

## **Don't Quench or Grieve the Holy Spirit**

In this short study I'll try to illustrate how important the indwelling Holy Spirit is in the lives of all who are born-again Christians. I'll also share with you what I believe I have been given to understand regarding the soul / spirit we each acquire at the moment of conception. This latter discussion may at first seem only tangential to our subject. However, I believe that it can serve as foundational for a better understanding of our God-given soul / spirit and its relationship to our indwelling Holy Spirit.

In John 14:16 Jesus told His Disciples that when He left, He would send to them the Comforter, that is the Holy Spirit, and that He would abide with them forever. Through the Apostles, He had established His church which we call the Body of Christ. He had taught them, guided them, and inspired them to carry on and grow His church. It is evident that these tasks could not be done by mere men. God had to be intimately involved in every beneficial aspect of the mission. What an incredible turn of events this precious plan represented! The Holy Spirit has, from the moment of creation, been active in the world (Genesis 1:2). We read also that He would at times come into and also leave the hearts of men. Occasionally, He would enter one's heart and remain there. Saul is an example of the former, and I believe, David is an example of the latter type of indwelling.

Those who are born-again during the present dispensation receive a new spiritual heart fully equipped with the indwelling Holy Spirit. And what an incredible treasure He is! The following is but a tiny sample of what His presence provides.

- He is your eternal Comforter who will never leave us.
- His presence in our hearts is the ultimate Evidence of our salvation.
- He is the Sensitizer of our conscience, so that we can, if we try recognize our sins.
- He is the Power in us that enables us to resist sin, and grow ever stronger in our faith.
- He is the Source of all spiritual wisdom and discernment that can keep us in the "Spirit and Truth".
- He is the Fire in us that spurs us on to ever increasing fruitfulness.

- He is the Light, and the only Light by which we can read the Scripture and truly understand what God the Author has written.
- He is the spiritual Energy that can drive our efforts of obedience and unrelenting service beyond any possible human limit.
- He is the Fountain of God's love, which allows us to love Him and our brethren in a truly selfless committed manner.
- He is the Strength through which we are able to deal with all adversities, and to persevere to the end!

What a wonderful blessing He is! And how incredible are these things that His continued presence in one's life can provide! Once He has entered our hearts, all of these wonders become available to each of us and remain so for the rest of our lives.

Ah, but it is not necessarily a done deal, that all these things automatically characterize our lives. It is possible that one might not be a noticeably active participant in any of these blessings that He brings with Him. Unless we as Christians, choose to activate these blessings, our lives will have little spiritual meaning or benefit to us or others. Neither will they be able to glorify our Lord and Savior who gave His life that we could have them, and use them in accordance with His will. So, what's the problem? The Holy Spirit doesn't activate Himself; He only empowers, and puts His blessings at our disposal. There are conditions associated with His willingness to let us use His wonderful treasury of blessings. He is eager to share them, but only for the glorification of God through works that are in accordance with His will. He will allow the use of His blessings only if our hearts are right.

What is a "right heart"? It is a heart full of love that has as its primary mission to please and obey our Lord. It is a heart that is keenly aware of the sinful nature of its host, hates the sins he or she commits, and when a recognized sin is committed, immediately confesses it while begging for forgiveness. Therefore it is a heart that has no known unconfessed sins. If we haven't recognized our sins, confessed them, and prayed for forgiveness with a fully committed resolve that we will seek more diligently to not sin, I

believe that then our hearts are not right, and the Holy Spirit will withhold the use of some or all of His blessing. That is what “quenching” or “grieving” the Spirit all is about! I Thessalonians 5:19 implores us not to quench the Holy Spirit. Quench also means “to extinguish”. Ephesians 4:15 warns us not to grieve the Holy Spirit, that is to not “distress” Him. As we can see, it is a very serious matter when we inflict these things on Him. Keeping our hearts clean of sin through continuous prayer and gratitude, confession and repentance of each known sin is, I believe, the best way we can keep our blessed Holy Spirit eager and active in helping us in our Christian walk and in our fruitfulness. Before we continue with the topic issue, let us look into the new heart / old heart issue.

Scripture speaks of redemption as being accompanied by a “new heart” filled with the Holy Spirit. But what about the “old heart”, did it evaporate or otherwise disappear? Before we can deal with this question, we must seek to understand and define what is meant by the “heart” in this context. To answer this question completely, if indeed that were possible, is way beyond my comprehension or the scope of this discussion. However, what I believe might be a partial answer can be sufficiently summarized as follow: First there is no physical organ in the body which is this “heart.” We are dealing with a spiritual heart. After God “made man”, that is the physical body from the dust of the earth, (Genesis 1:26) He then “created” man, (Genesis 1:27). I interpret these very carefully structured verses to be conveying two very distinct and different events. First God, “made” a complete full grown body for Adam. Then He created Adam, that is the soul/spirit which was Adam. This soul/spirit was in the image of Himself that God inserted into the body which He had first “made” from the dust of the earth, the dust which He already created.

Thus the whole eternal Adam was his soul/ spirit, and it was the body which gave him a form and substance in which to dwell. If the heart of Adam functioned as we suspect ours functions in us today, it wouldn’t have had much to do. The linking of his spirit to the Holy Spirit obviated any need for an “indwelling” Holy Spirit. Also, being sinless, he had no need for this repository of deceit and wickedness. (Jeremiah 17:9). After he

sinned however, there had to be a repository for sin because once unleashed, sin accumulated. All of humanity sprang from Adam and was therefore riddled with sin and now needed that citadel of evil, that spiritual heart. From this we might consider that the spiritual heart may be the catch-all place of all of the sins that our fallen nature generates. This seems to be a reasonable premise, especially when we consider the fact that all sin is spiritual in nature.

As I've mused on this, I have felt prompted to pursue this in a different manner. As I reconsider the events that brought down this "first couple", it is evident that it was the mind, the source of understanding, and volition that sinned., It was the mind that chose to utilize its free will in a way contrary to God's will. It wasn't Eve's or Adam's body that sinned. The body is merely the instrument that the mind uses to perform all physical activities and to commit its sins. The mind is the originator, the instigator and the perpetrator of man's sins. In that sense, I believe that we can consider that there is a place within the mind where the deceitful and wicked "heart" resides. Perhaps it is an actual part of the mind, or even a cancer-like appendage of the mind. Knowing that the mind can be a very powerful force for good as well as evil, I believe adds some credence to this idea. The "heart" is that portion of the mind that deals with spiritual matters.

If this is true, how do we reconcile it with the receiving of a new heart? First off, what brings forth the new heart? One assertion of how, is expressed by Peter in 2Peter3:9 where God spoke through him and said that He was "*...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*" That tells us that repentance results in salvation. What is repentance? It is in this context, a change of mind!! In this statement we can see that the mind is at the very least, a major player in the act of redemption. With redemption comes the new heart. Thus a changed mind is intimately related to the new heart adding another layer of creditability to the premise that the heart is that aspect of the mind that deals with spiritual matters. How do we deal with this idea of a changed mind? This isn't a new mind. It is a portion of the mind that is changed in the manner in which it regards and treats sin. The mind operates in a very broad spectrum having to do

with all aspects of life, physical, emotional, physiological, as well as spiritual. The new heart becomes a new aspect of the mind's spiritual component.

The "old" heart aspect of the mind is very stubborn and is exceedingly difficult to remove. In the redeemed person, it must and will lose its dominance through the power of the Holy Spirit as He proceeds with the process of sanctification. If this process proceeds well, not only does the old heart vacate the mind, but all of the other concerns and interests of the mind also become increasingly subordinated to the new heart and the mission it has been given. One thing that we must not forget is that the old heart will not die until the flesh dies. It remains somewhere, if no longer a part of the mind, then close to it in what we call the old nature. Satan cannot penetrate the Holy Spirit-filled heart. However, he will continue to offer sin opportunities in the hope of quenching the Spirit. In order to cause this, the Satan-guided old nature keeps alert to the slightest ignorance, slacking off, or weakness of the mind in its role as guardian and host to the new heart. This is when the old nature plants sins in the mind which quench and/or grieve the Holy Spirit! These opportunities for the old nature to inject sin, must be thwarted continually. This can be effectively accomplished only through sincere, single-minded prayers and continuing growth of an understanding of the Bible and what it tells us about these matters.

We know that when our physical bodies die, the soul/spirit leaves the body. If we are saved, the soul/spirit ascends to heaven. If not it descends to Sheol. What we are dealing with here is that each soul is a dimensionless, substance-less, eternal, timeless, and inseparable companion of its God-given spirit. Just as the egg and the sperm are useless until they are united, I suspect that the spirit is also an incomplete generic entity that God provides at the time of conception of every human being. As noted, every soul is unique and represents the individual's characteristics. The mind, as both the partner and the product of the physical brain, is the active growing, learning, experiencing and understanding aspect of all breathing life, both human and animal. It is the soul that accumulates and assimilates these components provided by the mind, which collectively become the persona or character of the individual. In animals, absent an eternal spirit, the

soul dies with the body. As noted, man is the only creature that has been given an eternal spirit that permanently attaches itself to the soul at conception, thereby making the human soul immortal and eternal.

As we have discussed earlier, the indwelling Spirit gives the changed mind the power to restrain and even modify the “old heart”, that is the portion of the mind that yet craves sin. The more we utilize the attributes of the indwelling Spirit, the less troublesome and invasive the old “nature”, or former “heart” will be.

The soul is the person. The body, the brain, the mind, etc., are not the person. They only serve the soul as temporary instruments by means of which the person is able to conduct earthly activities and to develop his or her growth in knowledge, character, abilities, and all other aspects of their individualities. The day-by-day, year-after-year, products of the mind, are absorbed by the soul, thus forming his or her eternal being and individual character. If it were not for the cleansing power of the blood of Christ, the soul filled with the wickedness given it by the carnal mind, would be in an utterly hopeless state, and doomed into eternal suffering! However, with redemption and the indwelling Holy Spirit, this transfer of wickedness from mind to soul is diminished, and the soul which is bound for heaven, is thoroughly cleansed and emptied of these abominations through the glorification process which takes place as the soul / spirit ascends to heaven. As noted, absent faith in Christ Jesus, there is no new heart, no indwelling Holy Spirit, no cleansing of sins, no power to resist sin and no salvation.

In the example, found in Luke 16:20, of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus gave us a clear and powerful illustration of this mind-to-soul transfer. It reveals to us just what the soul retains as it departs from the body. It carries away to eternity what is the total essence of the person. There it is confirmed that the wholeness of a person is 100% spiritual, that is why it can happen. As we are allowed this short peek into the realm of the dead in Sheol, we find an example of the unsaved soul, the rich man, conversing across the abyss which separated the suffering side of Sheol from the paradise side. The suffering soul and Abraham’s soul are able to “see” and orally communicate.

We can learn amazing things from this short segment of their conversation. What we have here confirmed is that the soul / spirit survives the death of flesh, and that it retains not only memory, but also the power to speak, thirst, feel, hear, reason, have emotions, and within strict limits move from place to place. We may therefore also know that it has most, if not all of the basic attributes that we believe to be physical faculties that the body possessed before the physical death. It stands to reason therefore, that the death of the body doesn't deprive anyone of the essence of their being nearly as much as most of us tend to believe. In fact, the soul / spirit retains essentially all that is important of what it had, and was, before the flesh was cast away. Here we learn that communication between disembodied souls is a biblical fact. However, there is no evidence that there can be communication between an embodied human soul and the disembodied human soul.

While the temporary removal of the flesh does seem to impose a few limitations for the redeemed Christian, it also provides many benefits especially when the flesh is old and/or suffers the many afflictions associated with physical life. For the unredeemed person, death brings on a greater suffering than ever experienced in life. While for the redeemed, being absent from the body will be quite pleasant. That is because of where we will be. However, we each like our body, and will miss it for a while. Therefore, it is gratifying for the redeemed to know that we will not roam forever as formless shapeless mass-less soul/spirits. This is because we know that God will one day provide each of us with a new body to occupy, a body that I believe will be exactly like our old one as it was in its prime. However, this one will never grow old, or weak, or hurt or die. It will be incorruptible, and we will live forever on the new earth in close proximity and communication with Jesus and the Triune Godhead. With this in mind, let us get back to the "Spirit quenching" issue.

In Acts 2:2-4 we find the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit "*And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and*

*began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance.”* Here the Holy Spirit is indicated to be like a fire unto them. With this image of “cloven tongues of fire” in mind, we might consider this analogy. We might say that the Holy Spirit, in a personal spiritual sense, is like a brightly burning fire in our fireplace. Its heat warms and comforts, and at the same time its light enables our sight to penetrate darkness.

However, if we periodically squirt water on our fire, its heat and its light will quickly diminish, leaving us progressively deprived in terms of those benefits. And so it is with your indwelling Holy Spirit, when we sin. Sin will quench the Spirit, that is it will deprive us of the fullness of His available blessings. He will never leave us, in that we remain redeemed, but our earthly service to the Lord, the major purpose of our very existence, will be greatly impaired or even totally negated. Sin and the Holy Spirit cannot co-exist very well in close proximity of each other. The only remedy is to recognize the sin, confess it, plead for God’s forgiveness, and seriously commit to and strive to refrain from further sinning. It is amazing how quickly that fire and light of the Holy Spirit is rekindled and He again reaches His full availability when sin is removed.

Seven times Scripture tells us that the physical body of the redeemed is the Temple of God. Might we then consider the new heart to be the Holy of Holies place where God as the Holy Spirit dwells? Augustine observed that “we abide in Him because we are His members, and He abides in us because we are His Temple.” We all like the image and feel good about being one of His members, as Paul in 1Corinthians 12:12-31 so eloquently describes. *“<sup>12</sup> For as the body is one, and hath many members and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. <sup>13</sup> For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. <sup>14</sup> For the body is not one member, but many. <sup>15</sup> If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? <sup>16</sup> And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? <sup>18</sup> But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. <sup>19</sup>*



*And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 and those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked: 25 that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 have all gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.”*

We as redeemed Christians, assume, because we are redeemed, that we each are one of the “members” that Paul referred to, that is leg, foot, ear, eye, etc. of the Body of Christ. We feel good about it. It’s a “touchy-feely” image we each have of ourselves. However, if in fact any of us who have been given such ministries are serving with a quenched spirit, then our service is not God-honoring, and we have caused a weakening of the whole Body. Depending on our individual calling, our particular portion of Body of Christ may have a serious limp, or be poor of hearing or seeing. No one can be a fully positively an affectual member of the Body of Christ who chronically quenches or grieves the spirit through un-convicted, un-confessed and un-forgiven sins! The bottom line to this is, in sinning we have defiled the Body of Christ, as well as quenched the indwelling Spirit, and that is nothing of which any of us should be a part!

There is one aspect of this situation that disturbs me personally, and quite often. It is something of which every redeemed soul should be keenly aware. That is the sins we commit that we don't know about. I put them in three categories:

1. There may be sins that we don't even know are sins. As fledging Christians, it may be excusable to be ignorant of the more subtle forms of sinning. However, ignorance cannot be an excuse for very long. This is because if we are serious about our faith, and we most certainly should be, lest it be a vain faith, our study of the Word should very soon educate us in this matter.
2. There are sins that we know are sins, but have become such an integral part of our persona that the conscience has become calloused and blinded to them. We must cut away the callous, restore sensitivity, and respond as needed to what is revealed. This can only be achieved by an intrinsically repentant heart that prays single-mindedly for this sensitivity, and restoration. Several decades ago when safes were less sophisticated than they are today, there were thieves called "safe crackers." They could discover the safe combinations by actually "feeling" the tumblers fall into place. They could feel this through the sensitivity of their fingers. To achieve maximum sensitivity, they would actually rub their fingertips with sandpaper. So also, through serious prayer, will the Holy Spirit re-sensitizes us to feel the "tumblers" of that so subtly keep us from unlocking Satan's safe, so we can discover his most secret ways of tempting and guiding us into indescribable sins. His safe contains an inventory of the weaker elements of our fallen nature. It is also where he keeps many of the Spirit-quenching programs.
3. Perhaps the most insidious and most difficult to recognize, may be classified as sins of the tongue. In Scripture, the tongue generally is symbolic of the words we speak that convey messages. In that sense the tongue is the most powerful organ of the human body. It can work for good or for evil. Many are led to the faith through the work of the tongue. However, it seems that far more are condemned and suffer greatly because of its misuse. The working of a loose or evil tongue has caused wars, persecutions and untold agonies and sufferings in the world. James devotes the whole of chapter three to the need for the truly faithful to

control the tongue. More often than not the workings of the tongue, even of the faithful Christians, cause much pain and suffering even for other Christians. There are at least forty verses on the Old Testament that admonish the evil nature of the tongue and the great harm that it is capable of inflicting. So what's the point in the context of our subject?

It is the uncontrollable tongue that is the source of not only heinous and criminal sins, but many sins that are so subtle that we utterly fail to recognize them as sins. They are fashioned by the tongue and spewed out of the mouth in the most pious, innocent, seemingly loving manner, which we find almost impossible to recognize as being sinful. That is how we quench the Spirit through sins, and never know it. How can this be? It has to do primarily with words that are said that didn't have to have to been said, or shouldn't have been said, no matter how innocent and beneficial they may have seemed at the time. Here is an example of such a situation, that I personally witnessed.

Because of a serious addiction, this person confessed that fact to a friend, and asked for the friend's prayers. This person went to others asking them to pray for the removal of this addiction. What is wrong here? The troubled person had gone to this friend, in strict confidence, and confessed the problem hoping that somehow his prayer might help. Of course the brother's problem soon was known by everyone in the congregation. This caused a great deal of embarrassment, a sense of betrayal and much anguish and pain, so much so that the person felt compelled to move to another church. Did the one to whom the confession was made, confess his sin? No, because this friend failed to recognize it as sin. What about the dozens of sins that resulted from this one? Everyone who revealed to another this rumor was guilty of the sin of slander, no matter how righteous they felt as they spoke of the problem in order to elicit prayers. Proverbs chapter 10 speaks of such sins, as does Psalms 101:5. Did these other brethren know they were sinning when they added to the spreading of this mischief? Most likely not. Again, this was a true event which I personally observed toward the end of its tragic trail.

What is the point of this? It is to point out one example of how even our most innocent, well meaning words spoken to a brother about a brother can unwittingly be harmful as well as sinful. How can we possibly confess such sins and thus avoid quenching the Spirit when we don't believe they are sins? In James 1:19 we are told to be "swift to hear and slow to speak" Slow to speak when properly applied means to avoid even forming the words until the thoughts have been filtered through a knowledgeable, loving, prayerful, God-honoring heart where all evil potential has been removed. If this is done, I believe that more often than not, the urge to speak will die before the words are formed. To put it another way, it is best for any of us that before we speak on matters dealing with our brethren, that we ask ourselves five questions:

- Why do I want to say this?
- Is it necessary?
- Will it be beneficial?
- Is it God-honoring?
- And finally, might it in any way be harmful?

If we will first prayerfully ask ourselves these questions, more often than not, I believe that we will often find that it is best for the words to remain unsaid. One thing to look out for as we examine what we are considering saying is pride. Pride is Satan's chief characteristic, and it is also an evil that has invaded every human heart. We should not jump too quickly to eliminate this possibility from any word we speak. Pride may be microscopic as well as a "log" in our eye. Simply knowing something and "innocently" sharing it with another, such as those who passed on the information about a brother could have been pride motivated. The pride could have been in the fact that they knew something that others did not, and the conveying of that knowledge gave expression to that pride. It is this, or any other "microscopic" expression of pride that can continually escape detection and keep our indwelling Holy Spirit grieved and quenched!

I am sure that if one were to muse at length about this matter, one could unmask any number of "trivial" sins, which are committed frequently, but which are not so trivial when quenching the Spirit is involved. We should each engage in such efforts if we are really serious about the quality of our service to our Lord. I believe that a quenched

Spirit, no matter how slightly He is quenched, results in a serious impediment to one's fruitfulness. For those who are called to teach, or preach or write biblical commentaries, or interpretations of God's Word should be particularly alert where quenching the Spirit is concerned. These people are called to a higher standard of care; because what they produce influence many. A person with a heart filled with an unquenched Holy Spirit has available to him the full spectrum of spiritual blessings through which his fruit will be unblemished. I believe that any amount of un-confessed, un-repentant sins will result in fruit that may well be quite blemished in direct proportion to the amount of quenching, of the Spirit that the sin causes. Such "blemishes" may manifest as errors, in biblical interpretation, poor or inadequate articulation, or any number of ways in which one's calling may be ineffectual, or actually be harmful.

As were many of my writings, what you have just read was first written for myself rather than something to share. This has been my attempt to examine, and so to better comprehend the subject. I hope thereby to strive to eliminate this quenching of the Spirit from my life, for the sake of what I have been called to do. To be right with our Lord while engaged in these efforts is the utmost importance because of the influence they have on others. I pray and hope that you pray for me, that I never teach or write a single word while there is the slightest amount of quenching of my indwelling Holy Spirit.