

Grieving the Spirit

Andrew Murray:

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" Ephesians 4:30.

It is by the Holy Spirit that the child of God is sealed, separated, stamped, and marked as the possession of God. This sealing is not a dead or external action that is finished once and for all. It is a living process, which has power in the soul, and gives a firm assurance of faith, only when it is experienced through the life of the Spirit in us. Because of this, we are to take great care not to grieve the Holy Spirit. In Him alone can you have the joyful certainty and the full blessing of your childship every day.¹ It is the very same Spirit who leads us and witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

How can anyone grieve the Spirit? Above all, by yielding to sin. He is the Holy Spirit, given to sanctify us, and--for every sin from which the blood cleanses us--to fill us with the holy life of God, with God Himself. Sin grieves Him.² For this reason, the Word of God names the sins which, above all, we are to guard against. Notice the four great sins which Paul mentions in connection with our text.

The first is lying. There is no single sin in the Bible that is so brought into connection with the devil as lying. Lying is from hell, and it goes back to hell. God is the God of truth. And the Holy Spirit cannot possibly carry forward His blessed working in a man or woman who lies, who is insincere, who does injury to the truth. Young Christian, review with care what the Word of God says about lying and liars. Pray God that you may never speak anything but the literal truth. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.³

Then there is anger. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you" (Ephesians 4:31). Along with lying, the most common sin which keeps the Christian from increasing in grace is the sin of temper--hastiness, the proneness to anger.⁴ Christian, let all ill-temperedness be put away from you. This follows from the command not to grieve the Spirit. Believe that the Holy Spirit, the great power of God, is in you. Surrender yourself every day to His indwelling in faith that Jesus can keep you by Him. He will make and keep you gentle. Yes, believe in the power of the Father, the power of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome temper.⁵ Confess the sin. God will cleanse you from it. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

Then there is stealing. This is all sin against the property or possession of my neighbour, and all deception and dishonesty in trade, in which I wrong my neighbour and seek my own advantage at his cost. Christ's law is love which works to the advantage of my neighbour as well as myself. The love of money and property--inseparable from self-seeking--is incompatible with the leading of the Holy Spirit. The Christian must be a man who is known to be honest, righteous, and who loves his neighbour as himself.⁶

Then the apostle says, "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" (Ephesians 4:29). Even the tongue of God's child belongs to his Lord. He must be known by his manner of speech. By his speaking, he can grieve or please the Spirit. The sanctified tongue is a blessing not only to his neighbour, but to the speaker himself. Foul talk, idle words, foolish jests--they grieve the Holy Spirit. They make it impossible for the Spirit to sanctify, to comfort, and to fill the heart with the love of God.⁷

Young Christian, please do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by these or other sins. If you have committed such sins, confess them, and God will cleanse you from them. By the Holy Spirit you are sealed. If you want to walk in the stability and joy of faith, listen to the word, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God."

Lord God, my Father in heaven, I pray that you would cause me to understand what marvellous grace You are manifesting to me, giving me Your Holy Spirit in my heart. Lord, let this faith be the argument and the power for cleansing me from every sin. Holy Jesus, sanctify me, that in my thinking, speaking, acting--in all things--Your image may appear. Amen.