

Can a Christian sin against the Holy Ghost?

There are many sins in the Bible that we can commit against the Holy Spirit and we need to know what they are so that we will not be guilty of them.

First, we will list the sins that can be committed against the Holy Spirit and then we will expound on what the sins are. The Holy Spirit can be grieved, despised, vexed, lied to, resisted, and quenched.

1. GRIEVED. (Eph 4:30) And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

The main way to commit this sin is to fail to put off the old man (Eph. 4:22). From Eph. 4:25-32, we find a list of things that a Christian can do that will grieve the Holy Spirit. You can be angry without a cause, you can give place to the devil, you can steal, you can refuse to work, you can talk dirty, you can hold on to bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking and refuse to be kind, tender hearted and forgiving. Any of these things will grieve the Holy Spirit. If you have it "out for somebody" don't think for a minute that the Holy Spirit is not grieved by your attitude.

2. DESPISED. (Heb 10:29) Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Jesus Christ died on the cross to save us from our sins. He has willingly offered himself as a free gift to any man who will receive him. And any man who receives Jesus Christ receives eternal life. However, there are many who will not receive Jesus Christ. And when a man refuses to believe on Jesus Christ and receive him, he despises the Holy Spirit. That's because it is the Holy Spirit who alerts him to his need of Jesus Christ and who will cause him to be born again if he receives him. Having despised the Holy Spirit, he winds up in hell. A person who has religion without salvation despises the Holy Spirit.

3. VEXED. (Isa 63:10) But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

As you can see from this verse, rebellion is the underlying cause of this sin. Many a Christian has been living backslidden for years. The Holy Spirit has dealt with them about getting right with God and they have refused the Holy Spirit's promptings and have rebelled against the words of God. The Holy Spirit is vexed. Many scholars have vexed the Holy Spirit with their modern translations of the Bible. Believe it or not, their underlying motive is rebellion against the pure words of God in the King James Bible.

4. LIED TO. (Acts 5:3) But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

Here, Satan filled the heart of this Christian to lie about the size of his offering. Evidently, Ananias wanted to appear more spiritual than he really was. As a result of this sin, God killed him and his wife. There are many who come to church and who appear before their brethren to be very spiritual and sanctified. In truth, however, they have secret sins and their apparent spirituality is just a façade. Not only are they living as hypocrites before men, they are lying to the Holy Ghost. When you pretend to be more spiritual than you really are, you are committing this sin. Therefore, do as a wise preacher said, "Be before men what you are before God."

5. RESISTED. (Acts 7:51) Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

Here is a situation where Stephen was preaching to the Pharisees, encouraging them to trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour. However, they refused to believe Stephen's preaching and, therefore, resisted the work of the Holy Ghost in trying to save their souls. The Holy Spirit, then, is primarily resisted by the sin of unbelief. Part of the reason that men won't believe on Jesus Christ is that they refuse to believe they are bad enough to need a Saviour. If you are not saved and the Holy Spirit is dealing with you about your need of righteousness, quit resisting him and trust Christ! If you are saved and the Holy Spirit has been prompting you to do certain things for Jesus, like witnessing, quit resisting the Holy Spirit and do what he wants you to do.

6. QUENCHED. (1 Thes. 5:19) Quench not the Spirit.

To quench something means to put it out, like putting out a fire. The Holy Spirit can be quenched in a church service by indifference and apathy. There are places where the atmosphere in the church is so dead you can almost "feel" the deadness and know that the Holy Spirit's work has been completely quenched. In some churches, the preaching of the pastor has been criticized by some of the people for so long that the Holy Spirit simply refuses to work among the members of that congregation. In some instances, the Holy Spirit has dealt with you in a particular area of your life and you have simply silenced his leading. Because you are responding to him in another area of your life, you're satisfied that you are doing all that God wants you to do. In fact, though, you have simply silenced your conscience and the Holy Spirit has quit dealing with you about this matter.

So you see the varieties of sins against the Holy Spirit and you are aware that everyone has sinned against him, at some time. After looking at the list, when you find the area of your life where you are sinning against the Holy Spirit, confess the sin and by God's grace quit it. The best way to keep from sinning against the Holy Spirit is to do what Paul said in Eph. 5:18, "be filled with the Spirit."