

## Sins against the Holy Spirit by Paul Anderson

The Holy Spirit is a person, not an impersonal influence or force. He is alive. What we do affects him.

### Grieving the Spirit

=lupeo; grieve, pain, distress

Sin grieves the Spirit. St. Paul writes, “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30). We need to put off sin and walk in holiness. When we make the temple of God into an unholy temple, the Holy Spirit is grieved. When we live deceitfully, the Spirit of truth is grieved.

Under the Old Covenant, the Spirit was a temporary resident. He left Saul when Saul left following the Lord, but he doesn't leave us now. We were sealed for all time. Because the Holy Spirit is a person, he has emotions. He expresses joy, sorrow, anger. When he is allowed to rule in our lives, he brings happiness and peace. If we have grieved the Spirit, and if we are sensitive to him and not hardened by our sin, we will experience his conviction. We will sense that the Partner within is not rejoicing.

### Quenching the Spirit

= subennumi: extinguish, put out, stifle, suppress.

The word is used of the Messiah. It was prophesied that he would not “*extinguish a smoldering wick*” (Matthew 12:20). It is used of the champions of God who through faith “*quench all the flaming darts of the evil one*” (Eph. 6:16). Paul tells us that the shield of faith enables us to “*quench*” the Spirit. The Spirit is pictured in a variety of ways: a dove, water, fire, oil. The word “quench” focuses on the fire of the Spirit. When he comes, he sets a fire in our hearts for Jesus. This is his single passion. When the disciples were filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit came as tongues of fire. Peter spoke with power and conviction about the crucified, risen and exalted Lord.

St. Paul wrote this command: “*Do not quench the Spirit*” (1 Thess. 5:19). He was giving some closing exhortations concerning spiritual gifts. He went on, “*Do not despise prophesying, but test everything; hold fast what is good, abstain from every form of evil*” (5:20-22). We can fall off a horse on either side. We can go to one extreme regarding gifts by ignoring them completely. Or we can treat them as if they are the only important aspect of the Christian life. Paul urges us to avoid both extremes. We are not to dampen the fire of the Spirit, but we are to employ the gifts wisely.

### Blaspheming against the Spirit

= blasphemo: revile, slander, speak evil

Jesus said, “*every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever says 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*” (Matthew 12:31-32). Blaspheming against the Spirit is the unpardonable sin. To consciously and consistently reject the testimony of the Spirit to the person of Jesus Christ is to shut out the potential for salvation, since it is the Spirit who convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment. The Pharisees were attributing the work of Christ to the devil, ignoring the Spirit's witness to Christ.

Those who are afraid that they might have committed the unforgivable sin show that they have not by their very concern. The heart of the person who has blasphemed the Spirit is hardened and he is beyond hope for redemption.

### **Lying to the Spirit**

= pseudomail: lie, deceive

*“But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land?’” (Acts 5:3).* Ananias was attempting to deceive the apostles by pretending to give all his land, while holding back some of it. His sin was more serious than fooling some apostles – he and his wife were lying to the Spirit that touched people’s hearts and made them give generously. Sin is first and foremost an offense against God. After committing adultery and murder, David said, *“Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight” (Psalm 51:4).* *The prodigal son acknowledged, “I have sinned against heaven and before you...” (Luke 15:18).* The Spirit of truth is grieved when those who possess the Spirit bend the truth or deny it altogether.

### **Insulting the Spirit**

=enubrizo, insult, outrage

*“How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he has sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 10:29).* WE live this side of the cross of Christ, in the age of the Spirit, the age of grace. One might conclude that we have more latitude in this day, because God has perhaps softened toward sin. Those who mock the grace of God will find out differently. Cheap grace is another way to say no grace. The Gospel of Jesus Christ does not make the Spirit of God as a pushover, as if anything goes because we live free from the demands of the law.

### **Resisting the Holy Spirit**

= antipipto: resist, oppose, strive against

*“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.” (Acts 7:51).* Stephen was full of the Spirit as he spoke to the Jewish supreme courts, the Sanhedrin. He boldly and accurately accused them of resisting the work of the Spirit in their lives. They were far more concerned about their kingdom than God’s, neither obeying the law nor receiving the Gospel. It cost Stephen his life, but his words eventually got through to a young man who witnessed his death – Saul of Tarsus, who later quit resisting the Spirit and surrendered to the Lordship of Christ.