

*How Is Your Relationship
with the Holy Spirit*

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

“As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.” (Psalm 18:30).

Everything about our lives is measured by the Word of God. The Bible is the yardstick by which all our thoughts and deeds will be measured. The Word will determine what will happen to us in eternity, at the Bema Seat of Christ—the place where our works, as believers, will be evaluated and rewarded.

A major factor that will determine our rewards at the Bema Seat is how we appropriated truth. Receiving and understanding the Word is dependent upon our availability to the initiations of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who penetrates, stirs our hearts, and reveals the truth. The question is, “How did you hear, and what did you do with what you heard?”

In this booklet, we will examine the four things Christians do that limit the Holy Spirit’s

work. Not to be confused with blaspheming the Holy Spirit (which happens when an unsaved person refuses to receive Christ as his Savior), these four issues—insulting, resisting, quenching, and grieving the Spirit—are very serious. Each offense can lead to the next one, hindering the Christian's walk with God.

Chapter One

HOW CHRISTIANS GO AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 10:29).

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy [Spirit]: as your fathers did, so do ye” (Acts 7:51).

“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30).

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

Have you ever been insulted? Can you picture yourself talking to someone, only to have him start to do something else while you are still speaking? Hebrews 10:29 speaks of those who have “done despite” unto the Spirit of grace. The

Greek word for the phrase “to do despite” is *enubrizo*, and it means “to insult.” It is an insult to Christ when we fail to listen to a message from the Word of God when we are in church. Furthermore, it is an insult when we do not respond to what is being expressed in the message. When we come into the house of God, we are to mix faith with what we hear (Hebrews 4:2). Otherwise, we are insulting the Spirit.

You may have insulted the Holy Spirit today without even knowing it. To illustrate it, imagine you are sitting in a church service. Your eyes gaze upon the speaker, but your mind floats to other things. It wanders and comes back, wanders and comes back again. That is what it means to insult the Holy Spirit. It happens when we do not listen to the precise words that the communicator is expressing, as led by the Holy Spirit.

To take this further, imagine getting godly counsel from a Spirit-filled and trained counselor regarding certain problems in your life. By not listening, you insult the Holy Spirit whom he trusted for wise counsel.

It is one thing to insult one another, but it is quite another thing to insult the Holy Spirit. The pastor may preach from Galatians 5:19 that one

aspect of the lust of the flesh is fornication. Yet, if you decide to enter into an extramarital affair and continue in it, that is an insult. There is forgiveness experienced through the gift of repentance (1 John 1:9). Yet, no one should insult the Holy Spirit by using grace in vain.

Exhortations to Hear

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Revelation 2:7a).

Let me show you some areas where the Spirit has exhorted us to listen. We have been instructed to listen when we enter into worship, according to Jeremiah 7:2. Rulers and scornful men were told to listen, in Isaiah 1:10 and 28:14. The house of Jacob was told to listen, in Jeremiah 2:4. God declared to the whole world, “O earth, earth, earth, hear the Word of the Lord,” in Jeremiah 22:29. God felt the need to say these things because of all the people who were insulting the Holy Spirit by not listening to Him.

The Word of God says, “Ye mountains of Israel, hear...” (Ezekiel 36:1), “O harlot, listen...” (Ezekiel 16:35) “Shepherds—pastors—listen...”

(Ezekiel 34:7). “Dry bones, listen ...” (Ezekiel 37:4).

Listening to the Holy Spirit is so crucial.

Walking in the garden Adam and Eve heard the voice of the Lord (Genesis 3:8). Every morning, as His people listen, God brings His judgment to light, and He never fails in doing it (Zephaniah 3:5). People pressed upon Jesus to hear the Word of God (Luke 5:1), and the Lord Jesus only spoke what He heard from the Father (John 12:49-50).

Don't Stop Short of Obedience

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy [Spirit]: as your fathers did, so do ye” (Acts 7:51).

Next, we want to look at what it means to resist the Holy Spirit. To resist the Holy Spirit means to listen to what the Spirit says and then not to do it. It is hearing the Word, but then making a choice not to accept Him as a part of my nature, a part of my life. James 1:22 makes it clear that we are to hear and to obey. Psalm 18:44 tells us how vital it is that we obey as soon as we hear God speak.

Then, there are people who hear the Word of God, and they consider obeying it, but they do

not follow through. That is what it means to quench the Holy Spirit. First Thessalonians 5:19 says, "Quench not the Spirit." We quench the Spirit when we consider what He says but then make a decision not to do it. It is possible that after a church service, we can get into our cars and be busy talking about something. It is not as if we don't care what was said; however, we might be insensitive and leave the message, occupied with other details and priorities. It is possible at that moment that we have quenched the Spirit. The Holy Spirit brought us something right from heaven itself, according to the will of God, and we left it with no consideration of its impact.

Picture something on fire, then the flame goes out: we say that the flame was quenched, whether by a lack of fuel or by some outside influence. Quenching the Spirit is when people are hearing the Word of God but they stop responding. They consider it and ponder it, but then they begin to leave what the Spirit has told them. They don't follow through, and they quench the work the Spirit has begun.

The Holy Spirit is that part of God who convicts us of the truth and moves in us as He reveals the Father's plan. His message is clear, as

He bears witness of the truth with our spirit (Romans 8:16). That is why it is so crucial that we allow Him to breathe in us the breath of life. Don't insult Him by being inattentive when He speaks. Ponder each precious truth as He reveals it in your heart. Then, keep your heart on fire by never getting familiar with His provision.

Chapter Two

GRIEVING THE SPIRIT THROUGH IMPROPER RELATIONSHIPS

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:29-32).

We grieve the Holy Spirit when we get involved with improper relationships. Improper relationships are behind so many problems: improper relationships with God, with friends,

with co-workers, with your spouse, with the family. When a married man vindicates his immorality and goes out alone with a woman other than his wife, he insults Christ with the action; he resists the Spirit by refusing to hear what the Word said about the situation; he quenches the Spirit by choosing not to make the Word a part of his nature; and then he grieves the Spirit with his improper relationship, which is destructive in all that he does.

Keep Relationships Sacred

All of us have been grieved at times when trying to edify someone with kindness and in love. You sense what it means to be grieved when you see someone in a godly ministry, serving God and going along well; then one thing comes up in his family, and suddenly he starts to withdraw. That person's problems began by insulting, resisting, and quenching what God was trying to do in his life. But ultimately he grieves the Holy Spirit by having an improper relationship to the Body of Christ.

A believer grieves the Holy Spirit by allowing improper relationships to be established through gossip. The mouth is open, the tongue is wagging. Someone says something and he lis-

tens (even though he knows better), and his listening produces an improper relationship. The Bible makes it clear that relationships must be kept very carefully.

There are people everywhere that hold grudges and develop a code of silence against one another. In everything they do they insult the Spirit, resist the Spirit, quench the Spirit, and finally grieve the Spirit because they have an improper relationship.

Another example would be a person sitting in church in the midst of a revival and apparently unaware of the work of God going on around him. On a recent Sunday, sixteen people received Christ at one of our services. "That's nice," he thinks to himself, but his next thought is about his plans for the afternoon. No, it is far more than nice—it is a revival, led by the Spirit of God. But this person has an improper relationship with the Holy Spirit and he is not sensitive to the revival. Heaven and the angels are rejoicing and this person is just trying to make it to the door quickly. When souls are being saved and a person still cannot wait to get to the door, his thinking is wrong. That is extremely sad to me. The invitation is the time when we should be most attentive to the Holy Spirit's work.

Put On God's Provisions

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering” (Colossians 3:12).

In the first two chapters of Job, we see this man of God being harassed. Everything under the sun has happened to him. But there was one thing Job understood and that was that Satan's power is limited. Therefore, Job entered into a very beautiful sequence of truth from God's Word in his thought patterns, which revealed grace orientation as the premise for his thinking. He was a good steward of the grace of God as he ministered grace toward others and began to fulfill his eternal destiny, his purpose, and his eternal provision. Positive volition in his consciousness began to move in Job's life.

What did Job do? He put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humility or lowliness of mind, meekness, and longsuffering. All of that led to his victory in his troubled situation.

Every one of the fruits of the Spirit carries a special meaning for us. They begin to work in us through a major decision of our will. We simply must choose to put them on.

See Yourself as Holy

First, it is most important that we see ourselves as God sees us, "holy and beloved." This means we have been set apart and sanctified by Him to receive His love. In the midst of all the things we go through as God's people, there are always those beautiful times when God calls us "beloved." As we go through our busy schedules and stressful trials and tests, the Spirit whispers to us that we are "beloved."

Oh, if we could only realize how much God enjoys telling us how much He loves us.

Just think of how God addressed Peter in John 21:15-18. He loves us as much now as He loved Peter then. Peter was backslidden; he went back to fishing and he took a group of disciples back with him. He had such an influence on those around him.

Yet, Jesus came to Peter and restored him with love.

Everyone needs to be loved and cared for. Regardless of the weakness we find in ourselves or in others, remember how perfectly God loves us. He died for us while we were sinners, before we received Him as our Savior. Do not insult, resist, quench, or grieve the Holy Spirit when it

comes to loving the unlovely. Allow the Spirit of grace to move in you and through you. The same Spirit will give you the wisdom you need to keep each relationship pure.

Chapter Three

LIVING BY CONVICTION

There is a big difference between opinions and convictions. An opinion is based upon a preference but a conviction is based on truth from God's Word that is rooted in your conscience. A conviction rooted in the conscience motivated by the love of God takes us through proper hearing, proper relationships, proper reception, proper propagation, and proper communication with the very Word of God which we hear.

Martin Luther prayed that God's will would be done in his life. He really didn't want to serve God, but he thought he would like to be religious. One day, a bolt of lightning struck and killed his best friend as they were walking. Within twenty-four hours, Luther made the decision to go into ministry, even going against the wishes of his parents.

A conviction was established in Luther's

heart by the Holy Spirit and he went on to change the world by following God.

Bringing Forth Fruit

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24).

Imagine if Jesus Christ, the sinless, perfect Son of God, had never fulfilled this Word. He would have gone to heaven because of his own perfection. He could have gone directly to heaven to live forever with His Father, but He would have had to abide there alone. He would have no Bride. He would have no Body. But in order for Him to have a Body and a Bride, Jesus Christ had to die.

Think of this: The life that Jesus Christ lived in his humanity condemned us because it fulfilled the Law (John 3:18-19). That was the life of the Holy Spirit in Him. Not only did Jesus’ life condemn us, it also made it possible for Him to die a vicarious death that was perfect and paid for all of our sins. It also made it possible for you and me to receive the Holy Spirit and receive the very same life that was in Jesus Christ. Now, simply by believing and receiving Him as our

Savior, He can live in us with the very same life that He lived in His own body. Henceforth, for those who believe, there is therefore *no* condemnation (Romans 8:1).

The Will to Do of His Good Pleasure

“For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him.” (Job 23:14).

“Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it” (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

Once we receive the same life of the Holy Spirit that qualified Jesus to die for us, once we receive Jesus Christ’s perfect life, we are justified by His Blood. That life comes into us and stays in us. We are saved from wrath. We are reconciled by His death. But much more than reconciled, we are saved by His life.

What a phenomenal privilege we have in being saved by the same life that was in Jesus. There is now not a single thing He will ask us to do that He will not perform. The very same life that was in Him to keep Him from sinning is now in us to keep us from sinning.

The Law condemned us and the life Jesus Christ lived condemned us. But when we accept Him as our Savior, there is no more condemna-

tion. By grace through faith, we are saved. It is indeed a gift from God. There are no works by which any of us can boast.

CONCLUSION

As Christians, we should be able to identify with people who suffer, whether their suffering is deserved or undeserved. Instead of being critical or judgmental, we can receive the filling of the Holy Spirit and let the words of life live in us and fill our hearts. The life Jesus lived, lives in us.

In the serenity of faith, the purity of truth, and the acknowledgement of God's integrity, we can live as recipients and partakers of the nature that allows us to escape the corruption that is in this world (2 Peter 1:4).

Jesus in all of His holiness comes to us and says, "Can I have your hands? Can I have your eyes? Can I have your ears, your feet, and your mind? I want to borrow your humanity."

Oh, may our response be this: "Yes, Lord, you can have all those things. And please help me rebound if I ever take back these things. By Your grace and Your mercies, I present my body

as a living sacrifice on this day and every day.”