

# Commands Concerning the Holy Spirit

by Bill McLeod

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of respecting and honoring the Holy Spirit by following the commands in the Bible to avoid grieving Him.*

**Duration:** 50:48

**Scripture:** Exodus 22:25, Mark 3:5, Acts 19:19, Ephesians 4:26-31

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of rejoicing always and praying without ceasing. He shares personal anecdotes about facing challenges, such as having a flat tire or a crying baby, and encourages listeners to maintain a grateful attitude towards God despite these difficulties. The preacher also highlights the significance of speaking with grace and giving thanks, rather than engaging in filthiness or foolish talking. He reminds the audience that the earth is full of God's goodness and encourages them to focus on being a blessing to others through the love of God.

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## Transcript

I want to talk with God's power tonight, we trust his grace, about some simple commands that the Bible gives us concerning the Holy Spirit. Maybe you didn't know that there are commands in the Bible related to the Holy Spirit, but there are. And we're going to look at them.

And Jesus said, you are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you. Alright? So we're going to look at some commands that God gave us. This time, respecting and concerning the Spirit of God.

What's the first one? The first one is well known, it's in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 30, and it says, grieve not, do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you were sealed unto the day of redemption. Can Christians, do Christians grieve the Holy Spirit? Well obviously they must be, because Paul is writing to Christians, this is addressed to born again believers. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you were sealed unto the day of redemption.

Why? Because the Holy Spirit is the source of our joy, of our peace, of our power, our strength to resist temptation, and all of these things, he's the source of it all. And if I grieve him, then these things are not going to be in my life in the abundant measure that God wants. We read of the early Christians, for example, they were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

We read in Acts chapter 13, the last verse, the disciples are filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. Or think of Paul in Romans 14, 17, 18, where he said, the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that in these things serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men.

Or think of Paul in Romans 15, 13, it's a sort of a prayer, now that God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. I'm going to back up a little bit and come back to our text again from Ephesians chapter 4, because there's something else I think we need to know and understand clearly before we come to this, and it is this truth, that if I am God's child, God's Holy Spirit is living within me, my body has become the temple of God. Do we know that? The Christians at Corinth had forgotten it.

1 Corinthians 3.16, one of those great 3.16 texts of the New Testament. If you want a good study, look up all the 3.16 texts in the New Testament, you'll be amazed at how many of them sort of fit together and how powerful they are. This is one.

He says, what don't you know? Know you not? Don't you know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? Don't you know that? They'd forgotten it at Corinth, or they'd heard it, but it's easy to forget things we have heard. And we need to be constantly reminded that as a believer in Jesus Christ, I have become the temple of God. Then in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, he goes at it the same way, Paul does, he said, what, know you not? Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own, for you are bought for the price? Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Are you doing that as a Christian believer? Are you glorifying God in your body? Are you glorifying God in your spirit, which belong to God? Remember Paul said in 2 Corinthians chapter 7, having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. And of course, the reason why is because the Spirit of God has made our bodies his temple and he lives within us. Going back for a moment to 1 Corinthians chapter 6, he says, he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

Now, you know, I came across this a year or so ago. I've read it many times before, and it just never hit me the way it did that day. You know how it is with the word of God, sometimes you read something you've read many times before and all of a sudden it hits you and it means something special.

And this verse meant something special to me one day. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. We have become one with Jesus Christ.

And the next verse says, free fornication. Every sin that a man does is without, that is, outside the body. But he that commits fornication sins against his own body.

And that introduces the thought, what he says, don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which you have of God, and you're not your own for you're bought for the price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. And the commands we're thinking about tonight will enable us, will help us to see how to handle this problem of glorifying God in my body and in my spirit, which are God's.

First of all, don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you were sealed unto the day of redemption. We have in Romans 15, 30, the Apostle Paul talks about what he calls the love of the spirit. Brethren, he said, I beseech you for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake and for the love of the spirit that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, for the love of the spirit.

Colossians 1a, he talks about your love in the spirit. These two verses, it's the only place in the Bible that either of these truths are found. Your love in the spirit.

Then in 2 Timothy 1, he reminds us, Paul does, that God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. The spirit that lives in the Christian is a spirit of love. And one of the ways we grieve the spirit of God is just by being unloving and critical and cranky and cold and carnal.

When we should be loving, I was on a canoe trip with some friends some years ago in northern Manitoba, a very, very beautiful country. We came to a lake called Elbow Lake. It was shaped like an elbow.

The lake was maybe six miles long, nowhere wider than a mile. High rock hills on both sides. And we hit the lake about five in the afternoon and it was as calm as glass.

So I said to the others, I said, hey, let's just sit here. I'm going to try the echoes out. So I hollered, hello.

And I heard it going down the lake, hitting these rock hills, just bouncing across the lake like this. Hello, hello, hello, hello, hello, hello. And it stopped.

And I thought it was all over. And all of a sudden I heard it coming back. Hello, hello, hello, hello, hello, hello, hello.

And it hit a rock hill back over here. Seventeen responses. We had a great time for about five minutes, and then all the loons got into the act.

I mean, I guess they should have said the other loons got into the act. But just supposing, just supposing I had said, hello, and I heard it going, hello, hello, hello, hello, hello, hello, hello, hello. Then it came back and it was saying goodbye, goodbye, goodbye, goodbye, goodbye, goodbye, goodbye, goodbye.

It would be kind of time to take off, wouldn't it? But listen, you as a Christian and I as a Christian are supposed to be an echo of God. God is love, and we have become partakers of God's divine nature. And God's nature is love.

Am I truly an echo of God? Do I love the way God loves? When Jesus said, be you therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect, if you study the context, what he is talking about is being perfect in love. That's what he's talking about. We are to let the love of God, we sing this chorus sometimes, the love of God flowing through me, out into the desert, setting all the captives free.

Oh, I don't care who you are, you can be a blessing. God can use your life in the winning of the lost. God can use your life in cheering those that are discouraged and despondent, downcast and afraid.

If you're filled with the love of God, that's all that's required. You don't have to know a lot. The Bible says, knowledge puffs up, it makes men proud, but love builds up and edifies, it makes men strong.

And all God is looking for is people through whom he can pour himself. So I hope you're an accurate echo of God himself. Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.

How do I grieve the Spirit? The context shows me how. He begins by talking about lying. He says, put away lying, put away lying.

Speak every man truth with his neighbor. Do Christians lie? Well, they don't call it lying, they call it exaggeration. I was just exaggerating.

Isn't it funny, you know, if you're telling a story and it was about a sum of \$1,000, when you tell a story, all of a sudden it's \$2,000, you know, and if you're talking about a story, there are four people involved, when you tell a story, there were eight people involved. Well, maybe you heard about a fellow who was given to exaggeration and his wife used to check him up, and he went partridge hunting and came home without a partridge, but he said, honey, I saw 500 partridge in one, you know, one covey, 500 of them. Well, she knew what he was like, and so she said, honey, how many did you actually see? Well, about 500.

Oh, she said 500. Well, honey, about 250. And she said, let's try again, now how many partridge did you actually see? About 100.

She said we came from 500 to 100 in a matter of minutes, let's try again, how many did you actually see? Well, honey, when you put it that way, about 25. She didn't figure it at the bottom yet, so she said, honey, I don't like to say this, but I have a funny feeling that you never saw 25. How many did you actually see? And he said, well, honey, I never saw any, but I sure heard a big noise in the bush.

But sometimes we Christians, we exaggerate and we grieve the Spirit of God, putting away lying. I remember preaching on that one time when I was a pastor, and one of the dads in the congregation was driving home with his boys, and he told me later the boys said, hey, dad, we listened to the pastor this morning. Yeah, why? Well, when you sell a car, you're going to have to tell a buyer what's wrong with it.

He wasn't planning on telling any buyer what was wrong with the car, he was planning on selling the car. He said, my kids reminded me of what you said from the Word of God in the morning. Oh, people, just to be honest so people can trust us and know that I'm not given to exaggerating, I do not tell lies.

Some Christians do, and it grieves the Spirit of God. Then he says, be you angry and sin not. You know, sometimes people do and say things, and they are things that cause us to be angry.

But it says, be you angry and sin not. Jesus was angry in Mark's Gospel, chapter 3. It says, he looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their heart. And there's times when you can't help but be grieved, but you know what it says? Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.

If you're angry with someone longer than overnight, you're sinning, you're grieving the Spirit of God. And how is it? I wouldn't be at all surprised if there are people in this building, within hearing of my voice tonight, that are bearing grudges that have been in your hearts for months, and maybe even for years. I knew two sisters, professing Christians.

They hadn't spoken to each other for 18 years. There were two men in my church in Saskatoon. I never even knew that they sang duets together, because they hadn't sung together for 11 years.

Why? Because they didn't get along. I never knew they hadn't spoken to each other for two years, prior to the revival in 1971. I never even knew that.

And they were both deeply involved in the work of the church. Now tell me, how can God bless that? God can't, and God doesn't. But somehow we think God overlooks these things, and God doesn't.

It grieves the Spirit of God. Don't let the sun go down on your anger. Make things right.

Make sure when the sun goes down, your heart is free from this kind of problem. You're filled with the love of God, no matter what they say or what they do. Then he says, neither give place to the devil.

Don't give the devil any room in your life. It could be a reference to witchcraft, getting involved in the occult. Do Christians do that? Oh yes, they do.

I'm so weary sometimes, counseling with people, and Christian people involved in the occult. I've lectured to three or four hundred people on different occasions, given an invitation at the end. I mean, lectured on the occult, given an invitation, and had as many as 40 people walk forward, all of them Christians, professing Christians, and all of them involved in some occult or witchcraft practices.

Sometimes one person, as many as 22 different areas of the occult. But much of it is due to total ignorance, if people do not realize what they're doing, they don't think it's occult, they think it's just some kind of a game. But the Bible says, don't give any place to the devil.

You know how Paul deals with this in 1 Corinthians chapter 10? He says, you cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. The word devil in the King James Version, the proper word translation is demon. You can't be partaker of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.

You can't drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. He says, do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? He says, I would not that you should have fellowship with demons. That's what you do when you use a Ouija board, when you have your palm read, when you go to a fortune teller, when you let somebody look in a crystal ball and tell you things about the future.

That's what you're doing. You're having fellowship with demons. When you use a needle on a thread to determine the sex of an unborn child, you're having fellowship with demons.

And I can't go into that tonight. But the text is saying, do not give any place to the devil, because it will grieve the Spirit of God and cripple you in your walk with him. Then it says, let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor.

Do Christians steal? Well, sometimes they do. Sometimes we steal time from our employer. My father-in-law was not a Christian.

He worked in a mill down in the furnace room where it was very hot, and there was another fellow who was a Christian who worked with him down there. And my father-in-law asked me one day, referring to this particular man, he said, old man so and so. My father never had much respect for him.

He said, tell me something, Bill, do you think he's doing right? He sits there reading his Bible, and I have to fire his furnace as well as fire my furnace and if I say anything to him, he says, look, I'm reading the Word of God, don't disturb me. He said, is that right? I said, no, I said, daddy, it's wrong. Now he thought he was impressing my father-in-law because he was sitting there reading a Bible, but he was putting a double burden on my father-in-law.

This man was stealing time from the company that was paying him his wage. And more than that, any Christian believer who's not giving God at least one-tenth of all that God gives him. Young people, if your parents give you an allowance, one-tenth of your allowance belongs to God.

And if you're not giving that much at least to God, you are robbing God, and in the strictest sense of the term, you are a thief. That's what God says. Don't blame me, I never wrote Malachi.

Will a man rob God? Yes. God said, you have robbed me. You say, wherein have we robbed thee? And God said, in tithes and offerings.

It belongs to God. Christ put a seal of approval on tithing in Matthew 23:23. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, if you remember, in the Old Testament, in the first book of the Bible. And Abraham was a type of the believer, and Melchizedek was a type of Christ.

And here we have the believer. He gave him tithes of all, it says. Start it when you're young.

Do you mind a personal reference? When I first went out preaching, they were paying me \$10 a month. Now the average salary at the time was about \$100 a month. I was getting \$10.

They paid me every three months \$30. After six months, I found a girl that was as crazy as I was, and we got married, and then the two of us had to live on \$10 a month. And we had the greatest time just watching God supply, because we gave God, always gave God a tenth, and beyond a tenth, at times when we could, we did.

And what a time we had, just watching God answer prayer. You know something? No matter how you try, you can't live on \$10 a month. You just can't.

Try it sometime. I mean, even try to live on \$100 a month. Well, anyway, give God the tithe.

Let him that stole, it says here, steal no more. But rather let him labor, working with his hands, the thing that is good, that he may have to invest at 14 percent. You noticed that, didn't you? Isn't that what it says? But that's what the Christians are all doing, or trying to do, planning to do.

What does it say? That he may have to give to him that needs. That's what it says. Now, isn't that strange? By the way, that's a subject all by itself.

And I have a sermon coming up, not here, but on that. If I get back here, I'm warning you, I might have to preach it, I don't know. The Bible talks about usury and increase.

And God says that increase is unlawful. It's not lawful. Think about it.

Anyway, let him that stole, steal no more, because it grieves the Holy Spirit of God. Rather let him labor, working with his hands, the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needs. Then it says, don't let any corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the ears.

What kind of a person are you when you're taught? I mean, most of us can talk, can't we? I talked with a preacher one time, and he was very, he said, Bill, I'm so dry, I'm as dry as a piece of leather that's hung out in the sun for two years. Now that's dry. I said, why are you so dry? He said, I don't know.

I said, what's God talking to you about? And you know, he hung his head and told me, he said, okay, I know what it is. I said, what is it? He said, I used to be pastor of a certain church, and he told me where, and I knew the church, I'd had meetings there one time. And he said, there's a certain lady in that church, and she's got a long tongue.

You know, some Christians have tongues so long, they could use it for a necktie. Some Christians have tongues so long, they can shoot them out the side window of the car and use them for a windshield wiper. They're always tripping on their tongue, you know.

The Bible has a lot to say about this. The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, so is the tongue among my members. It's set on fire of hell, it says in the Bible.

Watch your tongue. Watch what it says, let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth. In the Bible, in Isaiah, it says, the Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I might know that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

You know, before I knew better, I used to tell a lot of jokes. Oh, I knew hundreds of them. I knew hundreds, and I could really tell them.

People just roar, and they all want to hear the latest story I know, see. But it was a cover-up for an empty heart. That's really what it was.

You know, a lot of this ha-ha stuff, it's a cover-up for an empty heart, and that's what I was doing. And one night, I had a strange dream, and in this dream, I was looking at my own tongue. I'm sure God did that.

And my tongue was a horrible-looking thing, full of ulcers and sores. And I woke up, and I said, hey, God, what's that all about? He said, it's you. I said, me? I mean, I always preach lots of Bible.

And then God showed me that my tongue was not what it should be. I never, ever told dirty stories. I never even told jokes when I preached, unless it had a point.

I'll tell an amusing story if it has a point, to get a point across, but not for the sake of getting a laugh, not for the sake of reducing tension. And God taught me something, and you know, He really bore that into my heart. After Revival came, I was with a song leader of mine, Howard Gardner, a very godly person, and we were invited to a pastor's home.

His wife was in. She hadn't smiled, they said, in seven years. And she needed to meet God, and she wanted to meet God, and she'd been involved in the occult.

And so we went to the home, and we talked about these things, and finally she said, well, I'm ready to commit my life totally to God, and she did, and what a transformation. But she said something, I'm ashamed to share it with you, but I have to. She said, just as we were about to pray, she said, Bill, I don't want you to pray.

And I said, oh. She said, don't feel badly, but she said, whenever I think of you, all I can think of is all those funny stories you used to tell, and I don't want you to pray. I felt awful, but you know, when I got home that night, I said, Lord, thank you for doing that.

Thank you. God didn't want me to fall into that again. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Are you serious about the Christian life? Then this will speak to your heart. You want to be the kind of person, you see, you're being watched, as we said in one of the other sessions. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man.

Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not befitting, but rather giving of thanks. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. The Lord is good to all.

He is prepared of His goodness for the poor. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies. People, we've got enough to keep us thanking God all day, every day, as long as we're in the earth.

Why do we let our tongue get wrapped around other things? People, we've got enough to keep us thanking God all day, every day, as long as we're in the earth. Why do we let our tongue get wrapped around other things? Anyway, to get back to this preacher, I almost forgot him. This lady in his church had one of these long tongues, you know, and she just, she nattered, and she tattled, and she gossiped, and she lied, and it went on and on and on, until she got a storm going in the church, and finally the preacher had to leave.

He said, Bill, I'll tell you something frankly, I hate her, I absolutely hate that woman. I said, no wonder you're dry. He says, please don't tell me I have to love her, I can't.

I said, you have to love her. He says, you mean? I said, yes, that's what I'm saying, you have to make it right. Oh, Bill, he said, listen, I'll have to form a long distance, and I can just see, I'll tell her, you know, I've had all this bruising in my heart, please forgive me, and I can just, Bill, I can hear her now, she's saying this sweet, sweet voice, she'll say, oh, pastor, I've always loved you, I've never gossiped about you, I've loved you with all my heart.

Oh, he says, Bill, it just drives me up the wall, and I said, you have to do it. And he did it, and the joy of God filled his heart, as soon as he did it. Listen, you can't afford to hate people, you're a Christian, you can't afford to hate people, you can't afford to have bitterness in your heart, that hurts you, it doesn't hurt the other person the slightest, it grieves the Spirit of God, and it hurts you, but it doesn't hurt the other person, it sets up tensions in your life.

God, in Romans 5, it says, The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. When you let God do that, you can love everybody, the most unlovely person in the world, you can love them. We had a beautiful, heart-moving testimony in a meeting in Saint Louis one time, a lady came during the sharing time, and this is what she said, she said, people, I've been a Christian for years, but there's one kind of person I could never love, I could never stand people that were mentally deficient.

I never, I didn't, and you know what was happening in the meetings was this, every night we had sharing, there's a little lady there, she was probably close to 60, and she wasn't quite right mentally, and she'd come trotting up in the pulpit, and she'd get in behind the mic and she'd say, I love Jesus with all my heart, and she'd go back to her seat again. And this lady said, I was saying to myself, why in the world did I let her do that? I can't stand that woman. And one night, God dealt with her about her attitude.

God said, I love that woman with all my heart, I live in your heart, why don't you love her the same as I love her? You're out of step with me. And she got in step with God. And she asked the congregation to forgive her for the attitude she'd had, and then she said, I'm leaving the platform now, and watch me.

And you know what she did? She went and sat down next to that woman, and put her arm around her and gave her a hug and a kiss. And every night in the crusade from that night on, she sat next to that woman, and usually had their arms around each other, which is beautiful. It wasn't put on, it's the way we should all be.

Don't grieve God's Holy Spirit. Alright, let no corrupt communication in. Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking, and evil speaking John Wesley defined as saying something about a person that you wouldn't dare say if they were standing right there. Who hasn't done that? Would you mind standing? You'll notice I'm standing, but I've done it too. Alright, let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor, that seeking for personal attention, be put away with all malice, and malice is secret hatred in the heart.

Even the Old Testament said, you're not to bear a grudge in your heart against your neighbor. And then it says, be kind. Are you a kind person, or are you a crusty, demanding, and cold? Be kind, tender-hearted.

What's the next phrase? Forgiving one another, which means the Holy Spirit foresaw that Christians would sin against Christians, and forgiveness would be required. Forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you, and He has. Alright, don't grieve God's Holy Spirit.

Don't quench Him. There's another command in 1 Thessalonians 5. How do we quench the Spirit of God? Look at the context. It says, Rejoice evermore.

Do you rejoice all the time? We're supposed to rejoice in the Lord always. We sing in one of our choruses, and that's taken from Philippians, and again I say rejoice. We Christians have thousands of things, as indicated a few moments ago, for which to thank God for, to rejoice in.

Rejoice evermore. So, the Holy Spirit leads me to rejoice, and I'm too cranky and cold to do that, and I can't rejoice. So I quench the Spirit.

Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. Someone has called prayer the breathing of the soul.

That's based on Lamentations 3.56, Hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry. So you know, I don't have to think before I breathe in a physical sense. If I had to, I'd die every time I fell asleep.

And I have to pray without ceasing. It's the breathing of the soul, and God's ears are always open. When I'm washing dishes, sweeping the floor, driving my car, driving a tractor, whatever I'm nailing, banging nails in the wall or something, looking at a book, studying a book, whatever I'm doing, pray without ceasing and everything give thanks.

I should be continually raising my heart to God in prayer and praise. The Spirit of God leads me to do that, and so much of the time I say, no, I'm doing something else. I don't want to do this, and I quench the Spirit.

The word quench there, by the way, the Greek word that carries the idea of throwing water on a fire. And the fire in your life is the Spirit of God. Every time you quench Him, you put the fire down.

Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, even when you have a flat tire and you weren't expecting it, or the car won't start in the cold morning, or the baby cries in the middle of the night you spent half the night walking the floor.

It used to happen to us, too. When our kids were small, but we had some older children, and there'd be three or four of us to take turns babysitting. If the child wouldn't go to sleep, sooner or later they'd wake him up and say, Dad, it's your turn.

And I'd stumble out of bed and pick up the baby and walk over to this rocking chair. We had a special rocking chair that had a squeak in it, and the squeak would usually put the kids to sleep, but not always. And so I'd get in this rocking chair and start rocking, and I'd pray, Lord, I don't want to sit up here all night.

Please put this little tight to sleep. And the Lord did it every time. And we'd toddle back to bed, put the baby in the crib, and they'd say, Well, how do you do it? I said, Ask the Lord to do it.

I'm not going to sit up there all night with a crying baby. There's no point in that. But listen, it says, Don't quench, don't smother, don't put out the fire of the Holy Spirit.

So don't grieve him, and don't quench him. Your body is the temple of God, and the Holy Spirit lives within you. Treat him as the person he is, the God of glory.

There's not a word in my tongue but, Lo, O Lord, thou knowest it all together. You understand my thoughts afar off. You're acquainted with all my ways.

Don't grieve God, and don't quench him. Then on the positive side, and it's interesting to notice, you see chapter four of Ephesians says, Don't grieve the Spirit. Chapter five says, Be filled with the Spirit.

Now that's the other side. Be filled. I can be negative.

I mean, I don't grieve the Spirit in this way and this way and this way, but maybe I'm not filled with the Spirit either. A lady came to a counseling one time, I would say she was in her sixties, and she told me she taught Sunday school from the time she was converted when she was about fourteen or fifteen, but she said, You know, I just don't have any joy in my life. We talked about that for a little bit, and finally I said, May I ask you something? Do you think you're filled with God's Holy Spirit? Well, she said something like, Well, he lives in my heart, but I'm sure I'm not filled with him.

Well, I said, Let's look at Ephesians 5.18, it's a command, it's not an option, it's a command. And the command is, Be filled with the Spirit. Let me ask you a question, are you filled with God's Spirit? This is a command to be obeyed.

Be filled with the Spirit. It's not an option. I should be filled.

And since we have this command, it means a number of things. One, I can be filled. Two, I can know whether I'm filled or not.

And three, something that the average Christian never even dreams about. I sin every day I live not filled with the Spirit, because of the good I might do if I were filled with God's Spirit, and because of the evil that I often unwittingly do, because I'm not filled with God's Spirit. Be filled with the Spirit, literally it says, be getting filled with the Spirit over and over and over again.

It's not a once and for all experience. Dwight Brown Moody, the famous evangelist, he said, we are leaky vessels, and we need to stay under the fountain all the time. And we do.

Be getting filled with the Spirit. So I said to this woman, I said, you're not filled with the Spirit, you admit that. I said, do you call that sin? She said, no, that isn't sin, is it? I said, well, it is.

Let's look at the verse. So the verse says, And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess. So I asked her this question, would you consider being drunk a sin? She said, of course.

I said, what's the other half of the verse? But be filled with the Spirit. Isn't it a sin then? It's a sin to be drunk. Don't you think it's also a sin to disobey God and not be filled with the Holy Spirit? She said, I never thought of that.

She'd been searching her heart and asking God to show her all the sin that was in her life, and she said she confessed everything, there was nothing else there, but she said, now I see there's something else there. And we knelt together, and she asked the Lord to forgive her for the sin of living a life not filled with the Holy Spirit. And then she prayed and asked God to fill her with the Spirit.

She got to her feet, and she just stood there looking at me with tears streaming down her face, and she said, well, he did it. He did it. He filled me.

The river of God is full of water. If God's river is full, why is yours empty if it's empty? The trees of the Lord are full of sap. The words of sap are not in the Hebrew at all, it just simply says, the trees of the Lord are full.

Are you full? Well, God wants us to be full, full of himself. Think of Paul's remarkable prayer in Ephesians chapter 3, For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to his riches in glory, to be strengthened with power by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that you be rooted and grounded in love, there it is again, that you be rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height he means of God, the fullness of God, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge that you might be filled unto all the fullness of God. Now, there Paul was praying that the Christians at Ephesus would be completely filled with God, filled with all the fullness of God, but he relates it to love.

I don't think there's such a thing as being filled with the Holy Spirit if I'm not filled with the love of God. Remember, God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a discipline to sound a healthy mind. That's the Holy Spirit that lives in the Christians, and he wants to fill us with the love of God.

And we can be filled. Speaking in tongues, in my opinion, is not the sign of being filled with the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance.

Understand me. I'm not preaching against the gifts of the Spirit. I believe the gifts of the Spirit are in operation today, but I'm saying that these are not really, in my opinion, the sign of being filled with the Spirit of God.

I've talked with people who tell me they're filled with the Spirit, then I discover they're very critical, they're gossipy, they're cold and they're cranky, and all these other things. They are deceived. They are not filled with the Spirit of God.

If I'm filled with the Spirit of God, I'll be filled with love. The Holy Spirit, remember, is a spirit of love. Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks.

This is the will of God and Christ Jesus concerning you. Now be filled with the Spirit. Did you ever notice this? When Saul of Tarsus hadn't been eating for several days after he met Christ on the road to Damascus, and scholars wonder at what point he was really converted.

When did it happen? Well, we're not all agreed on it. I don't suppose we have to be agreed, though it will have to straighten a lot of us out when we get to heaven, as far as our doctrine is concerned. But the Lord said to Ananias, I want you to go and pray for Saul of Tarsus, because now he's praying.

Oh, he was a Pharisee. He prayed three times a day for many, many years. What did God mean, behold, he prayed? Well, he'd said his prayers for many years, three times a day, but he'd never prayed before, because praying is talking to God.

As you might talk to a living friend, behold, he prayed. And Ananias didn't want to go, because he'd heard a lot of stories about Saul of Tarsus, how wicked a person he was. God says, go your way, because he's had a vision, and he's seen a man with your name, Ananias, coming in and putting his hands on him, that he might receive his sight.

Please notice, friends, that's all that Ananias was told to do, pray for Paul to be healed. And for some strange reason, he did more than that. He came in and said, whether Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto you in the ways you came, has sent me that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now, tell me something, why did he add that? God never told him to do that. Why did Ananias add that? Because God wants his people to be filled with the Holy Spirit, that's why. What does it say, so simply and so sweetly, be filled, be filled.

To be filled, it has to be empty. If I had a glass of water and wanted to fill it with milk, I have to dump the water out, then I can fill it with milk. If I'm going to be filled with God's Spirit, I have to empty out self, I have to empty out sin.

I have to stop grieving God's Holy Spirit, I have to stop smothering, quenching him. Then when I'm empty of self, I can be filled with himself. You see, that's what it's saying.

Simple command, don't grieve him, don't quench him, be filled with the Spirit. And here's another command, it says, walk in the Spirit. You know, Paul says a very strange thing in Galatians 5.25, he says, if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

You know what that means. It means I might live in the Spirit and not walk in the Spirit, but what's the difference? Well he explains in Romans chapter 8 what is meant by living in the Spirit. And there he says, you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he's none of here. Here's what he's saying. If you have God's Holy Spirit living in your heart, you're born again, you're no longer living in the flesh, you're now living in the Spirit.

Now he says, if we live in the Spirit, let's also walk in the Spirit. But I can't walk in the Spirit until I'm filled with the Spirit. And in the outgrowth of the Spirit-filled, Spirit-controlled life is that I walk in the Spirit.

And so he says in Galatians chapter 5, walk, this I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh, for the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. And these are contrary, the word there means they are opponents or adversaries, God's Holy Spirit against the flesh in me, so that you cannot do the things that you would. What's the remedy? Verse 24 of the same chapter, and they that are Christ have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts.

Have you ever done that? Some of us need to have our tongues nailed to the cross, some of us need to have our pocketbooks nailed to the cross, maybe our feet nailed to the cross. I guess it would be better to say that I need to be nailed to the cross myself, knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, for he that is dead is freed from sin. In that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he lives, he lives unto God.

Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Walk in the Spirit. We also have this phrase, walk after the Spirit, and to walk in the Spirit is to walk after the Spirit, that is, as the Holy Spirit leads me.

We've noticed part of that already, as he leads me to praise, leads me to pray, leads me to give thanks. Then he may lead me to bring the gospel to somebody else. And many times at this point we say, well, God, I can't do that.

We can do it. We just think we can't. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

People, listen, when you're looking at me, you're looking at a person who used to be the shyest person in Canada. I was so shy as a teenager when I walked down the streets of Winnipeg where I live with my parents. If I saw somebody coming down the street, I'd cross the street to avoid it.

I used to go down the streets like this. I know every back lane in west Winnipeg where we lived. We used to travel the back lanes all the time because you never met anyone down the back lanes except the people picking up the garbage.

And the reason I went to working logging camps was because the trees didn't talk. I loved it back there. I could talk to the trees and pat them and all that kind of thing, and they never said a word.

I wasn't embarrassed by them. I was so easily embarrassed and all this sort of thing. When God called me to preach, I just about died.

I said, God, you must mean some other Bill McLeod. You can't mean me. What would I ever say in front of people? I was positive.

I couldn't do it. So you know what I started doing? I began writing letters to one of my converted friends of mine. And the first letter I wrote, I got a beautiful letter back from this friend of mine.

We worked together in the logging camps, and he says, Bill, I got your letter. I read it through a couple of times, and it kind of rocked me. So I saddled my horse, I took the letter, I rode away back in the woods, I found a clearing in the bush, I pulled in the horse, I sat there, and I read your letter through several times, and I gave my heart to Jesus.

Whoa, praise the Lord. I wrote a letter to another fellow, and he wrote back and said he found Christ. And you know what happened? All of a sudden, I found I could talk, and God gave me grace.

And he's still giving me grace tonight. I'm so thankful for that. But listen, you know, we're coming to the last command here now, and it's the command to pray in the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 6, 19, you remember what it says? Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. Every Christian ought to have a vital, deep, satisfying, powerful prayer line. We can have.

Let's give ourselves continually to prayer in the language of the Bible. Well, going over to the book of Jude, here's how it puts it there. It talks about the world and how wicked they are.

They're sensual, it says. They don't have the Holy Spirit, but you, beloved. And the word beloved, remember, it means divinely loved ones, but you, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.

Keep yourselves in the love of God. Did you notice something? He didn't say keep yourselves saved. He said, keep yourselves in the love of God.

There are lots of Christians that don't keep themselves in the love of God. They have become cranky, and very critical, and they're full of tension, and sometimes full of unbelief. Unbelief is the mother of just about every sin there is, and God calls in Hebrews 3 an evil heart.

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily while it's called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, an evil heart of unbelief. But to go back to this in Jude again, but you, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, and of some who have compassion, who are in doubt, or making a difference, as it says in different translations, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.

The word there really means snatching them out of the flame, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. I don't know how to say this. God expects every Christian to be a prayer warrior, a diligent student of the Word of God, a faithful giver to support the work of God, and a soul winner.

You may not win many, but you can win some. Make yourself a... Let me share something with you to encourage your hearts. There's a certain man, he's written the Danny Orr series, you know, what's his name? Bernard Palmer.

I saw a picture a while ago, and they had a stack of books, all the books he's authored, standing beside him, and the pile was about eight feet high. Christian books. A prolific writer, great news of God.

But there's something beautiful I read about him one time. He and his wife were talking about all their unconverted relatives, and they had a lot of them, close relatives. They'd witnessed to every one of them, and they'd been turned off.

Not one of them had accepted Christ. But they'd shared Christ with them all. Here's what they did.

How can we reach our relatives with God? So here's what they did. They made a list, and they wound up with a list of about 38, if I remember rightly, 38 close relatives. So then here's what they did.

They agreed together, he and his wife, that they would pray for those 38 relatives. They would pray every day, every day, never miss, and they would pray, believing that God was going to save them. And six years later, 27 of them were converted.

What about that? You know what some of you are saying in your hearts? You're saying, it won't work for me. You're right, it won't. But that's how you feel it won't.

Why won't it work for you? I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and for all therein, authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and to come into the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. And then Paul goes on to say, I will therefore, I'll teach you back in the context, because God wants all men to be saved, I will therefore let men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting.

It can happen in your life. It can happen to your relatives, too. Praying in the Holy Ghost, and then you see out of this kind of a life comes a godly concern for people to be converted.

Oh, let me say it again, there isn't a person, a born-again Christian in this building that could not win at least one soul to Christ in the next twelve months, if you really try. Who catches the most fish? The person that fishes the most, right? I mean other things being equal. Most of us haven't won a soul to Christ because we have never tried.

And we've never faced up to the fact that this kind of thing is sin. And it is sin. It is sin.

Paul was able to say, I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not come to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Are you pure? We can be, dear people, as we share Jesus with others, as we meet them here and there. Sometimes we have to get aggressive and go out where they are and share Christ with them.

God will bless that. All right. Some simple commands.

And remember Jesus said, you are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you. Jesus Christ said, I've kept my Father's commandments and I abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you'll abide in my love.

I read something the other day that simply said, with something like this, that an ounce of obedience is worth a ton of prayer. Now be careful, don't misunderstand me. Praying is important.

But sometimes we are praying when we should be obeying. I speak to myself as I speak to you. Let's close then.

God's commands to us. Don't read the Holy Spirit. Have you been doing that? Don't quench the Holy Spirit.

Have you been doing that? Be filled with the Spirit. Are you filled with the Spirit? Walk in the Spirit. Am I walking in the Spirit, allowing Him to lead me day by day? There's no victory over sin or self if I don't follow

the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Then praying in the Holy Spirit. This is the highest form of praying that there is. Praying as the Spirit of God directs me.

Because you see in Romans chapter 8 it says, We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And the Holy Spirit, we don't know how to pray, so He'll assist us in that. The Spirit also helps our infirmities because God knows we're weak.

And God will give us the strength and the power. Praying in the Holy Ghost.

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