

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

BIBLE BASICS

Overview

The Christian life after the Resurrection is not a moral program, nor a philosophical system. It is life in the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, there is no true faith, no repentance, no sanctification, no confession of Christ, and no growth in holiness. Everything that the Church lives, teaches, and transmits flows from the presence and work of the Holy Spirit within her.

How Do We Obtain the Grace of the Holy Spirit?

The Lord Himself directs us to the primary doorway through which the grace of the Holy Spirit enters the human heart: **prayer rooted in trust and humility**.

“Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”
(John 16:24b, NKJV)

This asking is not casual. It is the asking of a child who knows that the Father desires his salvation more than he desires it himself.

“...what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”
(Matthew 7:9–11, NKJV)

The “good things” Christ speaks of are not worldly comforts, but **the grace of the Holy Spirit Himself**. Therefore, the grace of the Holy Spirit comes to us through prayer, especially prayer that is accompanied by repentance, humility, and obedience.

What Are the Functions of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is not optional in the Christian life. He is essential. Christ calls Him the **Comforter** (*Parakletos*), meaning the One who stands beside us, defends us, guides us, and strengthens us.

“But the Comforter (Gr. *Parakletos*), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”
(John 14:26, NKJV)

The Holy Spirit:

- Teaches us divine truth
- Reminds us of Christ's words
- Preserves sound doctrine
- Guards the Church from error

Christ further explains that the coming of the Holy Spirit is directly tied to His own departure:

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

(John 16:7–8, NKJV)

The Holy Spirit convicts, not to crush, but to heal, as an act of divine mercy.

The Spirit is also the agent of sanctification:

“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.”

(2 Thessalonians 2:13, NKJV)

Without the Holy Spirit, holiness is impossible.

And even the most basic confession of faith depends entirely on Him:

“Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.”

(1 Corinthians 12:3, NKJV)

What Are the Gifts of the Holy Spirit?

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are **manifestations of His grace**, given not as rewards for holiness, but as tools for service, growth, and the edification of the Church.

The prophet Isaiah reveals the **sevenfold grace** of the Spirit resting upon the Messiah:

“The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”

(Isaiah 11:2, NKJV)

These gifts are not abstract qualities. They shape the soul:

- **Wisdom** orders life toward God

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- **Understanding** penetrates divine truth
 - **Counsel** discerns the right path
 - **Might** strengthens perseverance
 - **Knowledge** aligns life with God's will
 - **Fear of the Lord** humbles the heart before God

Saint Paul explains that these gifts appear concretely in the Church:

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all...”
(1 Corinthians 12:7–10, NKJV)

These gifts differ, but their source is one Spirit, and their purpose is one Body.

“And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers...”
(1 Corinthians 12:28, NKJV)

The gifts are entrusted to us as stewardship:

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”
(1 Peter 4:10, NKJV)

Gifts without humility become dangerous; gifts without love become noise.

The Gifts According to Isaiah: A Patristic Vision

Here the Church listens carefully to the Fathers.

St. Gregory the Great teaches:

“There are seven steps to the gate because the way to heavenly life is opened to us through the sevenfold grace of the Holy Spirit...
‘The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and piety, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord will fill Him.’
[Isaiah] is speaking here from the perspective of heaven, clearly numbering the steps in descending rather than ascending order... because it is written, ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.’
...The way consists beyond doubt in ascending from fear to wisdom... for wisdom surely has perfect charity. It is also written: ‘Perfect charity casts out fear.’
The prophet, therefore, because he reasoned from heavenly realities to the lower things, began with wisdom and descended toward fear.”

This teaches us a vital spiritual law:

- Grace descends from God
- Growth ascends in the soul

We begin with fear, and are perfected in love.

The Four Sins Against the Holy Spirit

Before enumerating the sins against the Holy Spirit, it is essential to understand a foundational truth: the Holy Spirit is the active agent of salvation in the human heart. He leads to faith, convicts of sin, grants repentance, sanctifies the believer, preserves sound doctrine, and comforts the soul. Therefore, sins against the Holy Spirit are not merely moral failures; they are direct resistance to the very work by which God saves us.

For this reason, Scripture presents these sins not as isolated acts, but as a progressive spiritual descent. Each stage represents a deeper, more entrenched rejection of divine grace. The danger increases not because God becomes less merciful, but because the human heart becomes less responsive.

The four sins against the Holy Spirit revealed in Scripture are:

1. Resisting the Holy Spirit
2. Grieving the Holy Spirit
3. Quenching the Holy Spirit
4. Blaspheming against the Holy Spirit

“You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.”
(Acts 7:51, NKJV)

The Holy Spirit works to lead us to repentance, to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His divinity, to sanctification, to sound doctrine, and to divine comfort. To resist Him, therefore, is to resist salvation itself.

1. Resisting the Holy Spirit

Resisting the Holy Spirit is the first and most common sin against Him. It occurs when a person actively or passively rejects the Spirit’s work in the heart, especially at moments of conviction, teaching, or calling.

When I resist the Holy Spirit, I resist:

- Faith
- Repentance
- Sanctification
- Sound doctrine and true teaching
- Comfort

This resistance is not always loud or dramatic. Often, it begins quietly through delay, rationalization, or stubborn attachment to sin. Yet its consequences are very real.

A. Resisting Faith and the Confession of Christ

St. Paul teaches clearly that faith itself is impossible apart from the Holy Spirit:

“Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.”

(1 Corinthians 12:3, NKJV)

If I resist the Holy Spirit, I cannot truly confess the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not merely a verbal confession, but a confession of heart, mind, and life.

“By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God.”

(1 John 4:2, NKJV)

“Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.”

(1 John 4:15, NKJV)

“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.”

(Matthew 10:32, NKJV)

To resist the Holy Spirit is to resist the very power that enables this confession.

B. Resisting Conviction of Sin

Another essential work of the Holy Spirit is conviction, not condemnation, against loving exposure of sin for the sake of healing.

“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

(John 16:8, NKJV)

The Holy Spirit convicts me **before** I fall into sin and **after** I fall into sin, calling me back to repentance. When I resist this conviction, sin becomes habitual, the conscience dull, and the heart hardened.

Scripture describes the end of such resistance starkly:

“How much less man, who is abominable and filthy,
Who drinks iniquity like water!”

(Job 15:16, NKJV)

“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit... For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”

(Matthew 12:33–34, NKJV)

What I repeatedly resist, I eventually normalize.

C. Resisting the Filling of the Heart with Good Treasure

The Lord teaches that the heart is a treasury, not an empty space.

How do I make the tree of my life good?
I must fill it with the Holy Spirit.

The Church prays in the Third Hour litanies, addressing the Holy Spirit as:

“...the treasury of good things and the Life-Giver.”

This “good treasure” is the Holy Spirit Himself.

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

(Luke 6:45, NKJV)

If I resist the Holy Spirit, my heart will not remain neutral. It will be filled instead with iniquity, sinful imagination, corrupt thoughts, harmful words, and disordered desires. These will inevitably manifest in my behavior, relationships, speech, and conduct.

D. Resisting His Word by Trusting My Own Mind

The Holy Spirit is not only the Comforter; He is the Teacher.

“But the Comforter (Gr. *Parakletos*), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

(John 14:26, NKJV)

When I resist the Holy Spirit, I begin to listen to my own mind, my own desires, and my own self-made doctrines instead of the sound doctrine revealed by God.

St. Augustine explains this distinction with great clarity:

“So then the Son speaks, the Holy Spirit teaches. When the Son speaks, we take in the words; when the Holy Spirit teaches, we understand those words.”

Scripture warns against relying on self-derived wisdom:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding.”

(Proverbs 3:5, NKJV)

“A fool has no delight in understanding, But in expressing his own heart.”
(Proverbs 18:2, NKJV)

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness... Professing to be wise, they became fools...”
(Romans 1:18, 21–22, 25, NKJV)

To resist the Holy Spirit here is to make oneself one's own god.

E. Resisting Sanctification and Losing Comfort

The Holy Spirit is the sanctifier of the believer:

“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.”
(2 Thessalonians 2:13, NKJV)

When I resist the Holy Spirit, I resist holiness itself. The heart becomes defiled, impure, and restless. And because the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, resisting Him results in the loss of peace, joy, hope, and consolation—fruits that only He can produce.

2. Grieving the Holy Spirit

If resistance becomes persistent, it deepens into grieving the Holy Spirit.

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”
(Ephesians 4:30, NKJV)

This grief is not weakness in God, but sorrow born of love. Like a father who repeatedly instructs a stubborn son, the Holy Spirit grieves when His guidance is consistently rejected.

Christ Himself wept over Jerusalem:

“If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes... because you did not know the time of your visitation.”
(Luke 19:41–44, NKJV)

Grieving the Holy Spirit means ignoring the time of visitation, the moments when grace knocks on the door of the heart.

3. Quenching the Holy Spirit

If grieving continues unchecked, the heart reaches the stage of quenching the Holy Spirit.

At this stage, the Spirit no longer rebukes or convicts as before. The person is left to his own will, not as freedom, but as judgment.

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit...”
(Hebrews 6:4–6, NKJV)

“For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it... but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed...”
(Hebrews 6:7–8, NKJV)

Saint Paul says “**near**”, not “beyond,” indicating that repentance is difficult but not impossible.

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”
(Ezekiel 36:26, NKJV)

St. John Chrysostom teaches us how to avoid reaching this stage:

“But let us all humble our own souls by almsgiving and forgiving our neighbors their trespasses... for he knew himself to be a man, and inasmuch as his heart had been made contrite, he continued mourning.”

4. Blaspheming Against the Holy Spirit

Blaspheming the Holy Spirit is **final, persistent, unrepented resistance** until the end of life.

“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men...”
(Matthew 12:31–32, NKJV)

This is not a single word or act, but a lifelong refusal to repent.

If I speak against the Son of Man, the Holy Spirit can still lead me to repentance. But if I resist the Holy Spirit who leads me to repentance, **who then will lead me to repentance?**

St. Augustine explains with great precision:

“Against this unmerited gift... it is unrepentance that is a blasphemy against the Spirit... This refusal to repent has absolutely no forgiveness, neither in this age nor in the age to come, because repentance obtains forgiveness in this world in preparation for the next.”

Where there is no repentance, there can be no forgiveness.



Review Questions

1. **Why are sins against the Holy Spirit considered especially dangerous?**
[Because the Holy Spirit is the One who leads us to faith, repentance, sanctification, and salvation.]
2. **What is the common theme behind all sins against the Holy Spirit?**
[They are all forms of resisting the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the human heart.]
3. **What are the four sins against the Holy Spirit mentioned in Scripture?**
[Resisting, grieving, quenching, and blaspheming against the Holy Spirit.]
4. **What does it mean to resist the Holy Spirit?**
[To reject His work in faith, repentance, sound doctrine, sanctification, and comfort.]
5. **Why is confession of Christ impossible without the Holy Spirit?**
[Because no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit.]
6. **What happens when a person continually resists the conviction of the Holy Spirit?**
[The heart becomes hardened, sin becomes habitual, and repentance becomes difficult.]
7. **What does it mean to grieve the Holy Spirit?**
[To repeatedly ignore or reject His guidance, causing sorrow because His saving work is refused.]
8. **What is meant by quenching the Holy Spirit?**
[Reaching a stage where the Holy Spirit no longer convicts or rebukes because of persistent resistance.]
9. **Why is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit not forgiven?**
[Because it is final refusal to repent, and without repentance there can be no forgiveness.]
10. **What gives hope even to those who have quenched the Holy Spirit?**
[God’s power to give a new heart and restore repentance if the person returns to Him.]