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The Perilous Path from Grieving to Quenching the Holy Spirit

Pastor Gene Giguere, October 4, 2026

Introduction

Now, were coming to the end of this study that has grown out of **John 12:25-26**: “Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.”

So, where have we been?

- ✝ We’ve talked about the Good Hate – hating the life we had in Adam – and the Bad Love – loving the life we had in Adam.
- ✝ We’ve talked about the importance of growing from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity – and how important that is to the whole Body of Christ. We asked, “Isn’t it time to get carried away?” – to maturity, that is.
- ✝ We’ve talked about undeserved suffering and what it means to ‘die to self.’ We considered the believer’s cross and the believer’s cup – his or her *Poterion*. And surrender and the believer’s ‘morning presentation.’
- ✝ We’ve considered God the Holy Spirit as the believer’s ‘forever Helper.’ We asked with Paul, “who is sufficient for these things”; and we answered, ‘None of us are’ – which is why we need our forever helper.’
- ✝ We’ve talked about “seeing Him who is invisible” and Evidence Testing – illustrated by Job’s magnificent story. We’ve studied the Crown of Life and what it means to have ‘a mind to suffer.’
- ✝ We’ve argued that undeserved suffering is *a gift* from God that can propel our spiritual growth and/or give us an opportunity to glorify God in this life. We’ve seen how having the opportunity to take the witness stand amidst extreme trials

and give testimony of the goodness and faithfulness of God is the highest honor which can be bestowed upon a believer. We looked at six stages through which we glorify God in this life – and God’s desire that “the Name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified” in us (**2 Thessalonians 1:12**).

- ✠ Then we turned to *deserved* suffering. We’ve talked about how believers – blood-bought and born again – can *and do* fall out of fellowship with God. We illustrated this with a case study of Simon the Sorcerer. We even took a moment to discuss the ‘new Simonists’ who are currently plaguing the Church.
- ✠ And then we arrived at the subject of grieving the Holy Spirit – and what ‘life in the Spirit’ actually looks like – what we’re to take off and what we’re to put on (**Colossians 3:1-17**).

And today we come to a *dangerous bridge* upon which we cross over from grieving to quenching the Holy Spirit. It is a perilous path indeed! And it’s a tragic path too – a *sad* path!

We Are Abba’s Sons, Not Slaves!
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- 1) This is because of what we looked at in **Romans 8**. Rather than setting our mind on the Holy Spirit and reaping the wonderful treasures of walking in Him, we often set our mind on the things of the flesh, with all of its ugliness and the false promise of satisfaction in this life.

But it’s a devil’s bargain! We’re trading the wonderful for the ugly – the blessing for the curse. Paul concluded his discussion of life in the Spirit with some of the most beautiful words in the New Testament:

“You did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”
¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God ...” (**Romans 8:15-16**).

Do you see that? We owe *no debt to the flesh*; we’re freemen and women and we should fight to never return to our former slavery.

- 2) To allow sin to dwell with in us, to submit again to the demands of our flesh after we've been freed, is to return to our chains; this grieves the Spirit. If we choose “by the Spirit” to “put to death the deeds of the body” we will experience the abundant life Jesus desires to show us. And we *can choose* because we're sons, not slaves! The “Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” We cry out to God, not as some distant sovereign, but as our ‘dad.’
- 3) We cry, “Abba! Father!” The phrase, “Abba,” is rapt with emotion! Ἀββᾶ is an affectionate word, an Aramaic term of endearment for a father – something like *papa* or *daddy*. Jesus used it when speaking to the Father in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane; He prayed,

“Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will” (**Mark 14:36**).

The Greek lexicographer Gerhard Kittel thinks that “Jesus probably used *abbá* for God not only in **Mark 14:36**, but also whenever the Greek *patēr* occurs.” He writes: “It denotes childlike intimacy and trust ... It undoubtedly expresses the new relationship with God proclaimed and lived out by Jesus and then experienced by believers in him.”¹

Ἀββᾶ was the warmest word in Jesus’ native language (Aramaic) to express His [and Paul’s, cf., **Romans 8:15**; **Galatians 4:6**] filial feelings toward God.² It indicates the *very personal and intimate spiritual connection between the Father and each Christian*³ – the very opposite of fear.⁴ It indicates warmth and confidence.⁵

- 4) But, most importantly, it was remembered by Christians as the way Jesus addressed the Father in prayer.⁶ Jesus was the very Son of God, so, when they used it, it identified them too as sons of God.

¹ Kittel, Gerhard, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985), p.2.

² Hodge, Charles, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953; originally published in 1886), *ad loc.*

³ Hendricksen, William, *Exposition of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*, vol 1, chapters 1–8; New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), *ad loc.*

⁴ Mounce, Robert H., *Romans*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), XXVII:182.

⁵ Murray, John, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), 1:295.

⁶ Dunn, James D. G., *Romans 1–8*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1988), 38A:451.

Jesus told His disciples, “Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven ...” (Matthew 6:9). This alone expresses intimacy of relationship (πατήρ rather than θεός).

But, if Kittle is right and Jesus actually used ἄββα, it takes the intimacy to a whole ‘nother level! In Latin, “our Father” is *Paternoster*. So, is it the *Paternoster*, or the *Abbanoster*? The idea that Jesus allowed (and even directed) His disciples to also use this term in prayer shows that He was granting them access to a relationship of the deepest intimacy.⁷ Furthermore, F.F. Bruce suggests that when Christians address God the same way Jesus did, it shows that *we have the same Spirit that He had*.⁸

5) But we don’t just say, “Abba! Father!” We cry, “Abba! Father!”

The Greek verb κράζω here indicates something that is *felt deeply and experienced intensely*.⁹ It is a fervent prayer¹⁰ in which believers acknowledge their adoption.¹¹ Godet says it represents the profound emotion with which the believing heart expresses its adoration to God.¹²

It’s the cry of *childlike* assurance, as opposed to the attitude of a *servant*.¹³ And yet, when we set our minds on the flesh, when we entertain sin, we throw this beautiful Child/Father relationship away as though it means nothing. And when we do, we grieve the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

How the Spirit Grieves

1) Now, I promised that I would take a few minutes to consider what it *really* means that the Spirit is ‘grieving.’ It’s a bit of a thorny question.

⁷ Cranfield, C. E. B., *Romans*, Vol. 1; International Critical Commentary (T&T Clark, 1975), *ad loc*.

⁸ Bruce, F. F., *Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), VI:166.

⁹ Schreiner, Thomas R., *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), VI:418.

¹⁰ Morris, Leon, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), p.313.

¹¹ Barrett, C. K., *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries, edited by Henry Chadwick (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), *ad loc*.

¹² Godet, F., *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, translated by Cusin, revised/edited by Talbot W. Chambers (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969, originally published in 1883), *ad loc*.

¹³ Stott, John, *The Message of Romans* (Lisle, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1994), *ad loc*.

The language of ‘grieving’ the Holy Spirit is deliberately evocative. We talked about anthropopathisms and how, all throughout Scripture, feelings and emotions are ascribed to God which He does not really possess in order that we might understand something about Him on our level.

For instance, we read in **Genesis 6:6** that “the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.” So, does God *regret* things? Does He *not* know the end from the beginning?

Did He *not* know the result creating man would bring about? Of course He did – He knows the end from the beginning. In contrasting Himself with useless, man-made idols, God says, “I declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times what is still to come” (**Isaiah 46:10**, Berean Standard Bible).

God has *never* made a mistake; nor has He *ever* exercised poor judgement. Everything He does and has ever done – every decision He makes – is *perfect*. He is “the ROCK,” and, as Moses in **Deuteronomy 32:4a** put it: “The Rock, His work is perfect.”

And the Psalmist in **Psalms 18:30** declared, “This God — His way is perfect; the Word of the Lord [and that is, EVERY Word of the Lord] proves true.” And everything He does is perfect, even if we don’t fully understand it – because, how can we?

As He said through the prophet in **Isaiah 55:9**: “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

- 2) So, what’s this “the Lord regretted” business all about? Well, this is an anthropopathism to help us understand God’s displeasure with the actions of people of that time. There are also anthropomorphisms, which ascribe physical characteristics to God (who is a Spirit) that He does not possess.

“The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him” (**2 Chronicles 16:9**). “God is Spirit” (πνεῦμα ὁ θεός, **John 4:24a**) and a Spirit doesn’t have eyes (especially before the incarnation). But this anthropomorphism is used to show us that God loves His people and is scanning the earth to see where any of them need help.

But, the word ‘regret’ usually points to some mistake – ‘I regret that I said that because it hurt you,’ etc. And God doesn’t make mistakes like that.

In this case, God is trying to communicate through Moses His sorrow over the terrible human choices that were leading them into destruction (in this case, the universal flood).

More precisely, the Hebrew word translated “regretted” in **Genesis 6:6** is *n̄hm* (MEE-hum), a word that literally refers to *sighing* or *breathing strongly, panting*, and thus it is used *to express lamentation or grief*.¹⁴

When God is said to “regret” He’s *not* admitting some mistake or sin or some change in His perfect will. Rather, He’s expressing His displeasure at our mistakes or sins.

We see the same thing in **1 Samuel 15:11**, where God says, “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments.” And again, in verse **35b**: “And the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.” But He *didn’t* regret *as we* regret. This is an anthropomorphism used to express God’s displeasure at Saul.

- 3) But that said, we don’t want to be too clinical here, nor too academic. *The Bible is not a math book; it’s a love letter*. It’s easy to dismiss the deep feelings God is said to be expressing here as mere analogies.

But there’s more to the story than that – *much* more! While we don’t want to paint a picture of God existing in a state of perpetual misery over the bad decisions of His people, we also don’t want to think about God as being *without feeling*. I don’t think that’s accurate.

When Paul talks about ‘grieving’ the Holy Spirit in **Ephesians 4:30**, he could have used many other words. But ‘grieving’ is *intentionally emotional* – and it’s the word used by the Spirit Himself to communicate what He wanted to say about our sin.

¹⁴ Gesenius, Wilhelm, and Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *Gesenius’ Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (Bellingham, WA: Logos, 2003), p. 544.

λυπέω (*lupeo*) is a word which means to cause severe mental or emotional distress.¹⁵ It means to *vex*, *offend*, or even *insult* someone. Or to *become sad*, or *sorrowful*, or *distressed*. The word is used of Jesus, who in **Matthew 26:37**, “began to be *sorrowful* (λυπέω) and troubled (ἀδημονέω, *distressed*).”

And **Romans 14:15** warns that we can “grieve” other believers by not acting in love. The context is having the liberty to eat certain foods that are offensive to others and doing so in their presence. Paul writes, “if your brother is grieved (λυπέω) by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died” (**Romans 14:15**).

The word was used by the 2nd century Roman rhetorician Polyaeus to indicate *the severe humiliation and outrage* experienced by a king who had been deposed by his subjects.¹⁶ I find this particularly interesting because, after all, *isn't that what we do when we grieve the Spirit by sinning?* Aren't we, in essence, ‘deposing God as our King?

Are you tracking with me here? Λυπέω, “grieve,” is an *intentionally emotional* word! And it was chosen by the Holy Spirit Himself to describe how He feels about our sin.

- 4) And so, we might say with Dr. Leland Ryken, that the word “functions as both literal and metaphorical simultaneously—a tension that theological scholarship has long grappled with.¹⁷

We see *a lot* of emotion present in God after the incarnation when Jesus walked among us in the flesh. He famously wept three times that are recorded in Scripture:

✠ He wept in Bethany at Lazarus’ Tomb. These were tears of compassion and grief upon seeing His friends Mary, Martha, and others mourning Lazarus’ death (**John 11:35**).

✠ He wept in Jerusalem at the Mount of Olives in **Luke 19:41-44**. As He approached the city, He wept aloud in anguish because of the spiritual

¹⁵ Here and below, Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), p. 604.

¹⁶ Polyaeus, *Stratagems in War*, translated by R. Shepherd (1793); 8:47; cited in BDAG, p. 604.

¹⁷ Ryken, Leland, et al., in *The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), p.808.

blindness of those who lived there and the impending destruction that would befall its inhabitants.

✠ And He wept in the Garden of Gethsemane as He looked into the abyss and considered all that the cross would mean. According to **Hebrews 5:7**, He “offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears” *alone* in the garden (the disciples were asleep). He was experiencing deep emotional turmoil before His crucifixion.

5) So, what does this mean for us as we approach this subject this morning?

I think it means that we should fight to maintain the theological tension that’s built into the Holy Spirit’s choice of words here. No, God is not dwelling in a state of perpetual misery over the millions of bad choices His people make every day. But, yes, He is aggrieved by our sin – legitimately grieved.¹⁸

Our actions spur Him to action. Our lack of repentance from sin will lead Him to discipline us as sons – a discipline which is described in very unpleasant ways. The ‘grieving’ of God really does function both literally and metaphorically, and it does so simultaneously.¹⁹

I mentioned earlier that everything God does is perfect, even if we don’t fully understand it. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so [His] ways higher than [our] ways and [His] thoughts than [our] thoughts” (**Isaiah 55:9**).

But, while this expression draws from anthropomorphic language, it’s *more* than merely figurative. The Holy Spirit is expressing an emotional dimension distinct from His intellect and will.^{20 21} Rather than being purely symbolic, the language conveys something that is genuinely true about God’s nature and His relational responsiveness to us.²²

¹⁸ The capacity to be grieved confirms the Spirit’s true *personhood*—a mere impersonal force or divine influence could hardly experience grief. Cf., Cole, Graham A., *Engaging with the Holy Spirit: Real Questions, Practical Answers* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), pp.92–95.

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, Ryken, in *The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, p.808.

²⁰ Terry, Milton S., *Biblical Dogmatics: An Exposition of the Principal Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures* (New York; Cincinnati: Eaton & Mains; Jennings & Graham, 1907), p.487.

²¹ Andrew Lincoln writes: “The phrase provides “a powerful personal metaphor,” but this metaphorical quality doesn’t diminish its theological weight.” Lincoln, Andrew T., *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 42:306-07.

²² Leland Ryken writes: “The scholarly consensus recognizes that **Ephesians 4:30** uses anthropopathic language – that it describes God in emotional terms – yet it affirms that, in some way, Scripture makes clear that God does

6) Great theologians – like Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost, for instance, whom I hold in the highest regard – affirm this to be true.²³ But Dr. Pentecost points out that the Spirit’s emotional nature *isn’t a limitation*, but a defining feature of His personhood.²⁴

✠ The Holy Spirit possesses perfect *intellect* (this is His ability to know everything about each believer).

✠ The Holy Spirit possesses *emotion* (this is His ability to love and to be wounded when He is sinned against).

✠ And the Holy Spirit possesses a *will* (this is His ability to decide and to act to convict errant believers and discipline them in order to lead them to restoration).

The Holy Spirit *does* experience genuine sadness – his heart is wounded by sin. Drs. Chuck Swindoll and Roy Zuck, in *Understanding Christian Theology*, argue that the Spirit’s grief operates much like human sorrow does in the most intimate relationships.²⁵ Just as parents hurt when children rebel or spouses wound each other through betrayal, so the Holy Spirit experiences the deepest pain when believers whom He indwells deliberately sin against Him.

The idea is that emotional hurt intensifies when those we love most violate the relationship. Again, this is *not* merely metaphorical language. Scripture is not merely describing divine action in human terms. Rather, this ‘divine grief’ addresses God’s very essence as a Person and reflects the image of God in all of His persons.²⁶

Here’s the point: *when we sin, God is genuinely grieved in some way.*²⁷ It’s a poetic statement that’s more than a poetic statement; it describes an actual relational consequence. When we sin and choose not to repent, the Spirit is *truly*

genuinely experience sorrow.” Ryken, Leland, et al., in *The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), p.808.

²³ Pentecost, J. Dwight, *The Divine Comforter: The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1997), p.15.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Pentecost, *The Divine Comforter*, p.15.

²⁵ Swindoll, Charles R. and Roy B. Zuck, *Understanding Christian Theology* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), pp. 397–398.

²⁶ Simmons, William A., ‘Grief, Grieving’ in *The Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), pp.318–319.

²⁷ Lincoln, Andrew T., *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 42:306-07.

grieved – and there are relational consequences: Fellowship is broken, the Spirit’s guidance goes unheeded, discipline may become necessary, and the Spirit within us *sighs deeply*.

Now, a few weeks back I preached a message called, “How NOT to Break the Holy Spirit’s Heart.’ So, was it accurate for me to talk about sin in this way – as something that ‘breaks the Holy Spirit’s heart’? In some very real way, yes.

The question is, how can all of these things be true at the same time. How can the Spirit grieve over my sin and your sin and still exist in a state of perfect joy?²⁸ Well, that’s something else again – in league with the mysteries of the Trinity, election and Jesus’ ‘divine’ death upon the cross.

“Because I Have Called and You Refused to Listen ...”

- 1) Now, if grieving the Holy Spirit is His *groaning within us*, and if quenching the Spirit is His *fire being snuffed out within us*, I think an interesting question would be ‘how do we move from one to the other?’

I think these are clearly *degrees of experiential distance* from God. Well, I’ve developed a mathematical formula that I think encapsulates the idea: $T + PR = Q$. Which means: *time + persistence of resistance = quenching*.

²⁸ This is a question that sits at the intersection of Trinitarian theology and the doctrine of divine immutability. In classical Protestant understanding, with important qualifications about what *joy* means for a divine Person, the Holy Spirit exists in a state of perpetual joy. In classical Trinitarian theology, the Holy Spirit is the eternal bond of love between the Father and the Son. John Piper writes, “*The Spirit, in his essence, is God’s joyful love, loving joy in person*” (Piper, ‘How Does God’s Joy Become My Joy?’; <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-does-gods-joy-become-my-joy>). Because the Father and Son have loved each other from eternity, and that mutual love is joy, the Spirit — as the personal embodiment of that love — exists in a state of eternal, unchanging joy. This isn’t a mood or a temporary disposition; it’s who the Spirit is. Furthermore, classical Protestant theology affirms that God is immutable (unchanging). God’s ‘emotions’ are not like human emotions which fluctuate with circumstances. When Scripture says God is ‘jealous’ or ‘grieved,’ it’s describing eternal dispositions expressed in time, not a change in God’s inner state. So, if the Spirit is joyful, that joy is perpetual by definition — it cannot come and go. The biblical passages that use the phrase ‘joy of the Holy Spirit’ (Romans 14:17, 1 Thessalonians 1:6, Luke 10:21) are primarily about the joy the Spirit gives to believers, not explicit statements about the Spirit’s own inner affective state. The claim that the Spirit *himself* is in perpetual joy is a theological inference drawn from:

- The unity of the divine nature (what is true of God’s joy is true of each person);
- The Trinitarian relationship as one of eternal love/joy; and
- The doctrine of divine immutability.

It’s a well-supported inference in the tradition, but it’s not something the Bible states explicitly. Classical Protestant theology strongly affirms it, but as a doctrinal inference rather than an explicit biblical proposition.

And I think we find a picture of this process all the way back in Proverbs, the Bible's greatest wisdom book. And Solomon addresses it right out of the shoot! In **Proverbs** chapter 1 we read that these are "the proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel" and that they're given that his "son" and "sons" might "know wisdom and instruction" and "understand words of insight."²⁹

And the first great principle that He gives us is in verse 7: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; [but] fools despise wisdom and instruction." This, we might well say, is the theme of the entire book of Proverbs. The phrase "the fear of the Lord" occurs 11 times in Proverbs and "fear the Lord" occurs another four times.

The word "beginning" is a Hebrew word that refers *to the start of something*. And so, everything we can know that is worth knowing begins with a genuine fear of the Lord.

But 'fearing' the Lord, as I think most of us know, is not 'fearing' as in 'being afraid.' It refers to a deep *reverential* fear, an acknowledgement of who *we* are and who *the holy God* is.³⁰ When Solomon says "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge," he's talking about *spiritual* knowledge. He's not talking about carpentry, or how to cook, or how to fix a car, or how to master chemistry or the periodic table. He's talking about:

- ✠ How to order our lives,
- ✠ How to distinguish right from wrong,
- ✠ How to avoid calamity brought on by poor decisions,
- ✠ What the purpose of my life is,
- ✠ What happens when I die, and
- ✠ How to honor God so that He might honor me (**1 Samuel 2:30**).

²⁹ Dr. Sid Buzzell's work was very helpful to me here and his ideas are woven into much that follows with respect to Proverbs 1:1-7, especially in identifying the three 'fools' of Proverbs. Additional research and exegetical work are duly noted. Buzzell, Sid S., "Proverbs," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. by J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1:907-8.

³⁰ It refers to recognizing the astonishing glory of the Living God in all of His perfections and responding with appropriate reverence, trust, worship obedience and service.

Apart from coming to know God personally, and *revering Him as God*, we are ignorant of all things spiritual.

2) Now, God is not hidden, in fact, He's everywhere present!

Romans 1:19-20 says that “what can be known about God is plain to them [that is, unbelievers], because God has shown it to them.²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So, they are without excuse.”

It's not that God is hidden; it's that men deny Him in order to escape accountability. But this only has the *appearance* of escaped accountability! For, mark it down, “it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment” (**Hebrews 9:27**). Unbelievers move through life anesthetized to the point that they think they're safe. They are not.

The Apostle Paul says such people are “darkened in their understanding, [they are] alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance [of who God is] that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity” (**Ephesians 4:18-19**).

But then he has a word for believers, those who have come to “fear the Lord.” He says, “But *that is not* the way *you* learned Christ!” (**Ephesians 4:20**).^{31 32}

³¹ He continues: “[You] were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.²⁹ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (**Ephesians 4:21b-30**).

³² The Apostle Peter adds: “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,¹⁶ since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”¹⁷ And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,¹⁸ knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” (**1 Peter 1:14-19**).

- 3) Now, God’s Word is pure wisdom – and we understand that it is wisdom because we have come to fear the Lord, to truly know Him. Unbelievers foolishly push this knowledge away.

Again, Solomon says that while “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools *despise wisdom and instruction*” (**Proverbs 1:7**).³³ This is true of unbelievers, but it’s also true of believers *living like unbelievers!*

- 4) The section of **Proverbs 1** that I think speaks to the idea of crossing over from grieving to quenching the Holy Spirit begins in verse **20**. It’s a fascinating passage in which the wisdom of God is personified – God’s wisdom is depicted as a woman who is crying out to sinners, pleading with them to return to God.

Don’t read anything into the fact that wisdom is presented as *a woman*. The Hebrew word for “wisdom,” *hokmâ*, is a *feminine* word and so Solomon presents its personification as *feminine*.³⁴

Personification is “a figure of speech in which something nonhuman is pictured as though it were a person—such as when trees clap their hands (**Isaiah 55:12**) or when righteousness and peace kiss each other (**Psalms 85:10**).”³⁵ But God uses personification to communicate very important ideas *vividly*.

Look at verse **20**:

²⁰ Wisdom cries aloud in the street,
in the markets she raises her voice;
²¹ at the head of the noisy streets she cries out;
at the entrance of the city gates she speaks:

✠ Notice it: God’s wisdom is crying out to *everyone* and *everywhere*! She’s ‘crying aloud,’ and ‘raising her voice,’ and ‘crying out,’ and ‘speaking.’ And she’s doing this in four settings throughout the city:

³³ So, two kinds of people are contrasted in here: *those who humbly fear God* and thus acquire true spiritual knowledge, and *the arrogant fools* who by their refusal to fear God demonstrate that they hold wisdom and discipline in contempt. As Job says, “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding” (Job 28:28).

³⁴ Dr. Bruce Waltke writes: “The abstract noun [*wisdom* in Hebrew] is feminine and accordingly becomes personified as a woman.” Waltke, Bruce, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 1–15*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament [NICOT] (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), p.83).

³⁵ Nielson, Kathleen, *Proverbs for You*, ed. Carl Laferton, God’s Word for You (Good Book Company, 2020), p. 34. A good number of the ideas embodied in the comments which follow are suggested by Nielson’s book.

- The ‘street’ where people live, and
- The ‘markets’ where they buy and sell, and
- The ‘noisy streets’ where they gather together, and
- ‘The entrance to the gates of the city,’ which in the Bible is the place where civic leaders would make decisions. So, in the halls of justice and politics, wisdom is crying out there too!

Amidst all the distractions of our daily grind, wisdom is raising her voice. And what does she say?

²² “How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?
How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing
and fools hate knowledge?

✠ She calls out three kinds of people:

- The ‘simple’ – these are the naïve or immature;
- The ‘scoffers’ – these are fools who actually delight in their scoffing); and
- “Fools” in general, who “hate knowledge” (the word translated ‘fool’ here is the same word we find in verse 7).

Wisdom doesn’t start out by condemning them; instead, she yearns for them to cease their foolishness, asking, with what feels like a deep sigh, “How long?”

I hear echoes of **Jeremiah 4:14**: “O Jerusalem, wash your heart from evil, that you may be saved [delivered]. How long shall your wicked thoughts lodge within you?” (cf., **Numbers 14:11, 27**; **Hosea 8:5**) She is clearly grieved by their refusal to heed her words!

Then, a hopeful promise!

²³ If you turn at my reproof [my *correction*],
behold, I will pour out my spirit to you;
I will make my words known to you.

✠ Notice it: restoration to fellowship through repentance, receiving correction and repenting [turning]! What a joyful word!

With respect to our current study, we've grieved the Spirit with sin, but now we've responded to God's wisdom and repented! Fellowship is restored and the precious Holy Spirit is once again poured out upon us – we're filled again, and joyfully walking in Him!

Ah, but those who refuse to hear Wisdom's cry take a further step from grieving to quenching – and thereby to more extreme forms of divine discipline ...!

²⁴ Because I have called and you refused to listen,
have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded,
²⁵ because you have ignored all my counsel
and would have none of my reproof,
²⁶ I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when terror strikes you,
²⁷ when terror strikes you like a storm
and your calamity comes like a whirlwind,
when distress and anguish come upon you.

²⁸ Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer;
they will seek me diligently but will not find me."

✠ They've mocked God by refusing to heed wisdom's call, now wisdom mocks them in their calamity! When the terror of the consequences they've brought down upon their own heads by their foolish decisions become evident to them, they will call to her [*wisdom*, not God].

They'll want to know '*What should I do?*' But wisdom's voice has grown so faint through neglect, that it can no longer be heard!

²⁸ Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer;
they will seek me diligently but will not find me."

✠ We gain the wisdom we need to face the trials of life BEFORE they come by submitting ourselves under the continual authority of God's Word. This is, I believe, a very vivid picture of what quenching the Holy Spirit looks like – its discipline and distance from the presence of God.

How have they come to this catastrophe? By refusing to repent when they first heard wisdom crying out.

²⁹ Because they hated knowledge
and did not choose the fear of the Lord,
³⁰ would have none of my counsel
and despised all my reproof,
³¹ therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way,
and have their fill of their own devices.

✠ Notice: they're eating the fruit "of THEIR [own] way"; this was never God's way!

³² For the simple are killed by their turning away,
and the complacency of fools destroys them.

✠ So, their undoing was that they initially 'turned away' in the first place. But their life was utterly dismantled by the 'complacency' in their sin – their refusal to repent.

Finally, after all these many words, a simple message to those who stay on roads of the Spirit:

³³ But whoever listens to me will dwell secure
and will be at ease, without dread of disaster."

This is the bridge from grieving the Spirit to quenching Him: not responding to wisdom's call when we first hear her voice! From there we move, step-by-step, further into the quenching process and the various, escalating levels of divine discipline until we reach the Nth degree – the sin unto physical death.

We'll continue next time.

Amen!