



1 John 3:24 Pt 2
Resisting, Grieving, and Quenching The Spirit

We're in the middle of going through the book of 1 John, verse-by-verse, chapter by chapter and we've learned that John isn't interested in what people *say* about themselves and God, he knows, as many of us know – talk is cheap – he says if we have a true relationship with God there will be proof, evidence, that we can look for in our lives. So far he's given us a list of three things to look for: obedience to God's commands, love for other people, and what we looked at last week, the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

1 John 3:24 Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him.
And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Last week we really zoomed in on this truth: that God actually comes to live inside the person who has been born-again. When you come to Christ, you don't just receive forgiveness of your sins; you also become a place of residence for God.

Now, that's hard to understand, but it's true. It's all over Scripture. It doesn't matter if you're eight or eighty. It doesn't matter if you're male or female, Norwegian, Swiss, Hawaiian, or Chinese; it doesn't matter if you've got a G.E.D. or PhD; it doesn't matter if you're barely scraping by or sitting comfortably in life, if God has adopted you as His son or daughter, He has also come to reside, to dwell, to live, to abide in you.

This is where we get the whole idea of 'inviting God into your heart.' Did you ever stop and consider what that means? It means really inviting Him in. Now that doesn't mean He takes over your left atrium – like you're opening up a little cardiac Air BnB. It's not a purely physiological change, and yet, it's more than just metaphorical poetry at the same time.

When you go from *not* being a Christian to becoming a Christian, something real happens. You really are a different person. It's described as being born-again, as inviting God into your heart, as God bestowing His love on you, as Him planting a seed in you – there's no 100% accurate and specific way to define exactly what happens, and yet the change is very real – you once were not something, you did not have something, and now, after a collision between you and God your soul has been radically altered and your eternal destiny has been changed.

John expresses it here by saying, if you are a Christian, God abides in you, and you know it by His Spirit – the Holy Spirit – who is in you. It is a fact.

That's what we looked at last week and what we will continue to look at this week, because although only one of us was ordained this morning, all of us have been called by God to serve Him – the only difference is in the scope of our ministry and who we are ministering to. The Holy Spirit lives in you, Christian, just as much as He lives in Stephen, and though

He has called Stephen to serve God by serving the church, He has also called you to serve God in some way as well.

But how we can do that well, without missing out, stalling out, or getting burned out? That's the question we need to consider. And from what I see in the Bible there are three dangerous responses to the Holy Spirit that we need to be aware of in our lives: we can resist the Holy Spirit, grieve the Holy Spirit, and quench the Holy Spirit.

Let's start with resisting the Spirit. Jesus said the Holy Spirit (John 16:8) "[convicts the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.](#)" If you are not a believer in Christ, the Holy Spirit comes to you and convicts you of your sin; you have that sense that what you're doing is wrong. He helps you see the need to change. But we don't always like what God says about our thoughts, our choices, and our actions, do we? The conviction of the Holy Spirit slams into our pride like a hammer hitting our finger and it's not a comfortable experience -- He says we're wrong, we say we're OK and if we cling to what we think, we **resist** what God wants to do in our lives.

That's nothing new. Just days after Jesus rose from the dead, Stephen, one of His early disciples, told the Pharisees, the local religious leaders who had been involved in His death:

[Acts 7:51](#) "*You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so *do* you.*"

People have always resisted God – which is kind of incredible, because God doesn't owe us anything – there's no reason He has to save us or rescue our souls. We suffer because we've turned from Him, but He is kind, He is merciful so He takes it upon Himself to save us, and then He brings us the message of salvation, and some still resist. It's amazing, but again, we all know from personal experience, it's true.

And yet, even though God is gracious, He's no pushover. God said very early on, (Gen 6:3) "[My Spirit shall not always strive with man.](#)" A point comes when God says, 'Alright, if that's the way you want it to be,' and He leaves people in their sin and the consequences it brings.

The author of Hebrews has these ominous words:

[Heb 10:29 \(ESV\)](#) *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? 30 For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

The Bible speaks of only one sin as being 'unforgiveable': the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit – that is resisting the work that God is obviously doing as He tries to get your attention. He's reaching out to you and you completely write it off or explain it away. If that's your response to the conviction He brings in your life, how can you be saved?

Jesus said

Matt 12:31 “Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy *against* the Spirit will not be forgiven men. 32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the *age* to come.

The Holy Spirit wants to see you forgiven, wants to give you a new life, and wants to take up residence inside you. You’re listening to this message right now, and you’ve either already made the choice to accept it or you’re facing that choice right now – the Holy Spirit is offering you the choice – will you resist Him or receive Him?

You need to know: God is a gentleman – He will call out to you, He will woo you, but He will not force Himself upon you. It’s the only real superpower you have – YOU can resist God. But you’re a fool if you do.

On the other hand, if you open your heart and say, ‘Jesus, forgive me of my sin, and be my Lord,’ then the Holy Spirit comes inside you.

1 John 3:24 Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Of course, even though we’ve been forgiven of past sin, and God has come to dwell inside us, we still find ourselves tempted by sin and at times we get involved with things we have no business doing as Christians and this grieves the Holy Spirit. And so Paul admonishes us

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

It’s like a malfunctioning marriage. You showed up at the altar and said your vows, but your behavior, your attitude, and your actions aren’t contributing to the health of the relationship so now the Holy Spirit is embarrassed by you. More than that, He is grieved by you.

You have to remember, Christians believe in a triune God – three persons in one - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. That’s three *persons*, not two persons and a force. The old King James Version of the Bible translated it as the Holy Ghost which gives us the wrong idea of the Holy Spirit as a thing instead of a person, but throughout the Bible we see the Spirit acting like and being treated like a person, not a force.

And this person resides inside you, so the Bible says keep that in mind and act accordingly.

1 Cor 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were

bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

We either glorify God in our lives or we grieve Him. Which do you think is going on in your life?

It's probably both, isn't it? Just like any long-term relationship whether it's friends, or family or spouses – there are things we like about each other and things we put up with. It's the same with you and God. He has forgiven you of all your sin, but there are still things in your life that grieve Him.

Think about that – because grief involves a sense of hurt. Have you ever seen someone grieve the loss of someone they love? Grief is powerful, isn't it? It's a very strong emotion. Something has happened outside of the person, and now their insides are torn apart. That's the word the Bible uses to describe the impact you can have on God.

How? What do we do that grieves God? If you think about it, you probably already know. I'm certain at some point He spoke very clearly to you about it. It may have been a year ago, or ten years ago, or it may have been last night – but at some point He showed you something in your life that He wasn't pleased about. How did you respond?

What is it that always comes up when you try to get closer to God? What is the thing that you know needs to change? Even if it's something small, something permissible, something 'ridiculous.' You see, it might not be the object, the action, or the activity itself, it may just be the fact that God is saying one thing and you're saying, "not yet Lord," or "not that Lord." God will do far greater and better things for you than this 'thing' or this attitude or thought-pattern ever will. He wants to make you better.

Remember, He is the *Holy Spirit* and He's constantly calling you toward greater and greater holiness. So, is that a word that would describe your life? It's not if you're grieving the Spirit instead of glorifying Him by clinging to things that pull you away from God.

So, are there things in your life right now that grieve the Holy Spirit? Remember, He is with you everywhere you go. He knows what you type into Google. He hears what you're listening to on the radio, what you're watching, what you're reading. You're bringing all of these things into His home through your eyes, and ears, and mouth and nose. You're taking things in and asking God to live with them. Are you aware of that?

Do you have things in your physical home that would embarrass you if Jesus Christ showed up, in the flesh, and came over for dinner? Would He be a welcome guest in your home for the week? Could He use your computer? Could you hand Him your phone? If He came back to earth again, just as He once walked the sandy streets of Jerusalem – if He walked the streets of Burke, or Arlington, or Fairfax today, could He come into your home or room or apartment without being grieved by what He found there?

OK, now think again about the fact that He does – only He doesn't walk around beside you, He walks around inside you.

1 John 3:24 ...by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Are you grieving God? And if so, what are you going to do about it? Will you listen to His voice, will you respond, will you obey? Will you ask Him for help in getting rid of the junk in your life that is getting in His way? That might mean there are actual material things you need to get rid of – things that need to leave your home, or it might be files or accounts you need to get rid of, it might be attitudes and habits that need to change – but if there is anything in your life that is grieving the Holy Spirit – would you PLEASE consider getting rid of it? And would you begin that purging today? Could you walk through your home, room by room, and consider – is there anything in here that needs to go?

If there's anything that's holding you back, will you let it go? Because, you see, God really does have a plan for your life, and a way He wants to use you. God doesn't just save us from, He also saves us for. He wants to use us to build His Kingdom here and now and to have an impact on the lives of the people around us. Now that He is in us, He wants to shine through us – He is willing to let us be His hands and feet – if we will go along with His Word and the promptings He places on our soul.

And that's why Paul warns us

1 Thes 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit.

God wants to rage like a burning fire in your life. You've heard people describe Christians as being 'on fire for God.' This is what they're talking about.

But what if God has stacked the wood in your life, He's arranged all the circumstances, He wants to use YOU – not the person next to you, not your mom or dad, or some other friend, or someone else involved in the situation – He wants to use YOU and you know it.

But your heart is thumping, you're anxious, you're nervous, and so you talk yourself out of it. You think for some reason that God's going to let you fail, or make you look awkward. You're worried what people will think of you – so you talk yourself out of it – you throw a massive bucket of water on the fire God wanted to start and you quench the work the Spirit was going to do in and through you. He was willing, you were not.

And yet you pray, "God, I want to know you more." You pray, "God, thank you for saving me." You pray and you sing to a God you say is your Master, and when He comes to you with an opportunity, you quench it and say, "not me Lord." Or, "not now Lord."

God is willing, He's ready, but you, in your superior wisdom are telling Him, no? That doesn't make logical sense. I see how and why we do it, but when you take a step back and consider it all, it just doesn't make sense.

The Bible says we're to rejoice in the Holy Spirit (Lk 10:21), walk in the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:12f; Gal 5:16-26) and set our mind on the things of the Spirit (Rom 8:4-6) pray in the Spirit (Eph 6:18, Jude 20) and love in the Spirit (Col 1:18).

The Holy Spirit blesses us with gifts (1 Cor 12), guides us in the truth (2 Tim 1:14), comforts us in midst of persecution (1 Peter 4:14) and invites us into ministry (Acts 20:28). He has thoughts of good toward us, and not of evil, to give us a future and a hope (Jer 29:11).

Why would you resist that? Why would you grieve Him? Why would you sabotage and quench that?

Before He ascended to Heaven Jesus told the disciples that the Spirit would come upon them and they would be His witnesses

Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

This is really important for you to know – God is trying to give you the strength to do what He's calling you to do – He wants to give you the power to be the mom you want to be, the husband you want to be, the single adult you want to be. God wants to give you the power to live and love and to serve in His name and with His strength through His Spirit who lives in you.

Some of you are exhausted, frustrated, discouraged, full of despair about the things going on in your life – the things you're trying to do, or the things you hoped would happen, or the things you're afraid will happen. Some of you are facing serious trials and challenges right now. You're dreading Monday and you're dreading March. Some of you are burnt out and worn out. Some of you feel like this season of suffering and difficulty has gone on waaaaaay too long.

There are two things you need to consider. Number one – maybe its rough because you've been blowing it. Maybe you've been resisting or grieving, or quenching the Holy Spirit and so God has been pulling farther and farther back – He seems distant because you've been ignoring Him and once again, He's not going to force you to accept or obey Him – He wants willing servants. Maybe some of the pain in your life is your own doing, I don't know – but I bet you do. You know whether this message is for someone else, or if it's for you.

And if it's for you – you need to repent. That means to agree with God that what's going on, or what has happened, is wrong – to ask for forgiveness, which He promises to give – and then, to ask Him to lead you step by step to the place where He wants you to be, even if it's hard to get there. Depending on your circumstances, you might feel every step, but He'll walk the miles with you. That's what repentance means – stop going in one direction and begin to head in a new direction.

It's not remorse – remorse says “I feel bad about what’s happened or what is happening, but it’s just who I am, it’s just the way the situation is.”

It's not regret – regret says “I feel bad about all of this because I got caught, or because I hurt someone.” People say, “We regret to inform you...” They regret, but they still do it – that’s not repentance either.

It's not resolve - resolve says “I’m going give this thing another go. I’m going to get my act together this time and see what happens.”

Repentance says “no more excuses; no more justifying; no more white-washing” I’m going all-in.

If you have been resisting the Holy Spirit’s call on your life – change your mind about your sin, change your mind about Jesus and give your life to Him.

If you have been grieving the Spirit, stop holding on to things that are choking and stunting your soul - change direction and deal with the things you know God is speaking to you about.

If you have been quenching the Spirit, stop saying “not yet Lord,” stop saying “not me Lord” and just say, “Yes, Lord. Whatever the cost – where You go, I will follow.”

And guess what? You will experience times of refreshing in your life. Things might be hard on the outside, difficult, complex, trying, but the Spirit of God will be thriving inside of you, consoling, encouraging you, strengthening you and guiding you in truth, until the day you are finally ushered into the throne room of God.

But one last thing to consider: Maybe your difficulties don’t stem from you – maybe they come from the outside. Maybe your exhaustion, frustration, discouragement, and despair are the result of external circumstances. My friend, the answer is still the same – press in to Jesus. Seek His strength.

Remember what God said to Zerubabel in the difficult days of small things as he sought to rebuild the Temple – “**not by might, nor by strength, but by my Spirit says the Lord**” (Zech 4:6).

Ps 20:7 Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses;
But we will remember the name of the LORD our God

Is 40:31 But those who wait on the LORD
Shall renew *their* strength;
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint

God wants to be our strength during times of difficulty, times of oppression, times of confusion and darkness and trials, and He wants to be our source of endurance during the long obedience that characterizes our lives and ministry.

So let Him. Let Him have His way in you – remember His presence in your life and look to Him to make a difference in how you respond and how you keep going. He's not far away and disinterested, He's dwelling inside you. He's near, and He cares.