

What We Can Do To The Holy Spirit

Introduction. The Holy Spirit is more impersonal to people than the Father and the Son. Perhaps because we see them both speaking in the biblical text, the Holy Spirit feels safe and gentle like a dove (Matthew 3:16), and maybe less significant.

However, this is definitely not the case. We can sin against the Spirit, just like we can the Father and Sn. There are five passages in the New Testament that reveal what we can do to the Spirit, and these sins are serious for they will keep us out of Heaven!

I. We Can Grieve Him (Ephesians 4:30)

- A. “Grieving” the Spirit reflects a serious offense; in Isaiah 63:10 (one of only two Old Testament texts to use the title “Holy Spirit”; cp. Psalm 51:11), it refers to Israel’s rebellion in the wilderness, which led to their rejection by God. Similarly, Israel’s rebellion against the Spirit led Moses to sin with his mouth according to Psalm 106:33 (cp. Numbers 20:10; Deuteronomy 3:26).
- B. The context (vv. 17-32) shows this to be personal conduct. God was grieved by ungodly conduct in Genesis 6:5-6, and when we disobey, it grieves the Spirit. God and the Holy Spirit are one and the same (Acts 5:3-4).

II. We Can Resist Him (Acts 7:51)

- A. According to Calvinism, man cannot resist the Holy Spirit. This false doctrine teaches that God saves the elect by sending the Holy Spirit on them, causing them to respond to the gospel in faith, thus securing their eternal salvation.
- B. The idea of resisting something means more than simply ignoring it. The word “resist” means to fall against or on something. In this sense, to resist is to oppose or strive against something. These Jews were not indifferent about the gospel. They were opposing the gospel with all their might.
- C. The Jews had never been willing to yield to the Holy Spirit (Matthew 23:34-39). Their problem was not a lack of knowledge but a lack of will (John 7:17). The same Holy Spirit who inspired the prophets of the Old Testament also inspired the apostles and prophets who wrote the New Testament. Today, one resists the Holy Spirit when he rejects and opposes the message of the New Testament.

III. We Can Quench Him (1 Thessalonians 5:19)

- A. “Quench” is to cause a fervent activity to cease. Everyone has to choose between Satan and the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:16; cp. Matthew 12:20; 25:8). If the flame of the one burns brightly in us, we will quench the flame of the other. Jesus brought out a similar idea when He spoke of the devotion of a disciple (Matthew 12:30).
- B. Therefore, we want to treat the Word appropriately:
 - 1. Abide in what He said (John 8:31-32).
 - 2. Do not go beyond what He said (1 Corinthians 4:6).
 - 3. Handle His Word correctly (2 Timothy 2:15).
 - 4. Speak as He speaks (1 Peter 4:11).

IV. We Can Insult Him (Hebrews 10:29)

- A. The writer invites the readers to work out for themselves how much more serious is the punishment of the one who apostatizes from Christ — the willful sin of vv. 25-26.
- B. This verb means not only outrage, but insolence. It is an arrogant rejection of the Spirit through whose agency grace has come to man. Willful sin is an insult to the Spirit, who brings the grace of God to us (cp. Acts 20:32).
- C. Madalyn Murray O’Hair, an American atheist and the woman who was responsible for ending official Bible reading in public schools in 1964, used to call the Holy Spirit “the Spook.” Now she knows better! You do not have to be this brazen to insult the Holy Spirit; simply ignore His words!

V. We Can Blaspheme Him (Matthew 12:31-32)

- A. A lot of people believe this is a mysterious passage. Paul blasphemed, but was forgiven (1 Timothy 1:13). These people would not be forgiven, but why?
- B. It must be due to something that pertains to the blasphemer.
 - 1. The punishment is eternal because the sin is continuous. They are set in their ways.
 - 2. The punishment is eternal because of the circumstance in which the sin was committed. To reject the Holy Spirit is to spurn the final means of our salvation (John 16:8). Those who reject the New Testament have no other source of salvation.

Conclusion. While this lesson has lent itself to showing the true work of the Spirit, make sure you do not miss the point: if you neglect the Bible, you have sinned against the Spirit! And that is not a sin God will take lightly. If you are guilty of these, you need to turn back to the Father and take hold of the cleansing blood of the Son.