

The Dove Will Not Adjust to You—Ways You May Be Quenching Holy Spirit

I recently read a story told by R.T. Kendall of a British couple sent by their denomination to be missionaries in Israel. They were given a home in Jerusalem. After they had moved into their new home, they noticed that a dove had come to live in the eave of the roof. They were thrilled with the presence of the turtledove and received it as a sign from the Lord of His favor on their ministry in Israel. But they noticed that every time they slammed a door, the dove would fly away. If they raised their voices in argument, the dove would fly away.

One day, the husband asked his wife, "Have you noticed the dove flying away when we slam doors or argue?" "Yes," she replied, "I am so afraid the dove will fly off and never return." He nodded and spoke words that would forever change their lives, "Either the dove adjusts to us, or we adjust to the dove." Wow! These words can change our lives as well if we learn to adjust to the dove instead of demanding the dove adapt to us.

When the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus, He chose the form of a dove. This choice of a dove as a symbol for the Holy Spirit is, of course, not coincidental. Although, the dove and pigeon belong to the same family of birds and are anatomically identical, their temperament is vastly different. The pigeon is belligerent, will eat anything, isn't bothered by noises, traffic or people. The dove, on the other hand, only eats fruits or seeds and is so peaceful that, from ancient times, cultures recognized it as the emblem of peace. Unlike the pigeon, the dove cannot be trained and is a very sensitive creature.

While we must be careful not to make the symbolic too literal in the Scripture, the dove gives us great insight into the Holy Spirit's temperament. We know that the Holy Spirit is also symbolically represented by fire, the wind, water, wine and oil. The church most often focuses on the fire because fire is a powerful change agent. We should take note that the dove came before the fire.

Ephesians 4:30 instructs us, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you are sealed for the day of redemption." The word translated "grieve" here means to make sad, to cause injury, to wound or to distress. So, it is possible to hurt the Holy Spirit. But it is also possible to live in such a way that we do not hurt Him. We should live in such a way that the dove of heaven is at rest in our lives; then we can expect the fire of His presence to be manifest among us.

Jesus told us that the Holy Spirit's coming was to our advantage in life (John 16:7). The Holy Spirit is our helper for every arena of life. His presence is so crucial to our success that we must learn to make the necessary adjustments to avoid grieving Him in any way. We do not want the dove to fly away but to remain on us in power. We are not talking in this passage about losing your salvation; we are talking about living as an authorized representative of His kingdom. This is not about the Holy Spirit abandoning us but withdrawing His presence so that we are left with our ability and not flowing in His.

I am nothing without the help of the Holy Spirit. What is ministry without the anointing? What is life without the dynamite power of God? How can we learn what we need to know if He is hurt by our attitudes and actions and pulls back from communing with us? We must learn how to live with high sensitivity to Him so that His presence becomes increasingly stronger with us and His power manifests in a marvelous and impacting way.

There are five things we must avoid if we want to live so the dove of heaven finds rest with us:

1. Impurity: 1 Corinthians 6:19 says that our body is the temple where the Spirit dwells.
2. Neglecting or paying little attention to this great salvation: See Hebrews 2:2-3.
3. Dishonoring His Word—2 Timothy 3:16 says the Scripture is the Holy Spirit's great work.
4. Dishonoring His people—Mark 6 shows that, where people did not honor Him, even Jesus could not accomplish much. See also Romans 12:9-10.
5. Inner attitudes that give birth to words and actions of destruction—Ephesians 4:29-32
 - Bitterness
 - Rage
 - Anger
 - Harsh words
 - Slander
 - All types of evil behavior

The dove is not going to adjust to us! He is gentle, but He cannot be trained. He is soft, but He is not weak. He is strong, but He is also sensitive. He is the sound of a mighty rushing wind, but He also is found in the gentle cooing of a dove. He is fire, but He is also flighty. If we want to live in the awareness of His presence and the flow of His power, we must adjust to the Dove!

For a deeper look at this concept, I encourage you to read R.T. Kendall's book, *Pigeon Religion*, published by Charisma House. {eoa}

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