

The Holy Spirit
First Baptist Church Dandridge
Winter 2026

Session Six: Sins Against the Holy Spirit

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1. Grieving the Holy Spirit

a. **Ephesians 4:30** – “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” (cf. Isaiah 63:10)

- **Definition:** The word “grieve” is translated from the Greek word “lypeō,” and it means to make sorrowful, to cause pain, to affect with sadness, and to offend. The word was used in Matthew 17:23 to describe the sadness of the disciples after Jesus predicted his death. It was also used in Mark 10:22, where the rich young ruler walked away in sadness because he loved his possessions more than Jesus, forfeiting eternal life. Therefore, it describes a deep sadness, the type that overwhelms a person when they experience incredible loss.
- **Theology:** This description is further biblical evidence that the Holy Spirit is a person, not merely a force or power. The Holy Spirit is fully God, joined with the Father and Son in the Trinity. Bruce Milne writes, “One can resist a power, but grieve only a person.”

b. **How Does a Believer Grieve the Holy Spirit?**

- **Context:** This truth is mentioned in the context of Ephesians 4:17-32, where Paul is describing the new life that believers have in Christ, “no longer walking as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds...darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart...given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!” (4:17-20). He continues by warning believers with a list of sins to avoid: speaking falsehoods, sinful anger, theft, dishonesty, selfishness, corrupting talk, bitterness, wrath, slander, malice, and refusing to forgive someone (4:25-32).
- **Danger:** When we think and act in sinful ways, we sadden the Holy Spirit, breaking his heart like a child who disobeys his or her parents, leading to shame and consequences.
- **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** – “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with the price. So glorify God in your body.”

- **Temple:** When Paul describes a believer's body as a "temple of the Holy Spirit within you," he's indicating that the Spirit indwells believers at the moment they are saved. In this sense, the Holy Spirit becomes a part of a believer—filling him, changing him, teaching him, loving him, warning him, protecting him, and sealing him until the day of redemption. He never leaves. In John 14-17, Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the "Paraclete," the One who comes alongside to help, comfort, advocate, and counsel. The Holy Spirit resides within us and experiences life with us. Therefore, whatever we see, hear, or do, we experience it with him.

c. Debate Over Impassability

- **Impassability:** The doctrine of God's impassability refers to God's inability to suffer emotionally (i.e. passions) as to change his principles, promises, or plans. For example, God could never look at sinners and feel sorry for them to the point that he decides to no longer bring judgment. Malachi 3:6 states that God is unchanging.
- **Grief:** However, when Paul writes that the Holy Spirit grieves over the sin of believers, he is using language that humans understand to indicate God's displeasure and disappointment with our sin. Therefore, understanding how God see our sin should drive us to obey him.
- **Quote:** "The challenge to believers then and now is to recognize the implications of their actions. If they allow the flesh to determine their practices instead of the Spirit, they demonstrate who or what is their true love" (Warrington, 229).

2. Quenching the Holy Spirit

a. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 – "Do not quench the Spirit."

- **Definition:** The word "quench" is translated from the Greek word "sbennymi," and it literally means to extinguish a fire. In other usages the word means to suppress or stifle something. Paul used this word in Ephesians 6:6 to describe how the "shield of faith" will "extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one." It pictures someone throwing a cup of water on a fire, slowing down the flames. Therefore, it describes suppressing or limiting the Holy Spirit's work in one's life, where his power doesn't move in full force.

b. How Does a Believer Quench the Holy Spirit?

- **Context:** In the context of 1 Thessalonians 5, Paul is giving a final set of commands for living a faithful life. He mentions respecting pastors and ministry leaders, living at peace with others, admonishing the idle, encouraging the fainthearted, helping the weak, not seeking revenge, giving thanks, testing prophecies, and abstaining from every form of evil.

- **Danger:** These instructions surround the command, “Do not quench the Spirit,” meaning that the Holy Spirit is quenched when we willfully disobey God. Like a blazing fire that slows down to a simmer, the Holy Spirit’s power is reduced in our lives when we engage in sin and fail to repent. In essence, we suppress his involvement and influence in our lives.

3. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit

- a. **Matthew 12:31-32** – “Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.” (cf. Mark 3:28-30; Luke 12:10).
 - **Definition:** The word “blasphemy” is translated from the Greek word “blasphēmia,” and it means to slander or injure someone’s good name. The word is used in theology to describe someone who speaks insults or judgments against God. In John 10:33, the religious leaders accused Jesus of blasphemy because he confessed to being God. In Revelation 13:5, the beast “was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.” Therefore, the word is used negatively in the Bible to describe those who utter insults to God.
- b. **How Does a Person Blaspheme the Holy Spirit?**
 - **Context:** In Matthew 12 (cf. Mark 3, Luke 12), Jesus healed a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute. When the crowds saw that the man could speak and see, the people were shocked and amazed, wondering, “Can this be the Son of David?” However, when the Pharisees witnessed the miracle and heard the crowd’s response that Jesus could be the Messiah, they made the outrageous claim, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.” In other words, they were accusing Jesus of receiving his power from Satan.
 - **Response:** In order to clear up this severe accusation, Jesus explained that it’s impossible for “Satan to cast out Satan,” because his kingdom would be divided against itself and could not stand. Such a position is logically and theologically impossible.
 - **Danger:** Finally, Jesus issued the most serious warning in the Bible. “Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven...either in this age or the age to come.” In other words, such a sin is unpardonable, and those who are guilty have no hope of salvation.
 - **What is this sin?** The sin isn’t merely saying something negative about the Holy Spirit, like criticizing him, but it’s an attitude that purposely resists the Holy Spirit’s witness. It’s the person who senses the Holy Spirit and sees irrefutable evidence of his work, but continues to resist his calling to repent and follow Jesus. Theologically speaking, the reason the sin

isn't forgivable is because the only way to receive forgiveness for any sin is to obey the Spirit's conviction to repent. If someone shuts off God's means for drawing them to Christ, nothing will draw them, and they will die in their sins.

- **Hebrews 10:29–30** – “How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.”
- **Quote:** “In such a case the hardness of heart would be so great that any ordinary means of bringing a sinner to repentance would already have been rejected.... In this case it is not that the sin itself is so horrible that it could not be covered by Christ's redemptive work, but rather that the sinner's hardened heart puts him or her beyond the reach of God's ordinary means of bringing forgiveness through repentance and trusting in Christ for salvation. The sin is unpardonable because it cuts off the sinner from repentance and saving faith through belief in the truth.” (Grudem, 508).
- **Quote:** “The sin consists in the conscious, malicious, and willful rejection and slander, against evidence and conviction, of the testimony of the Holy Spirit respecting the grace of God in Christ, attributing it out of hatred and enmity to the Prince of Darkness” (Berkoff, 253).
- **Extremely Important Note:** Countless Christians throughout the ages have fearfully questioned if they have committed this sin. Some have thought it was adultery, divorce, murder, suicide, etc. However, if someone is deeply concerned about their status with God, it proves they have not committed this sin. Otherwise, they wouldn't care.