

Ephesians Chapter 4

Week 10, v. 30-32

Eph 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

What does it mean to grieve? The dictionary gives us this definition: to experience intense sorrow, great sadness.

Think about those you love – your close friends, your family, your children, perhaps your spouse. Are there times when you have been filled with sadness for them? What circumstances cause you to feel sorrowful for others? As a parent, how do you feel when your children choose to turn away from what they were taught? How about when they choose to not accept your instruction or help?

The Holy Spirit is our Teacher, Counselor, Helper and Guide.

Pr 1:23 "Turn to my reproof, Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you.

Isa 11:2 And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

Eph 1:17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

1Co 2:12-13 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual [thoughts] with spiritual [words.]

Joh 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

Isa 30:21 And your ears will hear a word behind you, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right or to the left.

Joh 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

Eze 36:27 "And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

In what ways can we grieve the Holy Spirit?

Look back through this chapter. What have we been learning?

When we reject the wisdom, counsel, help, and understanding we have been given, the Spirit is grieved because we suffer the consequence of sin. When we act as if we are unsaved, we grieve the Holy Spirit. When we are not humble and gentle, patient and loving towards one another we grieve the Holy Spirit. When we harm the unity in the church, we grieve the Holy Spirit. When we neglect to use the gifts we have to serve the body, we grieve the Spirit. When we do not stand firm in our faith, we grieve the Spirit. When we speak with selfish motivation, we grieve the Spirit. When we are not truthful, when we allow anger to grow, when we steal, when we speak corruptly – we grieve the Holy Spirit.

Do you have relationships that you have fallen out of contact with? What happens to the relationships where you have invested whole-heartedly yet there has been no positive response? Do you think neglecting to read the Word and failing to pray grieves the Spirit?

How much does God love you? We cannot fully appreciate the depth of His love and the cost of His sacrifice. However, in our human understanding, we can glimpse the sorrow we cause when we choose to turn away from Him. Our disobedience rejects His love and blessings.

The second part of verse 30 reminds us of the future we have because we are God's children. We have been "sealed for the day of redemption".

What does it mean to seal something?

A seal is a tight or perfect closure that prevents the entrance or escape of something; a symbol or emblem that certifies the authenticity of something; something that gives confirmation or assurance.

What do we do today to make something valid or certain?

In this case, to be sealed means we are marked as God's children with His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit confirms that we belong to God. Our salvation is definite.

Eph 1:13-14 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of [God's own] possession, to the praise of His glory.

2Co 1:21-22 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave [us] the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

Those who trust in God alone for salvation are given the Spirit in their hearts as a pledge. The idea is a confirmation of the promise that has been made for our future in heaven. The Holy Spirit's work in our lives is evidence of our inheritance as God's children.

Paul ends this chapter with one more exhortation to put off behavior that is not pleasing and put on behavior that is characteristic of having the Holy Spirit.

Eph 4:31-32 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

We have an obvious contrast in verses 31 and 32.

The words bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander and malice are directly opposed to kindness, tenderness and forgiveness.

What is bitterness? Here, it means acidity, poison. Synonyms for this word would be sharp, caustic and cutting. It is astonishing that any who profess the Christian name should indulge bitterness of spirit. Those who are censorious, who are unmerciful to the failings of others, who have fixed a certain standard by which they measure all persons in all circumstances, and unchristian every one that does not come up to this standard, these have the bitterness against which the apostle speaks. (Adam Clarke's Commentary)

What is wrath and anger? This is passion born out of anger. Think out of control anger accompanied by hurtful words and harmful acts. **Have you ever seen this in others, in yourself?**

Clamour is loud, unruly speaking; demanding, shouting, yelling – often the offspring of wrath

Slander is translated evil speaking in the KJV. It comes from the word blasphemy. This is intentionally speaking in a way that causes injury to others.

How would you define malice? It is really all of the above put together – the end result of a heart following selfish concerns rather than selfless love. Malice looks for revenge by destroying that which is its object. **Do we see this in our society?** It is born out of a heart controlled by evil influences rather than the Holy Spirit.

You can see how each of these words builds upon each other.

Bitterness → wrath → anger → clamour → slander → malice

As discouraging and negative verse 31 is, the good news is that this behavior is not characteristic of a believer in Christ. We are saved from the power of sin. Because of the Holy Spirit working in us, we should be characterized by:

- **Kindness**, which is graciousness, being courteous and polite towards one another.
- **Tender-heartedness** meaning compassionate, to commiserate with those who are distressed
- **Forgiveness**, which means granting favor to one another, excusing mistakes, misunderstandings, wrongdoings or inappropriate behavior

Look at the end of verse 32. **What is our motivation?** **Just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.**

What have we been forgiven of? Think past, present and future. **How completely are we forgiven?** **What did it cost God to forgive?** **What does it cost us to forgive others?**

We are freely forgiven – without merit on our part
fully forgiven – of every offence
liberally forgiven – of many offences (Albert Barnes' Commentary)

When we truly forgive, the offense should not be remembered to bring it up again. We should not treat the offender differently; our love for them should not be any less. Can we struggle with this? What can we do to guard against harboring an offense?

Ro 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

Col 3:13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

What mercies do we continually receive from God? Does He withhold His love from us when we are truly repentant? Does the degree of His love change towards us when we err?

We are to be striving towards holiness; the church, as a body is to be striving towards holiness.

Eph 4:13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

By God's grace and the gift of His Holy Spirit, we are changed from what we once were to what we are now in Christ.

In Ephesians Chapter 4, we have addressed three major themes:

- v. 1-13 Unity – the importance of working together as one body
- v. 14-16 Maturity – striving to become more like Christ
- v. 17-32 Holiness – putting off sin and putting on righteous behavior

Ephesians 5:1-2 begins with therefore. It is a summary of the result of Ephesians Chapter 4. Let us take this charge home with us:

Eph 5:1-2 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Application Questions

Week 10, Eph 4:30-32

Small group prayer: take 5 minutes and quietly think about the study this morning. What is God saying to you personally? What one area do you need to focus on?

Today we talked about grieving the Holy Spirit. If we are God's child, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit, enabling us to live a life worthy of our calling. A list of characteristics to put away – bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander and malice, was followed by a list of characteristics to put on – kindness, tenderness and forgiveness. What personal application has God given you?

You will have an opportunity in your small group to pray about your personal application following ACTS. Your leader will begin each section with scripture.

Adoration – “I praise You for...”

Confession – “Forgive me for...”

Thanksgiving – “Thank you for...”

Supplication – “I pray for...”

If your group is done before 12noon please use the time to quietly work on your memory verses or begin to work on the life application questions below. Visiting time begins at noon.

This week: Read Ephesians 4 and use the “Apply It” bookmark to guide you in personal application. Pray for the concerns of those in your small group. Continue to work on memorization – Eph 4: 1-7, 12-16 – and pray for growth in the areas God has brought to your attention. Next week we will spend a short time in review then we will enjoy a potluck brunch together. This will be our last meeting until after the holidays.

In this last week, how have your actions or thoughts grieved the Holy Spirit? Whenever we sin, we grieve the Spirit. What steps can you take to prevent your sin from being repeated?

A small root of bitterness can lead to destructive behavior. Read Eph 4:26-27. Are you striving to deal quickly with the areas in your life that lead to sin?

You have been freely, completely and generously forgiven. How are you at forgiving others? Is there someone you need to forgive right now? Are you willing?

Read Ephesians chapter 4. Three concepts we discussed are unity of the church body, standing firm in what we believe and striving towards holiness by putting off the old self and putting on the new self. What has God put in your heart through His word these last ten weeks? How have you changed, what have you learned as a result of studying Truth?

On your own, study the first two verses of Ephesians chapter 5.

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”