

Habits that Grieve the Holy Spirit

March 22, 2026, Sunday AM

Text: Ephesians 4:25-32(NKJ)

- * Let me start, this morning by saying, we're going to talk about something today that every single one of us has wrestled with at some level.
 - It is not just people out in the wider world . . . I'm talking about us . . . Me included.
 - And if we're not careful, this issue can quietly shape our attitudes, affect our relationships, and even hinder what God wants to do in us and through us.
- * But here's the good news . . . God never exposes something to shame us, He reveals things so He can heal us.
- * I want talk about something that is so very easy to get caught up in and not even understand the damage we are doing.
 - There are habits we allow in our lives that the enemy has convinced us we are doing right.
 - At times, these habits even feel like a kind of therapy . . . Something we lean on to cope when we're struggling.
 - They can give us the illusion that we're growing, that we're making progress.
 - **But in reality we are grieving the Holy Spirit!!** . . . Let's look our text . . .

Read Text: Ephesians 4:25-32(NKJ)

Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

- * Paul is writing to believers . . . Spirit-filled, born-again people . . . And he's calling them to live in alignment with their new nature in Christ.
 - He says in verse 30 . . . ***Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.***
 - It is one of the most sobering verses in the New Testament.
 - That statement alone tells us something profound . . .
 - The Holy Spirit is not merely a force or influence . . . He is a person.
 - He can be welcomed . . . Or He can also be grieved.
 - **He is deeply affected by how we treat one another.**
- * The word grieve carries the idea of causing sorrow or distress to someone you love.
 - Think about that for a moment . . . The Spirit of God lives within us.
 - He is the One who convicts, comforts, empowers, and leads us.

- Yet our attitudes and habits can either create an atmosphere where He moves freely, or one where His presence is hindered.
- * Paul places that warning in the middle of a passage about everyday behavior . . .
 - How we speak, how we treat one another, and how we live our lives in the body of Christ.
 - This means grieving the Spirit is not about dramatic rebellion . . .
 - It is about **daily habits of the heart**.
- * So, this morning we are going to look at three habits that grieve the Holy Spirit and can hinder your life and the life of the church.

1. The Habit of Being Judgmental.

- * I want to begin with the habit of being judgmental.
 - Paul begins in verse 25 . . . ***Therefore, putting away lying, let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.***
 - At first glance, this seems to be about honesty . . . But it goes deeper.
 - Speaking truth here isn't just about avoiding lies . . . It's about walking in relational integrity and humility.
 - Judging others often disguises itself as "discernment" or "just being honest."
 - But Jesus warned in Matthew 7:1–5 that judgment flows from a heart that has not first dealt with its own condition.

Matt 7:1-5(NKJ) *Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*

- * In this passage Jesus uses a powerful illustration.
 - Imagine someone trying to remove a tiny speck from another person's eye while ignoring a large plank sticking out of their own.
 - The image is almost humorous . . . But the point is deeply serious.
- * Jesus is exposing the human tendency to magnify the faults of others while minimizing our own.
 - The judging spirit assumes we know someone else's motives.
 - It assumes our perspective is the correct one.
 - It quietly places us in the seat of authority over another believer's life.
- * Paul reinforces this truth in Romans 14:1-4(NKJ) . . .

Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

- * Do get lost or limited by the imagery what people eat . . . The point is judging what is not our to judge . . . **What is being confront here in both our text and Romans is a judgmental spirit.**
 - A judgmental spirit assumes superiority.
 - It assumes we understand another person's motives.
 - It elevates our own righteousness while magnifying someone else's faults.
 - Jesus says before you correct someone else, examine your own heart first.
- * Listen to what Paul says again in Rom 14:4(NKJ) ***Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.***
 - In other words, every believer ultimately answers to the Lord.
 - When we take on the role of judge over others, we are stepping into a position that belongs to God alone.
- * A powerful biblical example of this habit appears in John 8.
 - The Pharisees brought a woman caught in the act of adultery before Jesus.
 - They were ready to stone her according to the law . . . And the law was on their side.
 - But Jesus did something unexpected . . . John 8:7(NKJ) the Bible says . . . ***So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."***
 - And one by one this women accusers walked away . . . Why?
 - **Because judging others is easy until the light of God shines on our own hearts.**
 - **Jesus did not excuse the woman's sin . . . He approached her with mercy and restoration rather than condemnation.**
- * The problem is this habit often shows up in the church in subtle ways.
 - Someone may say . . . "Why does that person worship like that?"
 - "Why are they always late?" . . . "Why don't they serve more?" . . . "Why do they dress like that?"
 - But we rarely know the full story.
 - We don't know what battle someone fought just to make it to church that morning.
 - We don't know the struggles they are carrying.
 - We don't know the work the Holy Spirit is doing in their life.
 - Judging creates distance instead of compassion.
- * A judging spirit damages the very thing the Holy Spirit came to build . . . The unity of the body.
 - Eph 4:1-3(NKJ) Says . . . ***I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.***
 - Notice that phrase . . . ***The unity of the Spirit.***
 - Unity is something the Holy Spirit produces.
 - But when believers constantly measure, compare, and condemn one another, that unity is fractured and divided.
- * Judging also feeds pride . . . James 4:6(NKJ) ***God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.***
 - **A judging spirit often reveals a heart that has forgotten how much grace it has received.**

- * Instead of judging others the Bible calls us to practice humble self-examination.
 - Paul writes in 1 Cor 11:31(NKJ) ***For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.***
 - Healthy believers regularly examine their own hearts before God.
 - David prayed this way in Psalm 139:23-24(NKJ) ***Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting . . .*** That is a Spirit-led habit!
 - Instead of magnifying another person's faults, we ask the Holy Spirit to reveal our own.
- * Another way of overcoming a judgmental spirit is showing mercy.
 - James 2:13(NKJ) says . . . ***For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.***
 - The church should be the place where grace flows freely, because we all need grace.
 - When we remember that we were forgiven, restored, and lifted by God's mercy, it changes how we look at others . . . **Instead of judging them, we begin to pray for them.**

2. The Habit of Being Critical.

- * The second habit that grieves the Holy Spirit is being critical.
 - Judging and criticizing often travel together, but they are not exactly the same.
 - Judging deals with the attitude of the heart . . . Criticizing shows up in the words of our mouth!
 - Our text says in Eph 4:29(NKJ) ***Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.***
 - James 4:11-12(NKJ) **Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?**
 - James marries the ideas of "speaking evil" of someone and judgement.
 - The phrase "speak evil" means to slander, tear down, or speak against someone.
- * Notice the contrast in these two passages . . . Corrupt speech tears down.
 - Spirit-led speech builds up.
- * Criticism often disguises itself as concern, discernment, or even honesty.
 - But the fruit of criticism is rarely helpful . . . It leaves people discouraged, wounded, and defensive.
- * What we must come to understand is the Holy Spirit is a builder of the church.
 - You and I are the material which He uses to build His church.
 - 1 Peter 2:4-5(NKJ) says . . . ***Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.***
 - This phrase . . . "Lively stones" is a biblical metaphor describing you and I as living, active, and vibrant components being built into a spiritual temple by God.
 - **But constant criticism weakens the body** . . . It discourages those who serve.
 - It creates an atmosphere where people feel unsafe to grow.

- * A church filled with criticism becomes heavy and tense.
 - But a church filled with encouragement becomes alive with faith.
 - The Holy Spirit moves where faith, love, and encouragement are present.
- * We see a power example of this in the book of Numbers chapter 12
 - Miriam and Aaron are criticizing Moses
 - The surface issue was Moses' wife, but beneath that complaint was jealousy over leadership.
 - Num 12:2(NKJ) ***So they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it.***
 - God heard their criticism . . . God defended Moses and judged Miriam with leprosy until she repented.
 - This story reveals something important . . . Criticism against God's servants and His work grieves the heart of the Holy Spirit.
- * Here is the problem criticism often spreads quietly through conversations . . . Someone says . . .
 - "I didn't like the worship today." . . . "The sermon was too long."
 - "They should have done it differently."
 - Now, constructive feedback has its place . . . It done in love, grace, and humility.
 - But criticism really is pride masquerading as concern . . . It never builds anything good.
 - Instead it discourages those who serve.
- * Imagine a volunteer who practiced all week to lead worship.
 - Then afterward they overhear someone criticizing their effort.
 - Instead of feeling strengthened, they feel wounded.
 - Words can either fuel ministry or drain the life out of it.
- * The antidote to criticism is intentional encouragement.
 - Hebrews 10:24–25(NKJ) says . . . ***And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.***
 - Encouragement multiplies strength in the body of Christ.
 - And when the atmosphere becomes filled with encouragement, the Holy Spirit moves freely.

3. The Habit of Complaining.

- * The third habit that grieves the Holy Spirit is complaining.
 - The habit of complaining is a habit that can quietly take root in our lives . . . One that feels small, even justified at times . . . But carries deep spiritual consequences.
 - The bible speaks directly to this in Phil 2:14-15(NLT) ***Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.***
 - That means complaining isn't just a personality trait . . . It's a spiritual issue.
 - It affects how we represent Christ in a dark world.
- * We've all encountered people who seem to live in the "complaint department."

- Nothing satisfies them . . . Nothing brings lasting joy.
 - But if we're honest, this isn't just about "them" . . . It's something we all must guard against.
- * Complaining often begins quietly, deep in the heart . . . **It starts with discontentment.**
- A thought creeps in . . . "This isn't what I wanted."
 - That thought becomes words . . . "This isn't right."
 - Those words become a pattern . . . "Nothing is ever right."
 - And before long, it becomes a habit that shapes our perspective.
- * The Bible shows us this clearly in the story of Israel.
- After God delivered them from Egypt, they complained again and again, over 25 times.
 - They saw miracles, the Red Sea part, manna fall from heaven, water flow from a rock, yet they still complained . . . **Why? Because complaining blinded them to God's goodness.**
 - 1 Corinthians 10:10 warns us . . . ***And don't grumble as some of them did, and then were destroyed by the angel of death.***
 - Their issue wasn't just their circumstances . . . It was their perspective.
 - Complaining is ultimately a gratitude problem.
 - It magnifies the past, distorts the present, and ignores God's faithfulness.
 - When we become ungrateful we start to believe that what God has done is not enough and what He is doing is not good . . . And that's dangerous.
- * Complaining robs us of joy . . . Complaining destroys peace . . . Complaining hinders progress.
- Complaining undermines faith . . . Faith says, "God is able."
 - Complaining says, "This will never work."
 - And the Holy Spirit will not move in an atmosphere of unbelief.
- * So how do we overcome this? . . . The answer is not pretending life is perfect.
- The answer is cultivating gratitude and trust.
 - 1 Thess 5:18 says . . . ***In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God.***
 - Notice, it doesn't say for everything, but in everything.
 - That means even in difficulty, we can choose to remember who God is and be thankful.
- * And when gratitude and trust rise, something powerful happens.
- Complaining turns into worship . . . Frustration turns into faith . . . The atmosphere shifts.
 - Instead of draining the room, we begin to lift it.
 - And that kind of environment invites the Holy Spirit to move.

Conclusion (Call up Worship Team)

- * The Holy Spirit loves an atmosphere where He is welcome.
 - He moves where there is humility instead of judgment.
 - He moves where there is encouragement instead of criticism.
 - He moves where there is gratitude instead of complaining.
- * When those healthy habits fill a church, the spiritual atmosphere changes.
 - Unity grows . . . Faith increases . . . And the presence of God becomes tangible.