don't come back to repentance before it is too late, then they will be cursed.

When is the Land burned?

It is *in the end*, that the land is burnt. Again this implies that the sin of deliberate apostasy require continued apostasy to the end.

There are those who are backslidden, they have drifted from the faith, they know they are not right with God, but they have not repudiated their faith. Paul talks of such in 2 Corinthians 3v15. The line between backsliding or faithlessness and apostasy or denial is by no means clear, Paul; continually warns against falling away, 1 Corinthians 9v27, 2 Cor 13v5, Galatians 5v4, 1 Timothy 6v10.

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! 1 Corinthians 10:12

To commit the sin against the Spirit, is to knowingly and deliberately turn your back on what you know to be the truth, it is then to continue in this rejection until it is too late.



If someone has deliberately, turned away from God and fulfilled all the criteria for blaspheming the Spirit, and then come to their senses and repent will they be forgiven?

Yes. They will it is an eternal sin it requires that you continue in your apostasy until death. The problem is that having cut yourself off from God, the chances of you coming to that place of repentance is very small.

It is quite clear that blasphemy against the Spirit requires a hardened mind set to Christ. If you are frightened that you may have committed this sin, that by itself, is evidence that you haven't. If you had, you would arrogantly boast in it. You would not want to repent. If you can say the words, 'father please forgive my sin', you cannot have blasphemed the Spirit.

What attitude will those who have committed this sin show?



How does Satan use the fear of this sin in a believers life?

Is the sin against the Spirit, reciting a denial, or living a denial?

Is backsliding blasphemy against the Spirit?

Is it possible to be condemned for mistaking the Spirit's work for that of Satan's?
When was the last time you asked God to keep you from falling?