

## The Holy Spirit Sins Against the Holy Spirit

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HDBC

**As a Peace Corps** volunteer, Tom Yoder had tried for six months to earn the trust of an African tribe. He was eager to share innovative farming and marketing techniques that would change their lives. But they didn't trust him.

**One day**, a young boy came to Tom's hut. He pointed to the far end of the village and said: "The family that lives in that hut is sick. They've been abandoned to die. Can you help?" **Tom rushed** to the hut and immediately realized that the family had contracted yellow-fever. For the next six days, he nursed the family until each was strong enough to be transported 90 miles to a hospital. Each family member returned later, completely healed.

**The villagers** nicknamed him the **great fearless one**. From then on they accepted him and listened to him. Tom wrote about this amazing turn in his journal: "It's easy to be fearless when you've been vaccinated against a disease."

**Because of something** that had been injected into his body, Tom could face Yellow Fever with no fear of getting the disease. That immunization enabled him to survive and thrive in a hostile environment.

**Before He left** to return to Heaven, Jesus promised to send a **Helper** who would not only be **with His disciples** but would be **in His disciples**. That promise was realized through the coming and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As we have already pointed out in this series, every born again believer in Christ is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. If you are a Christian, the Holy Spirit lives in you. His presence enables you to **live fearlessly, confidently and with purity** in a hostile world.

**Jesus promised** to send the Holy Spirit and He did.

**We are baptized** by the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation.

**We are to be filled with** the Holy Spirit on a continual basis

**Being filled with the Spirit** is the critical key to our ability to live as Christ wants us to live. That means allowing the Holy Spirit **complete control** of our lives. The keys to being filled with the Spirit are confession of sins and conscious surrender of our will to the will of Christ. When we are filled with the Spirit we will walk under His influence and be obedient to Christ, resulting in a sense of His presence in us.

**That's the plan** that Jesus laid out for his disciples and the plan that is confirmed in the rest of the New Testament writings. That is the goal! **But we don't always** obey his voice, his promptings, his leadings. We are not always **filled with the Spirit**. In fact there are times when we actually sin against the Holy Spirit. And that is what I want to teach you about this morning.

**Believers and unbelievers can sin against the Holy Spirit.** Three primary sins identified in the Bible as sins against the Holy Spirit. First committed only by unbelievers and the next two by believers. I will add a fourth that is not explicitly spelled out in the Bible, but is certainly a sin against the Holy Spirit.

#### **1. Blasphemy Against the Spirit (Matthew 12:31-32)**

It is the one sin that even God will not forgive. It is the unpardonable sin. If there is one unpardonable sin, it is pretty important to know what it is.

**Blasphemy** - Defiant irreverence, purposefully degrading that which is holy.

**Context:** Jesus was casting out demons. The religious leaders accused him of doing so in the power of Satan. In verse 28 Jesus makes it clear that the power to cast out demons came from the Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit). So, they were rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit and actually giving Satan credit for it. Wow! That was a very serious accusation.

**Note what Jesus points out** in verse 30. There are only two sides in this spiritual conflict. You are either a follower of Christ or you are against Christ. There is no middle ground. Every person has a choice to make. He points out that they were choosing to Satan rather than God.

**It is in** that context that Jesus makes his statement about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. It was in a context of deciding which side one would be on. In other words, what will a person do with Jesus. If a person follows Christ they are born again. If not, they remain lost and in essence against Christ.

**Blasphemy** - Defiant irreverence, purposefully degrading that which is holy. Not just a case of saying certain words, like cursing God. It reveals a rebellious heart and it is a rebellious heart that will condemn a man. In this case, it speaks of a rebellious heart when it comes to the decision about to accept or reject Christ and His offer of salvation.

**When it comes to salvation**, the works of the Father and the Son are permanently fixed in history. Redemption was the Father's plan before the foundation of the world. The Son's work in redemption was to become a man, live sinless life, die sacrificial death, rise from dead. This happened at a point in time, historical, non-repeatable event. Unchangeable.

**But what about** the work of the Holy Spirit in redemption. His work is continual, rather than fixed in time and space. It is current, present tense. It is His work in the an individual's life that produces salvation and forgiveness. It is His role to come personally to individuals and to convict them of their sins, pointing them to Christ.

**A person who** absolutely rejects the invitation of the Holy Spirit is sealing his or her doom forever and ever. When a person defiantly rejects the invitation and arrogantly turns back on Him, **they have no hope of salvation.**

**Max Lucado** has great insights on this. *Hell is the chosen place of the person who loves self more than God, who loves sin more than his Savior, who loves this world more than God's world. Judgment is that moment when God looks at the rebellious and says, "Your choice will be honored.*

## 2. **Grieving the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30-32)**

A sin that can be committed by believers. Note the comforting reminder that we have been sealed for the day of redemption. Great reminder that though

we sin against Him, the Holy Spirit will not abandon us. He has sealed us with a seal that cannot be broken.

**Grieve** - to make sorrowful; to affect with sadness. To throw into sorrow.

**Remember** the Holy Spirit is a person. He can be grieved or made sorrowful. In his book on the Holy Spirit, Billy Graham makes the interesting observation that **“grieve” is a love word**. We may hurt or anger one who has no affection for us, but we can grieve only a person who loves us.

#### How Does a Christian Grieve the Spirit?

If you read the entire context of this statement you realize Paul is saying anything that we do by word, deed or attitude that is not Christ-like will grieve the Holy Spirit. Not simply a matter of listing one or two specific sins that grieve Him. **Any time we sin, He is grieved**. It breaks his heart because He loves us and wants us to enjoy all that the Father has for us.

#### How do you know if you are grieving the Spirit?

When He is grieved your source of joy is no longer joyful. Therefore your joy is affected. Are you filled with deep, inner joy in your walk with Christ? If so, then you are not likely grieving Him. But if there is an uneasiness in your soul, lack of joy and peace, He may be grieving over your sin.

### 3. **Quenching the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19)**

Grieving the Spirit seems to imply a **bruised heart**. It focuses on the feelings of the Spirit. Quenching the Spirit sounds like something altogether different.

#### *Do not quench the Spirit;*

Grieve focuses on the **feelings** of the Spirit. Quench highlights the **effectiveness of the Spirit**. When we sin we grieve the Spirit. He hurts and feels sorrow. But our sin also hinders the effectiveness of the work of the Spirit in/through us.

**Quench** - to extinguish or to quench as of something on fire. To put something out. To damper, suppress, stifle.

Eph. 6:16 - *taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one.*

**When we allow** sin to reside in us, we put out the Holy Spirit fire. We hold him back. We hinder his work in and through us. **Like a clear stream that becomes clogged with debris. Like arteries that are clogged with cholesterol.**

**If we are to avoid** grieving and quenching the Spirit we must deal aggressively with our sin. We must constantly work to minimize its presence in our lives. And confess and repent when it finds its way back in.

**Psalm 51:14-17; Psalm 32:1-5**

#### **4. Impersonating the Spirit**

The Bible does not directly address this, but I think it is important to consider it. Too many of us try to be the Holy Spirit for other people. We assume we know what the will of God for another person. Certainly we can counsel others and help others as they discern the will of God. However, you and I have to reject the temptation to impersonate the Holy Spirit when it comes to others. Generally reveals a lack of grace and focus on law, your law!

What Bible translation to use.

What kind of music is best for worship.

What political party or candidates to support.

What position to take on immigration, the lottery or minimum wage.

How to dress for church or whether or not to have a tattoo.

**When we are** led by the Holy Spirit, we operate in grace, not law!

**The Holy Spirit is a good and precious gift** given to each one of us. He is for us and wants to help us enjoy all that Christ has for us. He loves you and wants what is best for you. When we sin against him by rejecting his offer of salvation, by grieving him, quenching Him and impersonating Him, it not only affects Him, but it impacts us.

In 2016 NPR ran a heartbreaking interview with Robert Ebeling, an engineer who worked on the 1986 *Challenger* launch that resulted in the death of all seven occupants. In January 1986, Ebeling and four other engineers pleaded for the launch to be delayed; they anticipated the precise failure that would destroy the shuttle.

That night, Ebeling even told his wife, Darlene, "It's going to blow up." The engineers' pleas were refused. The morning of the launch the frustrated engineer told his daughter the same thing. It is going to blow up and they are all going to die. That is exactly what happened.

The lesson . . . there were warnings that were ignored. How much more serious if we ignore our own sins.