

Session #7

Don't Quench the Spirit!

This past year the emphasis in our DMM program has been on both **revival** and the **Book of Acts**. We have learned that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is integral to both!

I. In Session #2, we learned the two primary marks of Spirit-filled living:

A. **Power** (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).

1. Power **to be** something:

- a. Witnesses (=martyrs): ready to lay down our lives and give up our rights... thinking of others more highly than ourselves (I Cor. 10:24; Phil. 2:3-4).
- b. To transform us into lovers: loving others more than self. The power of love... not the love of power (I Cor. 13:5).
- c. To have an undivided heart (Ezekiel 11:19).
- d. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).

2. Power **to do** something:

- a. The will of God.
- b. The gifts of the Spirit (I Cor. 12:4-11).
- c. Mighty deeds, exploits.
- d. Assurance, confidence, boldness (Rom. 8:15-16).
- e. Signs and wonders.

B. **Purity** (Acts 15:8-9).

The Spirit is called the **Holy** Spirit. This adjective denotes not just who the Spirit is... but what the Spirit does:

- Makes holy (I Thess. 4:7-8).
- Sanctifies (I Thess. 5:23-24).
- Sets apart for service.

II. Sins against the Spirit.

We will never experience power or purity, therefore, if we fail to give the Holy Spirit freedom in our hearts and lives. The New Testament mentions at least six ways it is possible to sin against the Holy Spirit.

1. **Grieving** the Spirit.

*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you (Eph. 4:29-32).*

The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force or cosmic energy. (You cannot grieve gravity.) The Holy Spirit is a Person. When we sin, we not only break God's law, we break His heart. We cause Him emotional pain!

The text mentions several ways we grieve the Spirit:

- Unwholesome talk
- Rage, anger, brawling
- Lack of forgiveness
- Bitterness
- Slander, malice

2. **Insulting** the Spirit.

*If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has **insulted the Spirit of grace**? (Heb. 10:26-29).*

The text makes it clear: to insult the Spirit is to “deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth.” To continue in such a state is to fall into judgment and such a dreadful condition that “no sacrifice for sins is left.”

3. **Lying** to the Spirit.

Ananias and Sapphira brought a generous offering to the apostles, but did not tell the truth in their presentation. They made themselves appear to be more godly than they were.

*Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have **lied to the Holy Spirit** and have kept for yourself some of the*

*money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? **You have not lied to men but to God....***"

*Peter said to (Sapphira), "How could you agree **to test the Spirit of the Lord?** Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also" (Acts 5:3-4, 9).*

The sin of this couple was not in how much they gave. Their sin was hypocrisy, wearing a mask, causing others to think they were more holy than they were. Their sin was using God to promote their reputation!

4. **Resisting** the Spirit.

At Stephen's trial before the Sanhedrin, the climax of his defense came when he became the prosecuting attorney!

*"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: **You always resist the Holy Spirit!**" (Acts 7:51).*

The context makes it clear that such resistance included:

- Being circumcised in body but not in hearts or ears (v. 51).
- Persecuting prophets (v. 52)
- Rejecting the Messiah (v. 52)
- Disobeying God's laws (v. 53)
- Covering their ears and screaming (v. 57)

5. **Quenching** the Spirit.

Do not put out the Spirit's fire (I Thess. 5:19).

In the Bible, God's presence is often associated with fire. Paul is telling us not to do anything that would throw cold water on places where God is moving. Don't work against God. Don't work against the Spirit. This is shocking! Can a man extinguish God? Can a man frustrate the purposes of God?

There are two ways to put out a fire. One is by depriving it of fuel. The other is by an effort to smother or extinguish it. The context (I Thess. 5:12-22) helps us to understand how our human actions and attitudes can actually quench a work of God's Spirit:

- Not respecting and honoring your spiritual leaders (v. 12-13)
- Idleness (v. 14)
- Revenge (v. 15)
- Lack of joy (v. 16)
- Lack of prayer (v. 17)
- Lack of gratitude (v. 18)
- Treating prophecies (preaching) with contempt (v. 20)

6. **Blaspheming** against the Spirit.

*And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but **the blasphemy against the Spirit** will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but **anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit** will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come (Matt. 12:31-32).*

Again, the context of this passage (Matt. 12:22-32) helps us to understand what it means to blaspheme against the Spirit. Jesus had just healed a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute. But the Pharisees attributed Jesus' power to Beelzebub, the prince of demons.

To blaspheme against the Spirit, then, is to:

- attribute a divine act of God's grace to demonic influence.
- treat Jesus as if he were Satan.
- be totally confused about right and wrong.
- to call good evil... and evil good.

When this condition becomes permanent – the situation is hopeless. They have reached the point of no return. There is no forgiveness.

Such a condition is hopeless NOT because God is not willing and ready to forgive.... NOT because the blood of Jesus is lacking in power... NOT because the love of God has reached its limit.... Rather, the situation is hopeless because these sinners have reached a point where they have cut themselves off from the only source of salvation. Repentance and faith are made possible by the work of the Holy Spirit. If a man blasphemes against the Spirit (speaks against Him), there is, therefore, no hope.

Thus, we see that anyone who genuinely fears that they may be guilty of this sin... isn't! The very fact that you are fearful proves that your conscience is still alive and sensitive to the promptings of God's Spirit. Those guilty of the sin Jesus is describing feel no remorse (like the Pharisees) and have lost all sense of guilt and sin.

TABLE TALK

1. Jesus Christ has given us the Holy Spirit so that we can experience power and purity (see page 1). Discuss some areas in your life where lack of power or purity manifest themselves.
2. We have seen six ways it is possible to sin against the Holy Spirit:
 - Grieving the Spirit
 - Insulting the Spirit
 - Lying to the Spirit
 - Resisting the Spirit
 - Quenching the Spirit
 - Blaspheming against the Spirit

Discuss areas where you may be sinning against the Spirit and quenching His influence to make you pure and give you power.

3. What can you do to give more freedom to the ministry of the Spirit in your life?
4. What can we all be doing to give more freedom to the ministry of the Spirit in our church?

TESTIMONIES

Let's close our year by opening the microphone for those men who want to share a word of testimony of what God has been doing in their lives. A testimony ought to be:

- Short.
- Personal.
- Specific.
- Not a sermon.

Come to the microphone and begin by saying: **My name is _____.**
I want to thank the Lord tonight because in this past year, He has been teaching me _____.