

THE PENALTY OF GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

By Thomas Lindberg

Text: Judges 16:20

INTRODUCTION

Any discussion of the Holy Spirit would be incomplete if thought were not given to the fact spiritual power may be lost.

Samson's life is one of the saddest accounts in the Bible. He was a remarkable man. He had a supernatural birth. The Spirit of God was upon his life (Judges 13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14). Yet his life ended in failure. How do we lose the power of the Holy Spirit?

MESSAGE

1. THROUGH UNCONFESSSED SIN

This was the precise case with Samson. He asked for trouble when he became involved with a prostitute (Judges 16:1). Like butter sizzles away on a hot griddle, so spiritual power leaves our lives when we harbor unconfessed sin (Isaiah 63:10).

The apostle Paul urged believers to let nothing master them (1 Corinthians 6:12). Paul also testified that he diligently guarded his personal life so he would not be stripped of spiritual power (1 Corinthians 9:27).

2. THROUGH GREED

It was greed that led Judas down the path of spiritual poverty. The love of money captured Judas' heart and proved to be his ruin (1 Timothy 6:10).

Jesus' words about "the deceitfulness of riches" (Matthew 13:22) ought to be engraved deeply upon our hearts. Greed can actually deceive us into thinking that gold is more valuable and powerful than God.

Illustration: Every astronomer worth his name is constantly careful to keep his lens clean. Every Christian who bears Christ's name must be constantly mindful to keep his heart from greed.

3. THROUGH PRIDE

Lucifer was once a godly, powerful spiritual being. Pride caused his fall. (see his five damnable "I wills" in Isaiah 14:13.)

God will not use a proud person (1 Peter 5:5). The heart is only so big. If it is filled with pride, it cannot also be filled with the Spirit. Jesus pleaded with His followers to remain humble (Luke 14:11; 18:14).

Illustration: Martin Luther said, "You cannot stop the birds from flying over your head, but if you allow them to land and make a nest in your hair, then you are to blame." Thoughts of wrongful pride reach for all of us. We must not allow them room to remain.



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4. THROUGH NEGLECT OF PRAYER

Tapping Christ through prayer is our source of spiritual power (John 15:5). Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to those who ask (Luke 11:13). The verb ask is in the present tense. Jesus literally said, “God will give the Spirit to those who keep on asking Him.” That is prayer.

Illustration: Fifty-meter rifle competitors shoot at a bull’s-eye smaller than a dime. If the gun is moved five one-thousandths of a millimeter, the shooter misses and loses a point.

As a slight move costs a marksman a point, a move away from prayer costs a believer power.

CONCLUSION

No clever arrangement of rotten eggs can make a good omelet. And no clever arrangement of a life of sin, greed, pride, and lack of prayer can produce spiritual power.

The Holy Spirit urges, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life” (Proverbs 4:23, NIV).

Endnote

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