

## INTRODUCTION

We are continuing our study of our verse-by-verse journey through the letter Paul wrote to the church of Ephesus, but it is a message for all Christians. Last week we talked about putting off the old man getting rid of that old sinful nature putting on the nature of Jesus Christ. Today we are going to talk about "What Grieves the Spirit of God?" As Christians we have to understand the commandments of the Old Testament and sometimes we misunderstand them.

I heard about the Sunday School teacher who was teaching her class. She would give them a "sin" and then she would ask them to give the Bible verse that commands otherwise. So she gave a case study. She said, "Number one. Billy is watching television and his parents tell him to come wash the dishes, and he says, 'No.' That's a sin. What's the Bible verse?" One of her pupils raised her hand and said, "Honor thy father and thy mother." The teacher said, "Correct that's wonderful." She said, "Situation number two. Molly goes into the store and when the clerk is not watching, she takes some candy without paying for it. What's the command?" Someone raised their hand immediately and said, "Thou shalt not steal." The teacher said, "That's correct." Then the teacher said, "Here's situation number three. Johnny is pulling the tail of his dog and he is hurting the dog. What's the command?" They thought for a moment and one kid raised his hand and said, "What God has joined together let nobody put asunder." Well that's not exactly right I think there are a lot of Christians today who misunderstand the Old Testament Commandments. You see in the Old Testament times they obeyed the commandments to be righteous before God but as New Testament Christians we do not obey the commandments to be righteous before God we obey God's commands because we are Christians because of who we are. When it talks about putting off the old man and putting on the Jesus nature, you say, "Well what makes a Christian different?" A Christian lives a certain way talks a certain way acts a certain way and that's what we are going to read about today.

Ephesians 4:25. "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 'In your anger do not sin': Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. 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."

### I. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

When a Christian lives the wrong way, we grieve the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. The New Testament says there are several sins you can commit against the Holy Spirit. There is the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, the unforgivable sin and there is a lot of confusion about what the unforgivable sin is. I had a man tell me after the first service, "The unforgivable sin is letting chocolate sit around without eating it until it gets moldy." That's not the unforgivable sin. The unpardonable sin is finally and ultimately saying, "No" to Jesus, rejecting faith in Jesus Christ. That's the unpardonable sin, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. If you are a born-again Christian, you have not committed that sin and you can never commit the unpardonable sin, so

just put your mind at rest but if you are here and you are not a Christian, you are condemned already, Jesus said, and you may be in danger of committing that unpardonable sin and so today you should give your life to Jesus. That’s one sin, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

## **II. Quenching the Spirit**

There is another sin against the Holy Spirit the New Testament talks about called “quenching the Spirit.” Have you ever felt prompted by the Holy Spirit to do something Christ-like, such as call somebody and encourage them or send them a note or just visit somebody who is in need? That’s the prompting of the Holy Spirit and when you deny it and do not obey it, you are quenching the Holy Spirit. It’s just like taking a fire and dousing it with water. So there is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and there is quenching the Spirit.

## **III. Grieving the Holy Spirit**

Here’s the third sin against the Spirit and the one we will talk about today: Grieving the Holy Spirit. What does it mean to grieve the Holy Spirit? When you love someone, you grieve over their sin. Many of you know when I was a teen; I was pretty rebellious for awhile. Even though I was a Christian I was back-slidden. I did some pretty stupid things with some of my friends that I am not proud of. I will never forget one evening when my Dad took me aside and he said, “David, I heard you and some guys did a certain thing.” He was talking about how we went off and were drinking. I was too old for my Dad to whip me, but he said, “David, I just want you to know that you really hurt me, and you hurt your mother by what you did.” I’ll tell you I wish I could have gotten a spanking that night, because when I found out how badly and how deeply I had hurt my father, I felt pretty bad. They grieved, because they loved me. That’s one reason why later, when I got my life right with God and began to live holy and pure, I wanted to live that way because I did not want to grieve my parents. If you are a Christian, the Holy Spirit lives in you and you should live a certain way not to go to heaven when you die but so you won’t grieve the heart of God, because everything you do either causes the Holy Spirit in you to smile or the Holy Spirit in you to grieve.

### **1. We grieve the Holy Spirit within us when the truth is not communicated**

So how can you grieve the Holy Spirit? There are four ways in this text. Number one. We grieve the Holy Spirit within us when the truth is not communicated. That’s what it says in verse 25. “Put off all falsehoods and speak the truth.” Lying is pandemic in our society today. All of us have cultivated a skeptical distrustful attitude. We just don’t believe people anymore, because we have been lied to by politicians, we have been lied to by advertisers. You watch a certain commercial that says if you use a certain kind of toothpaste, you will be a better lover and we know that is not true. We have come to a point where we believe everybody out there is lying and we can’t trust anybody. I don’t know where we get the idea, but somewhere along the line we thought all lawyers were liars. It was Mark Twain who, when looking in a cemetery, saw a tombstone that read, “Here lies a lawyer and an honest man.” He said, “Well, I’ll be—they have started burying two men in one grave now.” I don’t know where we got that idea, because I’ll tell you most of the attorneys I know are honest men. They are no more deceptive, no more liars than the entire population. We say the same thing about used car dealers too. Where did we get

that idea? Imagine for a moment if everybody started telling the truth and you walked down to a used car lot and there's this shiny car and it says, "32,000 miles, one owner \$2,000." You ask the salesman, "Tell me about this car." He says to you, "Well, it was driven like a hotrod by a teenager who burned out three clutches. It really doesn't have 32,000 miles on it. We changed it. It really has 127,000 miles on it. It's been wrecked three times; we slapped a coat of paint on it and some retreads. We paid \$800 for it; we put \$200 in it. You give me \$1,100 and we'll make a \$100 profit and you can keep it." Can you ever in a million years imagine something like that happening? Somebody said, "What would happen if suddenly governments and nations started telling the truth to each other?" Somebody said, "World War III would break out just like that." So much of our dealing and advertising has been based on a lie. I want to say about used car dealers what I said about lawyers. Some of the most honest guys I know are used car dealers. Here in Tyler, there is an organization called the "Auto Christian Fellowship." These men get together and pray. They are honest men full of integrity. Let's quit picking on lawyers and used car dealers and talk about ourselves. Are we honest? Are we practicing deception? When you practice deception, you can get in trouble with your business.

Maybe you have heard the story about the butcher. It was toward the end of the day and he only had one chicken left in his icebox. A lady came in and said, "I want a two-pound chicken." He only had one in there so he reached down in there among the ice and pretended he was feeling among all the chickens and he pulled out the one chicken he had and held it up. He said, "How about this one?" She said, "Don't you have a larger one?" He said, "I sure do!" and he put that chicken back in there and reached around in the ice and pulled out the same chicken. He said, "This one is a little larger. Will it do?" She says, "Yeah that's better. I'll take both of them." You can really get in trouble if you don't tell the truth in your business. The Bible says a Christian ought to be someone who tells the truth.

Some of you are young people and I know a lot of our teenagers are gone this Sunday, but sometimes you think as long as you don't tell an outright lie, it is okay. For instance, maybe one of your friends calls you up and says, "There's a party going on at somebody's house" and you go and ask your parents they say, "Absolutely not!" So you tell your friend you can't go. They say, "Well instead just ask your parents if you can go to McDonald's then we'll go to McDonald's and then we'll go to that party. So you go to your parents and say, "Can I go to McDonald's?" "Sure you can go to McDonald's." So you get in the car with your friend you go to McDonald's and then you go to that party. You come back home and your parents ask you. "Where did you go tonight?" "I went to McDonald's." Now are you telling a lie? No, you went to McDonald's it's not a lie, but you are practicing deception. So you can break the Spirit of this even though you don't tell a lie if you are practicing deception. Here's the principle. We always tell the truth. Why? There is a reason for it, because we are members of the same body. That's why Christians ought to tell the truth. We are members of the same body. That's what it says in verse 25. "We are all members of the same body."

Let me explain that with an illustration. When you put your hand into a bathtub to see if the water is too hot, let's say the water is way too hot for you to get in the bathtub. The nerve endings in your fingers send a message up to your brain. Your hand tells your brain "Take me out of this water! It's hot!" Your brain sends a message back to the muscles in your arm that say, "Jerk that hand out of that hot water!" So it does just that. Can you imagine what would happen

if suddenly your hand decided it was going to lie to the rest of the body? Your hand stays there in water that is just about boiling hot and says, "I'm going to play a trick on my brain. This is not hot, this is only lukewarm." And that's what it tells the brain. The only result of that is going to be pain and the whole body is going to hurt! For your hand not to tell your brain the water is hot is just as wrong as when one member of this body or the body of Christ lies to another member it hurts the whole body.

Are you telling the truth? Are you deceitful in what you are doing? I want to make this very clear. As a born-again Christian, you may occasionally give in to temptation and tell a lie. We call them "little white lies," but a white lie is just as sinful as any other kind of lie. You may occasionally fall into sin and tell a lie but, if you are a born again Christian you cannot live a lie. You cannot continually, habitually practice a deceptive kind of lifestyle if you are a Christian. You need to come clean and repent and commit yourself to tell the truth, because we are members of the same body. That is one way you can grieve the Holy Spirit by not telling the truth.

## **2. You can grieve the Holy Spirit when your temper is not controlled**

Number two. Another way you can grieve the Holy Spirit is when your temper is not controlled. Look at verse 26. "In your anger, do not sin." I know anger can be righteous anger and it can be directed wisely, but most of the anger we see today is sinful, harmful, destructive anger. Let me just say this: I know this is such a problem that next Sunday I have chosen to take that one verse and preach a whole message on it, "How to Be Good and Angry!" because so many people struggle with this. The Minirth & Meier Clinic coined a new phrase for the 1980s and 1990s. It is used to describe someone who is always losing their temper; someone with a hair-trigger temper. It is the word "rage-a-holic." A rageaholic is someone who, with the least provocation, loses their temper. They boil over so easily. Some of you are rageaholics. Some of you live with rageaholics. Some of you work for a rageaholic, and you spend your whole life walking around on eggshells afraid they are going to lose their temper. You know the destructive power of anger. I am going to talk more about that next week. What are you going to do with your anger? Some say, "Repress it just hold it in." No don't do that. That's like setting a trashcan of paper on fire and putting it away in a closet in your home thinking it will be okay. No, you're going to have a fire. Others say, "Don't repress it—always express it. Let it out!" That's like an explosion that hurts other people. The answer is not to repress it; the answer is not to express it—always the answer is to CONFESS it before God as sin and ask Him to give you the control over that violent temper you may have. You say, "I can't control my temper." No, it is not that you cannot; it is that you WILL not, because in any given situation, you can control it. Let me give you an example.

Anger is not one of my weaknesses. I have plenty of other weaknesses but there are times when I do get angry. In case you didn't know, I sometimes fuss with my wife a little bit. I argue with her. (if you don't think we ever do that, look back at point number one) I'm trying to communicate the truth to you here. We love each other, but we sometimes disagree and argue. Our marriage is kind of like that of Charlie and Martha Shedd. Charlie is a Christian writer. He talks about the time his wife put a note on his mirror after an argument. She said, "Dear Charlie, I hate you. Love, Martha. So sometimes we discuss things and we get a little intense in our

discussion. (if you know what I mean) Don't sit there piously and look at me and act like you don't do that. I know one time we were discussing a point very intensely and I mean my level was right up there and I was communicating very intensely, you might say. The phone rang and I picked it up and said, “Hello. Yes, this is the pastor. Can I help you?” Now what did I do? I just turned it off just like a faucet. I controlled it. If you are at home and the same thing happens, you do the same thing. You can have the ability to control a violent temper. Why should you do this? Why should you control your temper?

Verse 27 tells us why: Rage gives the devil a place in our lives. “Do not give the devil a foothold.” A violent, uncontrollable temper gives the devil a place in your life from which he can operate his strategy of misery in your whole personality. Any time you lose your temper, you are saying, “Devil, I am opening the door. Come into my personality. Stand firm in my life.” Whenever you lose your temper, you are opening the door and saying, “Devil, come into my marriage. Come into my family. I'm giving you a place to stand.” That's why as a Christian you ought to control your temper. You can grieve the Holy Spirit when the truth is not communicated and the temper is not controlled.

### **3. You grieve the Holy Spirit when theft is not condemned**

Number three. You can grieve the Holy Spirit when theft is not condemned. Some of you are saying, “Pastor, it's getting awfully hot in here. You've been reading my mail. You are really, really hitting me hard.” I always respond, “I'm just shooting down into the hole. I can't help if you are in it.” Some of you are saying, “Now, this point doesn't hit me. I may tell a lie every now and then I may lose my temper—but I am not a thief.” Are you so sure? Have you ever padded your expense account in your business? That's stealing. Kids, have you ever cheated in school? You're stealing, you're a thief. Have you ever presented information on your income tax return that is not true? You're stealing from the government. Have you ever been in a store and the clerk inadvertently gives you too much change back and you know it? And you think, “That's just my luck. Tough luck on them,” and you take that money? You are a thief! Jesus says this and God answers in Malachi 3 when He says if you are not tithing, you are robbing God. He says at one time or another all of us have been thieves. So that's what the Bible says in verse 28. “He who has been stealing must steal no longer.” Theft must be condemned.

There are people in our world today who take things. I'm not talking about just kleptomaniacs; there are people who steal just for the thrill of it. I'm appalled to see what's happened just recently in Tyler. Some young people are going around robbing people's homes. It's not like they need drug money; it's not like they need these things. They have everything they need. They are just doing it for the thrill of it.

The American Psychological Association did a study a couple of years ago of what they call “inventory shortages” in American retail businesses. That means at the end of the year when a retail business takes inventory, they look at what they have compared to what they should have and every year American businesses come up with an \$8 billion dollar shortage on their inventory. The American Psychological Association conducted a study to find out where that shortage comes from. 10% of the shortage was the result of a bookkeeping error only. 30% was due to shoplifting. 60% came as a result of employee theft, \$16 million dollars per day!

Employees were stealing from their employers in America. The study also said we as American consumers pay 25% more in retail prices because of theft. If suddenly everybody was honest and there was no shoplifting, no employee theft, the prices you pay everywhere would be 25% less. Stealing is a real problem and as a Christian you cannot live a lifestyle where you are continually deceptive and you are stealing. Why? The reason is given in the text here, “sharing is better than stealing.” That’s why the Bible says in verse 28 “Let him work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.” There are people in need and when someone is in need, the Bible says the best thing they can do is to work. But there are a lot of people who have needs and don’t want to work; instead they want to steal, whether it is welfare fraud or breaking into somebody’s house; it is stealing. The Bible says when we as Christians encounter someone who has need, it is better to share and give to those who are in need. A Jewish Rabbi once said, “The man who does not teach his son to work, teaches him to steal.” As Christians we ought to be faithful employees, faithful workers so we can discourage theft and we should never practice theft in our own lives.

#### **4. You grieve the Holy Spirit when your talk is not clean**

You grieve the Holy Spirit when the truth is not communicated, when temper is not controlled, when theft is not condemned and then number four. We grieve the Holy Spirit when our talk is not clean. Look at verse 29. “Do not let any unwholesome talk” The word “unwholesome” is the Greek word *sapros*. It is a word used to describe rotten fruit that was only good to be thrown away. When fruit rots, it stinks. And that’s a word the Bible uses for the kind of vocabulary and talk some people use. We’d call it filthy language. That involves several things and you know what I’m talking about.

##### **(1) Profanity**

Number one, it does involve profanity and I’m like you. I am appalled at what we are hearing on television—not just in movies not just on cable television—but on broadcast television; some of the filthy words and language we hear is appalling. I will never forget what my dad said when he and my mom went to see, “Gone with the Wind,” for the first time and Clark Gable finished that “Frankly, my dear” line (and you know what he didn’t give). My dad said there was an audible gasp in the theater, because people could not believe a profane word like was uttered on the screen. All I can say is, “God help us. We’ve come a long way down from there!” Now that’s the way the world out there talks regularly. What I am trying to say and what the Bible is trying to say is we as Christians do not speak that way. We should not speak that way. Parents, you just can’t shield your children from it. They are going to hear it. From the very beginning, what we tried to do with our girls is whenever they heard something like that on television, we turned to them and we would say, “Christians do not speak that way!” Of course, then they grow up discovering a lot of people who claim to be Christians *do* speak that way. The Bible says Christians should not use profanity. You say, “Well you just tell me why Christians shouldn’t use profanity,” because the Bible says so. “Don’t let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth.”

##### **(2) Criticizing**

Some of you are feeling pretty smug right now, because you are thinking, “I’m pretty clean. I don’t use profanity. I don’t curse.” The phrase “unwholesome talk” means MORE than just profanity? It also means any kind of talk that criticizes or tears people down or damages them. Do you remember when we were kids they used to tell us, “Sticks and stones will break your bones, but words will never hurt you”? I think everybody in this room knows that is not true. That there are words people speak that do hurt us a lot more than sticks and stones and that’s what this is talking about—those kinds of words that destroy. The Bible says, “Don’t let any of that unwholesome, rotten, filthy speech come out of your mouth.

There is an ancient fable about an evil slave woman who began to take poison in such minute amounts, her body built up a resistance to it and then she could take more and more poison until she got to the point where her body was literally filled with poison and she wasn’t dead, but she was so destructive, all she had to do was breathe on a flower and the flower would die, and her kiss was the kiss of death. I don’t know a lot of people today who are eating poison, but I do know a lot of people who are breathing out poison and who are speaking poison, because they are hurting and damaging people by what they say. The Bible says as Christians, we should not let that kind of unholy talk come out of our lips. We should never say something bad about somebody especially when they are not there.

St. Augustine was a great church father in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. After he became a Christian, he opened up his home to anyone who wanted to come and share a meal at his table, but he had a sign over his table and this was his motto. “He who speaks evil of an absent man or woman is not welcome at this table.” Are you guilty of that? That’s unwholesome talk. Why should our talk be clean? Because the Bible not only gives us the prohibition, it gives us the positive principle and it is this. We should use our speech to build others up. We should use our speech to build other people up. That’s what the Bible says in verse 29 it says, “build others up according to their needs.” Can you imagine what would happen in our church, in your families, in your homes if suddenly we made a commitment that the only thing we would say to those around us would build them up instead of tearing them down? I like that old song, “Home on the Range,” where it says, “And seldom is heard a discouraging word.” Wouldn’t it be wonderful if that could be said about your home? Wouldn’t it be wonderful if that could be said about our church? “Seldom is heard a discouraging word.”

Several months ago after my quiet time, I made sort of a daily commitment that day that I was going to only, only, only speak positive, encouraging words to everybody I talked to. It wasn’t too hard to do this for my wife and my daughters and the people up here at the office that I work with. I made a specific effort to try to speak good, positive words. Everything was going fine until after supper that night our telephone rang and it was one of those phone solicitation calls. Don’t you just love those? I’ll be honest with you—it is one of my pet peeves. I cannot stand them! I’ve been known to use a curt tone and just say, “I don’t do business over the phone. Goodbye.” When that lady started giving me her spiel it was almost like I was smiling and saying, “Okay, Lord. You really threw a loop on me this time.” So I listened to her talk and after she finished (I listened to it all!) I said, “Ma’am, I’m not interested in your product, but I just want to tell you, I really appreciate your persistence. You gave that sales talk so well, and I know it takes a lot of courage to do this kind of work, because people don’t like to hear about what you have to sell, but I just want to encourage you in what you are doing.” and I hung up. That was

the Lord's way of, I think, playing a joke on me because he gave me probably the hardest assignment He could give me.

I want to challenge you to speak positive, encouraging words. Now why should you do this? Why should you tell the truth? Why should you control your temper? Why should you not steal? Why should you talk clean? Not to go to heaven when you die but you act like that because you are a Christian and when you don't practice that, the Holy Spirit inside you grieves.

## **CONCLUSION**

In 1963, Robert Sanchez, now the Director of Missions for Southern Baptists in New York City, was a student at Southwestern Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. He happened to be visiting a cemetery that fall and saw a woman sitting all alone weeping so hard her body was shaking. He walked over to her and with reluctance put his hand on her shoulder. He said, "Ma'am, I'm a pastor. Is there anything I can do to help?" She looked up at him and she said, "I am the mother of Lee Harvey Oswald. All of America is grieving over the death of President Kennedy. Isn't there anyone to grieve over the death of my son?" There probably were not many people who grieved over Lee Harvey Oswald's death, but the point I am trying to make is why do you think that mother was grieving? Because she loved him, and what he did hurt her and broke her heart. The good news is the Holy Spirit of God in you loves you! And the reason he grieves over your sin is because he loves you and he wants the very best for you.



## OUTLINE

I. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

II. Quenching the Spirit

III. Grieving the Holy Spirit

We grieve the Holy Spirit within us when

1. Truth is not communicated
2. Temper is not controlled
3. Theft is not condemned
4. Talk is not clean
  - (1) Profanity
  - (2) Criticizing



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To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes