

Grieve Not The Spirit

Ephesians 4:30

Rock Hill Baptist Church
605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Pastor David Buffaloe
731-845-6104
online at bibleteacher.org



FOCAL Read Together Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

There was a commercial on television several years ago that used the phrase "**often imitated, but never duplicated**". I forget what product was being advertised, but I believe that this phrase or slogan could actually be used for the Christian way of life. Christianity is **often imitated, but never duplicated**. There is only one genuine Christian way of life. A person may say "I am a Christian" but their statement will be proved or disproved by whether or not they endure in the faith. As **Adrian Rogers** once said, "**The faith that fizzles before the finish was flawed from the first**". The Christian is designed by God to be an overcomer. The Apostle John says confidently that

1 John 5:4-5 For {whosoever} is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. {5} Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

Our Lord Jesus Christ addressed the Church through the apocalyptic writing we call **Revelation**. Over and over Jesus spoke of the overcoming faith of the true Christian. He said:

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life (Revelation 2:7). Those who do not overcome will not receive of that eternal life! He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death (Revelation

2:11). Only those who have an overcoming faith shall not be cast into the Lake of Fire that burns forever and ever. **Him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a new name (Revelation 2:17).** Only those who overcome will be entered into the registry of Heaven! **He that overcometh shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life but will confess his name before My Father (Revelation 3:5).** Only those who overcome will be announced in the courts of God. **He that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of My God, and he shall go no more out (Revelation 3:12).** Only those who overcome will have a right to permanent residence in Heaven.

You can see that "**overcoming**" - remaining solidly in the grip of God - is key to the Christian way of life. That's a little scary if my "overcoming" was based on my abilities as a human.

We are all fallible, all subject to stumble. How in the world am I going to "overcome" in my own strength? The fact is, I can't. And this is the major difference between the person who *says* he is a Christian and the person who *is, in fact, a Christian*. He who makes mere profession is *not* indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. He who has no more than a profession may imitate the Christian way of life for a time, but in time will find themselves *being overwhelmed by this world* rather than being an overcomer. The mere professor - like an Alka Seltzer[®] tablet dropped in water - starts out with substance. But as the world closes in on them they sizzle away. The

Apostle John concludes that those who are no more than mere professors:

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would not doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Well said, John, well said! "If they had been of us, genuine Christians, known of God and indwelt by God's Holy Spirit, they would have stayed within the faith. They went out from among us so that God could let us all see they were not genuine - their faith was feigned. They were not indwelt by God."

If you have been saved God came into your lives on the day that you were saved. God the Holy Spirit indwells - that is, lives inside - of every believer who has ever been born into the Kingdom of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

Christians don't overcome because they hold onto God. Christians, genuine Christians, overcome because *God holds onto them*.

Christians don't forget God until they're in trouble. The Holy Spirit of God lives in you. God is with you! He is with you in the valleys, and with you on the mountaintop. God is with the Christian when he sins, and when he stumbles. When you were **born again by faith in Christ Jesus you received the Spirit of adoption (Romans 8:15)**. You, dear Christian, **received the Spirit**

of God, that you might know the things that are freely given to us of God (1 Corinthians 2:12). The Apostle Paul so closely linked the moment of salvation to the receiving of the Holy Spirit that he said to the works oriented Galatians:

Galatians 3:2-3 ... Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? {3} Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

You entered the Christian way of life by believing on Jesus. Your faith in Him caused God to come and dwell in you. You, dear Christian, are an overcomer because **you are held up by God Who indwells you.**

As King David said to God

Psalms 18:35-36 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great. {36} Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.

It is God Who holds the believer up. It is the He Who has promised to keep us from falling. **Grieve not the Holy Spirit**, dear Christian.

1. Do Not Grieve The Spirit Because He Loves You

FOCAL Ephesians 4:30 **And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God**, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of

redemption.

The Apostle commands the Church "**And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God**". Think on those words for a moment. He doesn't say "**anger not**", but "**grieve not**". There is a vast difference between the two. God's anger is fierce, and stands against those who would stand against Him. But

Grief is a mixture of anger thoroughly diluted with LOVE. Love sweetens anger and removes its sharp edge. A Father is grieved, a Judge is angered.

The Love that God has for His Redeemed cannot be measured. God loved you so much that:

John 3:16 ... He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Do you remember the day that God called you to salvation *and you answered*? He called most of us more than once before we responded. We were under conviction, but resisted the Blessed Spirit's wooing. **We came from our mother's womb lying and justifying our lies** yet God strived with us. Before you were ever formed God loved you, and determined to give Himself for you. The Apostle tells us a startling truth:

Ephesians 1:4-5 According as {God} hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

{5} Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

God decided, before you were ever born, to give Himself to you. God decided, **before this world was ever formed**, to come to Calvary and make payment for your sins and for mine.

God decided to **adopt you into His Kingdom** by coming into your lives following your cry of faith in Christ. **He plucked us as burning brands out of a fire.** Hell's flames licked at our feet - and we nevertheless ran toward destruction.

God the Son cried out:

John 12:46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

The preacher cried out:

Acts 10:43 To {Jesus} give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

The Apostle declared:

Romans 9:33 ... Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Eventually you believed that such love was not only possible - but directed to you. Dear Christian, that word "**grieve**" is the only word that can apply to your misdeeds. God's wrath is reserved for those who will not receive His love. Though God called to Israel, repeatedly showing her His Love, few among that first generation responded to the Spirit's call. God strove with Israel from the time He brought her out of Egypt, yet His love was rejected. To them He said:

Psalms 95:10-11 Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: {11} Unto whom I swore in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

Oh Beloved, God's wrath is reserved for those who will not believe in Him. God's wrath is reserved for those **who have not known His ways.**

To those who will not come unto Jesus and be saved - but who seek other paths outside of the **Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6)** - wrath is reserved for them. To those who **worship the queen of Heaven rather than the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Jeremiah 7:17-20)** the Lord says:

Jeremiah 7:20 ... Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall

not be quenched.

But to you, dear Christian, there can be no wrath. **The wrath of God was poured out on Jesus Christ and judged** - and you have believed in Him.

Christ in love came down from Heaven to be born in a manger. The Holy Spirit in love came down from Heaven to live in the *born again* you. Christ in love dwelt among the sick, the lame, and the dying. The Holy Spirit in love lives in you whether you be sick, lame, or dying. Christ comforted the grieving by raising the dead, and by promising **"to never leave us, nor forsake us"** (Hebrews 13:5). God the Holy Spirit comforts us in our grieving by reminding us that, once we trusted in God's promise through Christ,

Ephesians 1:13-14 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, {14} Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Do not grieve the Spirit Who indwells you, for He is God's living promise that you and I shall one day be with Him in yonder glory. **He is the earnest - the downpayment on our Heavenly inheritance.** He remains in us until the day that we shall see Jesus face to face.

2. Do Not Grieve The Spirit Because He Helps You

FOCAL Ephesians 4:30 **And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.**

When Jesus promised His followers that the Spirit of God would come and indwells us, Jesus said:

John 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; {17} Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

ILLUSTRATE What does Christianity have that no other worldly religion could ever have? **It has the Promised Comforter.** I heard a parent speaking the other day about her child. She said that her son, talking about the Comforter, said "A Comforter is like a blanket. Just like a blanket comforts you, wrapping you up when you're cold, the Holy Spirit comforts you". That's as good a definition as any I've ever heard! When we were children we often imagined bogey men or monsters were in our bedrooms. I remember as a child hearing the house settle and creak. I'd respond by pulling the covers of the bed over my head and hiding. It gave me great comfort to know that I could retreat under those covers and, while I was covered, no harm could befall me. Dear friends, in this life there are many horrid threats. One of the greatest threats we have come from within ourselves, for we are all terribly flawed.

ILLUSTRATE 2 A Sunday School teacher asked her students, "who can tell me the difference between the sins of commission and sins of omission?" A little girl spoke up: "a sin of commission is doing what's wrong". The teacher said, "Very good! Now who can tell me what a sin of omission is?" A little boy spoke up: "A sin of omission is those sins you want to do, but haven't gotten around to doing yet!"¹

We are all sinners, believer and unbeliever alike. We who are saved *avoid sin* because we do not want to grieve the Lord who lives within us. When we who are saved *do sin* we **confess that sin unto God, repenting of it, because it hurts us to hurt Him Who has given so much to us.**

The Holy Spirit indwells us to comfort us. When we willingly and purposely sin without regard for Him we draw away from His power - and begin to live within our own power. C.H. Spurgeon said:

"Though it be but a cottage, a very hovel, and all unholy and unclean yet doth the Holy Spirit condescend to make the heart of His people His continual abode. Oh my friends, when I think how often you and I have let the devil in, I wonder the Spirit has not drawn from us. ... When you consider that the Spirit is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and yet He dwells in the heart where sin often intrudes ... t is a marvel that He is there at all, for He must be daily grieved with these evil guests ... who

¹ Greg Laurie, *Ten Things You Should Know* page 27

thrust themselves into that little temple that He has honored with His presence, the temple of the heart of man."²

Love God as much as He loves you. Hate sin as much as God hates it. Avoid grieving the Spirit of God by following after sin, and you will grow in your walk with God.

If you think nothing at all of grieving God's Spirit, then *you may be deluding yourselves - you not be saved.* The text says:

FOCAL Ephesians 4:30 **And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.**

You are sealed by the Holy Spirit if you are saved. A seal both preserves as well as brands.

We know that the contents of a mason jar are good to eat, not because of its evident lid, but because *the lid is sealed to the jar.* If you push on the lid and no seal is evident the food may be poisoned. Are you born again? Then the seal should be evident! The Apostle wrote:

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; {22} Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest

² from *Grieving the Holy Spirit*, delivered October 9th, 1859 at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens

of the Spirit in our hearts.

God gave His life for us in the Person of the Son.
God sealed us in the Person of His Spirit. **Faith that is unsealed may be poisonous or presumptuous, but faith sealed by God's Holy Spirit is genuine.**

The genuine Christian will, at times, step away from God. But from the moment he steps away God will begin to call to his heart, convicting him of the wrong he has done. **The Holy Spirit is often seen in Scripture as a Dove. A dove is a clean animal, and will not nest on that which is filthy.**

3. What Specifically Grieves The Holy Spirit?

FOCAL Ephesians 4:30 **And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God**, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

As we close this sermon, I want to have a bit of *practical application* here. What *specifically* grieves the Spirit? I could just say "sin" and be done with it, but that is too broad a stroke. When you go to the doctor sick you don't want his diagnosis to be "you're sick", but you want to know what's wrong so you can avoid this. As in all Scriptural interpretation let's *look to our context* for an explanation. The Apostle writes:

CONTEXT Ephesians 4:1-3 **I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, {2} With all**

lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; {3} Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

ILLUSTRATE What grieves the Spirit of God? **An unworthy walk or way of life in a Christian.** Dear friends, you cannot pull someone out of a ditch by getting into the ditch with them. **Walk worthy! Keep your spiritual wheels on the road!**

We who belong to Christ and who are sealed with the Spirit of God should be characterized with **lowliness and meekness**. We should not be forever seeking to be the center of attention. We are in this place to worship the Lord and to thank Him for saving our souls. We should also be **longsuffering, forbearing one another in love**. This means that we should be *tolerant* of the failures of others, just as we expect them to be tolerant of our failures. Remember it was the Pharisees who chased after Jesus, mocking Him as unfit because they felt themselves *holier than thou*.

The Spirit of God is longsuffering with us - we should be longsuffering with one another.
Forbearing one another in love does not mean to justify sin in our members, but it does mean that we should remember that **Christ has forgiven us much, so we should forgive much.**

We who belong to Jesus should **strive to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**. A Dove is peaceful - and God's Church should be working together in the

bond of peace. Jesus said:

John 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

It grieves God the Holy Spirit when the Church that Jesus died for fails to represent His Gospel to a lost and dying world.

CONTEXT Ephesians 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

It grieves God the Holy Spirit when the Church misrepresents the Gospel. Some local Churches teach that salvation consists of *part* what Christ has done and *part* of what we have done. That is terribly untrue. If we could have saved ourselves, or if we could keep ourselves by our efforts, then Christ would not have had to die on Calvary and the Spirit would not have to live inside of us. Salvation is all of Christ. **Grace is a gift. Christ on Calvary is a gift. A gift is not paid for, but is cherished as it is accepted.**

CONTEXT Ephesians 4:11-15 And {God} gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; {12} For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the {building up} of the body of Christ: {13} Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: {14} That we henceforth be no more

children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; {15} But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

God gave us His Word through the Apostles and Prophets, and presents that Word through His Pastors and Teachers so that His Church - that Body of unified Believers - will grow. It grieves the Holy Spirit when His people will not hear His Word. It grieves God the Holy Spirit when the preachers will not preach the Word.

It grieves the Holy Spirit when a lost and dying world cannot see Christ in the operation of the local Church. It grieves the Holy Spirit when there is no apparent difference between the believer and the unbeliever, when we are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

It grieves the Holy Spirit when we do not speak the truth in love.

If you are saved and I am saved then we are bound together by the Spirit of God. **The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5:22-23).** Therefore we that are His are to

Ephesians 4:31-32 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away

from you, with all malice: {32} And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

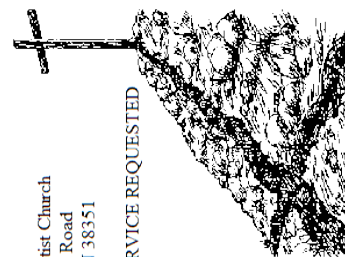
My heart is filled with joy because God the Holy Spirit is at work among this little flock. We have seen many come to Christ by faith in this past year. We have seen many baptized, and many have been discipled in the precious Word of God. And yet, there is so much more left to be done. We cannot win this world for Christ in our own power, but we can win this world for Christ if we unify in His power.

The Lord cannot use a self centered Christian to win the world, nor can He use an apathetic or selfish Church to bring revival to America. Yield to God, dear believer! Sing your songs to Him. Do not yawn throughout the invitation, but pray - pray that God the Holy Spirit will touch a heart and bring a life to salvation today. Pray that God will remove the blinders of sin and doubt from one more person's eyes. Pray that someone today will:

Acts 3:19-20 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; {20} And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

God cannot save the soul that will not repent, nor can He use the Church that will not yield. Be His Body as the invitation is given, that God's Spirit might lift up an erring heart to that Old Rugged Cross.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



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