

Grieve Not the Spirit

A few years ago a British couple, Sandy and Bernice, accepted a call from their denomination to be missionaries in Israel. A house was provided for them near Jerusalem.

After they moved in, they noticed that a dove had come to live in the eaves of the house. They considered this to be a confirmation that they were in the right place.

However, Sandy noticed that every time they raised their voices, the dove would flutter off, sometimes not returning for some time. "Have you noticed that every time there is a lot of noise, the dove flies away?" he asked.

"Yes, and it makes me feel sad. I am afraid the dove will fly away and never come back," Bernice replied.

"Well," Sandy said, "Either the dove will adjust his behavior to us, or if we really want to make sure we never lose him, we will have to adjust our behavior to the dove."

Likewise, our heavenly Dove, the Holy Spirit has feelings, and we can hurt His feelings when we grieve Him by the things we do (see Eph. 4:30). I have learned that the Dove will not adjust to me; I must adjust to Him.

What is needed is a sensitivity to the Spirit's ways and an immediate awareness of His absence should He withdraw. In fact, how quickly we recognize His absence is a good test as to how well acquainted we are with Him.