

Grieving the Spirit

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **—Ephesians 4:30**

In over fifty years of studying the Bible, one truth has alarmed me more than any other. You might think it has to do with standing before God at the final judgment. But, surprising as it may seem, it isn't that. The truth that alarms me most is the possibility of grieving or quenching the Holy Spirit without knowing it—the painless way in which the anointing can be lifted from me. When this occurs, because I know nothing whatever at first, I carry on as though nothing has happened.

It is possible for one who has experienced the precious anointing of the Holy Spirit to swiftly, painlessly, lose that anointing. I can displease the Lord and feel nothing. It is very possible that I could spend years doing what I presumed was God's will—preaching, teaching, witnessing, and being involved in church work—when God was hardly present in my efforts at all. I may even have the applause and respect of people the whole time, and they not have a clue I have moved ahead of Jesus.

It is a great mystery of the anointing of which one may be unaware—even though it is working most powerfully. On the other hand, one also may not be conscious that it has been lifted! When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, “he was not aware that his face was radiant” (Exod. 34:29). Yet Samson, who could tear a lion apart with his bare hands, was as weak as a kitten when the anointing left him—but he was unconscious of this until he tried to do what had seemed so natural the day before. (See Judges 14:6; 16:20-22.) The supernatural often seems natural to the anointed man or woman.

When the Holy Spirit is grieved, the anointing lifts. We

usually feel nothing at the time. It isn't until some time later that we notice we have carried on out of habit or through the momentum of a natural gift.

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