

OLD-TIME RELIGION
12 Fervent, Soul-Winning Sermons

By

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE FIVE DAMNING SINS AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST

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In order to understand the seriousness of sinning against the Holy Ghost, we need to understand something of the work of the Holy Spirit.

You notice that I used two terms: "Holy Ghost" and "Holy Spirit." They are two names for one and the same person. For the Holy Spirit is a person, not just an influence, as some people think; not just a power from GOD, as some people imagine; but a person - the third person of the Godhead. He is just as much GOD as CHRIST is GOD; just as truly GOD as GOD the Father. For the Godhead, as we are taught in the Scripture, consists of three persons: GOD the Father, GOD the Son, and GOD the Holy Spirit; each equal, all forming one GOD, and each having a special work that He does.

Now, the Holy Spirit has a very definite work in bringing a person to salvation, and He has a very definite work after salvation in the life of that person who has been saved.

The Work of the Holy Spirit in Salvation

First, the Holy Spirit draws the sinner to CHRIST.

No one ever would be saved were it not for the work of the Holy Spirit.

JESUS said in John 6:44, "**No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.**" Now, that is the work of the Holy Spirit: to draw unsaved people to CHRIST. And JESUS said plainly that no man can come to Him without the Holy Spirit drawing him.

So many unsaved people have the idea they will be saved whenever they get ready. No, you won't! You will be saved when the Holy Spirit draws or you will go to Hell. You will be saved when GOD is ready. Just remember, "**No man,**" said JESUS, "**can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.**"

Next, the Holy Spirit convicts the sinner of sin.

JESUS said, when He promised the Holy Spirit in John 16:8, 9 and 10, that when the Spirit is come, **"he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."**

Now, the convicting of the Holy Spirit is indispensable in salvation. Every person who has ever been Born Again passed through that stage of conviction by the Holy Spirit.

What is it? First of all, the Holy Spirit in conviction reveals one's own sinful condition to him, and his need of a Saviour; reveals to him that he is lost. And everybody who has ever really been Born Again knows what an awful time that is.

It may last just a moment, it may last a day, it may last longer. In my case, I was under conviction three years. But oh, that burden of the soul when you see yourself lost and ruined and undone and doomed and damned and going to Hell, when GOD turns the searchlight into your soul!

GOD convicts sinners because repentance from sin is necessary for salvation, and no person ever would be willing to give up sin and really turn his back on it in genuine repentance until the Holy Spirit shows him that he is on his way to Hell, that the curse of GOD is on him, and that he is lost.

In other words, you have got to get a man lost before you can get him saved.

The Holy Spirit does that. A sinner has to realize that he is lost before he will want to be saved enough to turn away from his sins. When the Holy Spirit convicts the sinner of his sin, He literally shakes him over the mouth of Hell. He will get to the place where he will feel that if something isn't done, and done soon, he is going to Hell in spite of all that can be done. I have seen that conviction come upon some people almost like a flash of lightning. Immediately they saw themselves lost and under the wrath of GOD, doomed and without GOD and without hope, and they came right out almost instantly.

But others resist the Spirit when He begins to call and when He begins to draw.

Now the next thing the Holy Spirit does with the unsaved is to open his understanding to see the way of salvation in CHRIST.

By the river in Philippi, when Paul preached to that group of women, the Scripture says of Lydia, that her **"heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul"** (Acts 16:14).

In other words, her heart was opened that she might understand; for GOD tells us plainly that an unsaved person does not understand spiritual things. **"But the natural man receiveth not the**

things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Corinthians 2:14).

No unsaved person can understand his true condition in the sight of GOD and the way of salvation through CHRIST except the Holy Spirit enlighten him. It is foolishness to him. **"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness."**

And that man who says, "Why can't I live the best I can and treat people right and go to Heaven?" says that because the way of salvation is absolute foolishness to him. It seems foolish to him that someone needs to die for his sin, and that before GOD can forgive sin, atonement must be made.

Then the Holy Spirit actually assists that sinner to repentance. Then He reveals to him CHRIST in all His saving grace, and helps him to saving faith in the Lord JESUS CHRIST. Then when he repents of his sin and receives by faith the Lord JESUS CHRIST, the Holy Spirit applies the Blood of CHRIST and cleanses him from all sin.

Then we are told that he is regenerated, or Born Again, by the Spirit of GOD. The Holy Spirit brings that soul to birth, and plants the divine seed of GOD in him; thereby, he becomes partaker of the divine nature. That is what makes a child of GOD: not reformation, but regeneration. The implanting of divine life in a dead soul is the work of the Holy Spirit, known in the Scripture as regeneration.

Work of the Holy Spirit After Conversion

Immediately after regeneration, that new-born soul is sealed in CHRIST.

Ephesians 1:13,14 says, **"In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."**

Sealed in CHRIST by the Holy Spirit! Now, the seal is GOD's brand on the soul. Paul said, **"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his"** (II Timothy 2:19).

The western cattle man takes a hot iron and brands the side or the hip of his cattle, and everywhere they may go, he knows the brand; he can identify them. And brother, just like that, GOD's brand or seal is placed upon the soul of His redeemed child.

Some Christians forget that there is another side to that seal; there is another inscription. One inscription is, **"The Lord knoweth them that are his,"** but the other inscription on the other side of that seal is, **"Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."** Be done with sin - that is what it means.

People sometimes are offended when I preach separation and when I cry out against sin. But the day you were sealed by the Holy Spirit, the inscription on one side of that seal put the mark of

GOD on you for identification; the other side calls you to let sin alone from that day on.

The Holy Spirit then takes up His abode in the body of the believer.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:19,20).

From that moment on, you not only become a temple of the Holy Ghost, but you are under obligation to that indwelling Spirit, and under obligation to the CHRIST who bought you, to glorify GOD in your body as well as in your soul, for your body and soul belong to GOD. When GOD says to glorify GOD in your body and in your spirit, that means everything in your life. That takes it all in.

The Holy Spirit indwells the body of a Christian for a specific purpose.

He comforts in sorrow. JESUS said, **'I will send you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot receive, because the world seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless.'** Oh, praise the Lord! I have preached about the comfort of the Holy Spirit during all my ministry, and I have known a little about it, but when my mother went home to Heaven I never knew such peace could be possible in a human heart as was in mine that hour. All through the years I had thought and I had said, "When that mother of mine goes, it will be the saddest day this boy has ever seen in his life." But when the time came, I never was closer to GOD in my life. I never knew such peace as the day that I held her head in my arms, and she went out to be with GOD. He comforts in sorrow!

The Spirit indwells the child of GOD:

- to teach him (John 14:26);
- to guide into the truth (John 16:13);
- to promote Christian growth;
- to comfort him in sorrow;
- to bear fruit for the Master's glory (Galatians 5:22,23);
- to give him a testimony;
- to warn of the dangers on the way;
- to lead him out into a life of fruitful service;
- to enable him to pray.

For no man can pray except he prays in the Spirit. **"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered"** (Romans 8:26).

I mention all these things to show the tragic consequences of sinning against the Holy Ghost.

Now, having said that about the work of the Spirit, let us go into the sins against the Holy Ghost.

First, we will mention the sins that a Christian can commit. And let me say this: they are not unpardonable. Only an unsaved person can commit an unpardonable sin, and I will show you why as we go along.

I. Lying to the Holy Ghost

The first sin we mention that a Christian can commit is the sin of lying to the Holy Ghost. You will find that in the fifth chapter of the book of Acts, in the story of Ananias and Sapphira. The second great wave of revival was on at Jerusalem. The church had grown to many thousands and some of them had come from afar, had been saved, and remained in Jerusalem. There was a need for food and the physical necessities of life, so many of the members of the church who had property sold it, came and laid the money at the apostles' feet, thereby providing for the need during that time. But there was a couple - no doubt they sat in that meeting, day after day, seeing people who had sold their property come and bring the money into the treasury of the church, and they were conscious that there were members there who knew they had property, and they hadn't sold any of it and hadn't brought anything. People no doubt would look at them, wondering why Ananias and Sapphira hadn't done anything.

They went home from that meeting, and I believe they were sitting alone one night, discussing it. Ananias may have said to Sapphira, "You know, this thing is getting embarrassing to me! Did you notice how the people looked at us today when Barnabas came down and put in his princely gift? He sold everything that he had, and gave himself to the Lord for the ministry, and we sat there and didn't do a thing. What are we going to do about it?"

The Devil said, "Now, listen. Go and sell that piece of land. And you'll get enough for it that you can make a nice gift, and keep enough to take care of yourself, and nobody will ever know the difference. They'll think you did the best you could. They'll think you are giving it all, and you will save your face."

You know, there are many Christians who do a lot to save face and maintain respectability in the church. A lot of people care more about maintaining respectability in the church, and saving face, than they do about pleasing the Lord.

So they sold that piece of property, and kept back part of it, and Sapphira was also privy to it. Then Ananias came down, and he marched in and laid the gift at Peter's feet.

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? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? After it was sold, was it not thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God**" (Acts 5:3, 4).

And Ananias dropped dead on the spot.

Then, about three hours later, Sapphira came in. You know, I've always wondered how he got off without her in the first place! But I think, from what Peter said, it was part of the plot. No doubt

she thought that if she came in right in the middle of the service, after Ananias had given his princely gift and the people had rejoiced over it and congratulated him, everybody would look around and say, "Here comes Sapphira!"

And you know, I think if they had taffeta silk then, she wore a taffeta silk dress, so that when she came marching down the aisle everybody could hear it, "swish, swish, swish," and she would be the center of attraction.

When she got in there, however, everything was as still as death. She marched down there and Peter said, "**Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much?**"

And she said, "**Yea, for so much.**"

Then Peter said unto her, "**How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out**" (Acts 5:8, 9).

And down she went - dead.

Did you ever ask yourself why GOD killed those two people? GOD doesn't do anything without a purpose! GOD slew those two people on the spot there to make an example of them. The church had just started out on its mission in the world. In the beginning of its existence, GOD struck two people dead for lying to the Holy Spirit, to teach men from then on what a serious thing it is for people to trifle with GOD.

What was their sin? Trying to put something over on GOD. Pretending to be something that they were not. If GOD struck everyone dead today that did that, there wouldn't be enough left to bury the dead. But what is this sin? It is any kind of sham or mockery or make-believe or hypocrisy in matters of religion or in dealing with GOD.

Lying to the Holy Ghost is:

- living with one foot in the world and one foot in the church;
- running with GOD's crowd on Sunday and with the Devil's crowd six days in the week;
- putting on sheep's clothing on Sunday and going out with the wolves during the week.
- it is the sin of an unconsecrated heart and life.
- it is holding out on GOD, knowing that GOD expects your best, and yet withholding that best, while at the same time pretending to be giving your best.
- it is trifling with GOD, coveting the honor of a full consecration in the sight of others and yet unwilling to pay the price
- it is posing as something that deep down in your heart you know you are not.

GOD struck Ananias and Sapphira dead on the spot, to make an example out of them, to show people what a grievous sin it is for a Christian to live in duplicity, deception and hypocrisy.

II. Grieving the Holy Spirit

The next sin we mention is the sin of grieving the Holy Spirit. "**And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption**" (Ephesians 4:30).

You ask how you grieve the Spirit? Look back to the twenty-ninth verse and hear GOD say, "**Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.**"

One way that GOD's people grieve the Holy Spirit is by their conversation - unchristian, unbecoming, unholy conversation. Filthy talk! And I have seen multitudes of professing Christians make a regular sewer out of their mouths; they indulge in all sorts of filthy talk, all kinds of suggestive stories - just revel in them. I have even heard them take GOD's name in vain!

It is grieving the Holy Spirit when any kind of unchristian, unchaste, unholy, unbecoming words come out of your mouth.

Then in the thirty-first verse, still on the matter of talk, He mentions "**evil speaking**" - gossiping, if you please, tale-bearing, slanderous speaking against people. This kind of thing on the part of Christian people grieves the Holy Spirit.

In the fifth chapter of Ephesians, He speaks of foolish talking; "**let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting**" (Ephesians 5:3, 4).

I know people think I am cranky and narrow and fanatic. But you listen to me now: I don't think a Christian ought to use any kind of slang - what we call down South "bywords." What are they, anyhow? If you analyze them, nearly every one of them starts with a "G" and sounds like GOD. And when they use two words, the second invariably begins with a "D." What is it? A substitute for outright profanity. I tell you, if you want to have power with GOD, if you want to have the assurance of your salvation (for that is part of the work of the Spirit, and I am going to talk about it a little further in a minute) - if you want to be happy as a Christian and have the fellowship of the Lord and the unction of the Spirit on your life, you cannot be too careful about your speech.

Paul said in Ephesians 4:29, "**Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers**" that everybody who listens to your conversation will be blessed by hearing it. Otherwise you will be grieving the Holy Spirit.

Another way you grieve the Spirit is in the attitudes of your heart. "**Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.**"

Do you carry anything around in your heart against anybody? Is there anybody in the world to whom, right down in your heart, you would like to see something happen?

I heard a woman not long ago say of another woman, "Oh well, you just wait - she'll get hers, and oh, won't I be glad when she does!" GOD did say, "**Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord,**" but GOD said to His children, "**You pray for them that persecute you and**

despitefully use you, and those that speak evil against you falsely for my sake! Pray for them, and don't you hold anything against them in your heart - any kind of bitterness against anybody.' If you do, you are grieving the Holy Spirit.

Then, not only the attitudes of our hearts, but our attitudes toward Christian people, toward one another, may grieve the Holy Spirit. He said, "**Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another**" (Ephesians 4:32).

You know, church members are the worst people on earth about forgiving an erring brother!

If the worst sinner who walks the streets of the town, in all his filth, in all his sin, should walk down the aisle and confess his sins and accept JESUS CHRIST as his Saviour, every member of that congregation would forgive him instantly. But, you take a brother or sister in the church and let the Devil trip one of them up. It may break his heart; he may repent and weep bitterly over it; but the people of that church - a large proportion of them - never will forgive him as long as they live, and take him back to their hearts again. You know I am telling the truth. Oh, the tragedy of it!

"Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another." For you are grieving the Holy Spirit when you have a wrong attitude toward a Christian brother or sister. Even though he is wrong; even though he sins; even though he has fallen, the Scripture says, "**Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness**" (Ephesians 6:1). But we don't do it! It grieves the Holy Spirit.

We can grieve the Holy Spirit in the places to which we go, if they are not the right places for a Christian.

Why do I say so? You are the temple of the Holy Ghost, and wherever you go, if you are really saved, the Holy Spirit must go. Long ago, I began to yearn and thirst and hunger for the fullness of the Spirit of GOD in my life and on my ministry. And the minute I began to seek the fullness of the Spirit and to be Spirit-led, GOD began to put His finger on things in my life that had to go. One of the first ones was the picture show. I would not any more go inside a picture house to see a show than I would take a drink of liquor. Why? Well, perhaps you go. But I want to ask you an honest question: did you ever see a picture house in your life where the atmosphere of the place would be pleasing to the Holy Spirit? If you go where they show on the screen all that Blood and thunder, lust and sex and smut, the Holy Spirit has to go along with you!

Do you really want to know what is right for a Christian and what is wrong? I will tell you how you can know.

When the question arises, ask yourself, "Would JESUS be my partner? Would JESUS go with me, sit down there and watch that stuff on the screen and enjoy it with me?" If He wouldn't, brother, sister, then that is no place for a Christian.

Maybe there is no harm in dancing. But do you think JESUS would go with you? Is the atmosphere of such places pleasing to the Holy Spirit? Do you really want to know what is right

for a Christian and what is wrong? Or do you want to try to justify yourself in your ways? Do you think JESUS would be your partner on the dance floor? Do you think that JESUS would hold the opposite hand in a bridge or poker game? Do you? Not one of you would dare say that He would! Then, if He would not, a child of GOD has no business there. He is grieving the Holy Spirit.

Then another way that a child of GOD can grieve the Holy Spirit is in his attitude toward the church.

JESUS CHRIST has so closely identified Himself with His church that anything you do to the church is considered by Him as done personally to Him.

When JESUS met Saul of Tarsus, who was persecuting the church, He did not say, "Saul, why persecutest thou the church?" He said, "**Saul! Saul! why persecutest thou me?**" Since the church is so dear to JESUS, the Holy Spirit is very jealous of it. And when you mistreat, neglect or bring reproach upon your church, you are grieving the Holy Spirit. JESUS' question to Saul means that exactly as you treat the church, that is the way you are treating JESUS.

Another way one can grieve the Holy Spirit is to defile the temple of the Holy Ghost, your body.

Oh, I tell you, when it dawned on me that now, as a Christian, my body was the temple of the Holy Ghost, my body became a sacred thing to me. Here is what GOD says will happen if you defile the temple of the Holy Ghost: "**If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are**" (I Corinthians 3:17).

Now, that word "**destroy**" does not mean that GOD will send a person to Hell for defiling the temple of GOD. It has no relation whatever to going to Hell. But it means that GOD will visit dire consequences upon that person who defilest the temple of the Holy Ghost. What do you think would be defiling the temple of the Holy Ghost? Unclean and unchaste thoughts harbored, of course, would defile. It defiles every stream of your life. Taking liquor into the temple of the Holy Ghost would defile it; taking beer into the temple of the Holy Ghost would defile it. Uncleaness! Unchastity! Impurity of any kind!

What are the results when you grieve the Holy Spirit?

Paul says, "**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance** [or self-control]."

When you grieve the Holy Spirit, He cannot bear that fruit in your life. The love, that first love you had for CHRIST, is soon gone. That warm, glowing love that made CHRIST real is gone. The joy of your salvation is gone. The peace - the love, joy and peace - the peace in your heart is gone. The assurance of your salvation is gone. Your faith is gone, and your prayer life is gone when you grieve the Holy Spirit. That is what happens. Your power is gone. It is all gone; everything that is dear to the heart of a Christian is soon gone when you grieve the Holy Spirit.

I have had people say to me, "I would give anything in the world if I could pray with faith." If

you cannot pray with faith, do you know what the trouble is? You are grieving the Holy Spirit, and thereby, you have destroyed your faith.

If you have been praying for somebody to be saved and they have not been, do not blame or accuse GOD. Begin searching your own heart and life. If you have been praying for revival in your church and it has not come, do not put the blame on GOD. Begin searching your own heart. Something is grieving the Holy Spirit. If you are floundering around in doubts, and have lost the joy of your salvation, lost your peace and power, you have grieved the Spirit.

III. Quenching the Spirit

Another sin that a Christian can commit is quenching the Holy Spirit. "**Quench not the Spirit**" (I Thessalonians 5:19).

The Holy Spirit leads a Christian, will lead you, if you let Him. The Holy Spirit warns you against sin and against the pitfalls of the Devil, if you will let Him. Everyone knows what I am talking about. The Holy Spirit will move upon your heart to reveal to you the will of GOD; move upon your heart to speak to an unsaved person; impress you to do a certain service for the Lord.

You have had that moving of the Spirit, that still small voice whispering into your heart that there is a service you ought to do, some definite testimony you ought to give, a dedication of your life you ought to make, some sin or inconsistency you should give up. That is the Holy Spirit trying to lead you to higher ground for GOD. If you turn a deaf ear, you quench the Spirit, and you will soon get to the place where you are no longer sensitive to His leadership. Then you flounder around, reach out, grope for the will of GOD and you cannot find it. You wonder' what GOD wants you to do. What is the matter? You have quenched the Spirit.

Also, He warns you when you are about to go the wrong way. You know, when you were first saved, and the first time you started off into sin or was tempted to take the wrong way, how the Holy Spirit grabbed hold of your heart and seemed to just all but smite you between the eyes. Something inside of you rose up in rebellion and warning, like a red lantern at the railroad crossing and a swinging bell of warning. But you would not listen. You pushed it aside and went on. You get, after awhile, to where you cannot hear His voice. And then you have come to the place that Isaiah was talking about, when he said, "**Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter**" (Isaiah 5:20).

You can't tell what is right and what is wrong; you have lost your power of discrimination between what a Christian ought to do and what he ought not to do, and then - you hear them all around you: "I can't see any harm in that; I just can't, to save my life, see any harm in that." You have lost your power of discernment between what is right and what is wrong. It is a sad state in a Christian's life.

IV. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit

There are two sins that are unpardonable, that the unsaved man alone can commit. One is

blaspheming the Holy Spirit, and I will not dwell on that. That, as JESUS said in Matthew 12:31, 32, is speaking against the Holy Ghost. The unsaved man that belittles, or ridicules, or attributes the power of the Holy Spirit to the Devil - that is what these people had done that JESUS said had blasphemed the Holy Ghost - there is never forgiveness for it in this world or the world to come.

V. Resisting and Driving Away the Spirit

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost" (Acts 7:51).

I am now speaking strictly to unsaved people. Remember that JESUS said, **"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him"** (John 6:44). Remember, too, that it is the Holy Spirit that does the drawing. Remember that there is in front of every unsaved man a "dead line," and when he crosses that, his doom is sealed forever, because the Holy Spirit quits him and GOD gives him up.

Unsaved friend, the Bible does teach that you can resist the Spirit; you can turn away from His drawing, His striving; you can put off your salvation; you can say no until GOD will withdraw His Spirit from you. And then you are just as certain for Hell as if you were already there.

Your time to be saved, unsaved friend, is when that knocking is at the door; when that tugging, that pulling, that striving of the Spirit is there.

Hear the Word of GOD!

"My spirit shall not always strive with man" (Genesis 6:3).

Then again, **"Because I have called, and ye refused [there you are again, that call, that urge]; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded [I have reached for you.' Oh, when that tugging comes at your heartstrings, it is the Holy Spirit of GOD reaching for your soul]; But ye have set at nought all my counsels [you wouldn't listen to me], and would none of my reproof [hear it!]; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind . . . Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer [Oh, my friend, listen]; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me"** (Proverbs 1:24-28).

People say, "Would GOD do that?" Who am I to say what GOD will do and will not do? The only way I know what GOD will do is by what He has done and what He says He will do. GOD says that He will withdraw His Spirit from that unsaved man.

Listen again: **"Ephraim is joined [or married] to idols: let him alone."** Let him alone! GOD is speaking to His Holy Spirit. Some day He will say of you, "He is married to his liquor; he is married to his adultery; he is married to his uncleanness; he is married to his pleasure; he is married to his profanity - let him alone!"

Three times in the first chapter of Romans, verses 24, 26 and 28, GOD uses these words: "**And God gave them up.**"

Now listen to John 12:37 and 39: "**But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.**" Hear verses 39 and 40: "**Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.**"

What? When they had a chance to believe; when the Holy Spirit revealed CHRIST to them; when the Holy Spirit called them; when the Holy Spirit knocked at their door; when the Holy Spirit was striving with them, they would not believe on Him, and the time came when they could not believe.

GOD blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts and got them ready for Hell - just as He hardened Pharaoh's heart. What did GOD do about it? Just exactly what He says in II Thessalonians 2:10-12: "**Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned.**" Getting them ready for Hell!

If you would go with me tonight to a little city in Texas where I was once pastor, I would take you into the home of an old, gray headed man. He is now seventy-eight, stooped and bent and with one foot in the grave. That man used to come and hear me preach every Sunday night. The Holy Spirit would strive with him. Time and again I have seen him tremble under the strivings of the Spirit. I would go back and speak to him again and again and again.

He would say to me, "I love you like a brother, and one of these days you are going to baptize me." And then I would say, "Why not tonight?" His reply was always, "Not tonight, preacher, not tonight."

Before I left there, he quit coming to church. The last thing I did before I moved away was to go down to his home. He was the last person I visited. I put my arms around him, looked him in the eye and said, "Once more I wanted to tell you how I love you, fellow, and once more ask you to give your heart to my Lord. I may never see you again in this world, but I couldn't leave without coming to plead with you one more time to accept the Lord JESUS CHRIST."

He looked at me with a blank stare, and the most pitiful look I ever saw, and said, "Preacher, there was a time when I was so close to being saved, but I tell you now, I can't." He would shake his head and say, "If I could do it for anybody in this world, I would do it for you, but Brother Hankins, I can't!"

One Sunday night, while I was pastor in a Texas town, a young man sat in the balcony. Oh, how the Spirit of GOD did strive with him that night! He wiped the great beads of perspiration from his brow and turned pale. He hardly took his eyes off me while I preached.

When I made the call that night, he stood and held on to the balcony rail, and leaned over and

looked at me. I kept motioning for him to come; he would shake his head. We would sing on, and again, I would motion for him to come; he would shake his head. After awhile, he stepped out into the aisle, and ran to the stairway, ran down the steps, out to the front door, and was gone.

Three weeks from that time, I sat by his bedside as he was dying with leukemia.

That day I sat there with my Bible and tried my dead level best to win him to CHRIST. Oh, how I pleaded with him! After awhile, that eighteen-year-old boy looked at me and said, "Brother Hankins, three weeks ago Sunday night, when I sat in the balcony, GOD called me so strongly that it seemed to me at times that I must jump over that balcony rail to get to you. But my favorite sin came up before me, and the Devil said, 'If you go, you will have to give it up.' I said, 'I won't do it,' and I turned and ran." He said, "Brother Hankins, something died inside of me. My heart is as cold and as dead as a stone."

I wondered if the doctors had told him that he could not live, and I said, "Has the doctor told you what was wrong with you?" He said, "Yes, the doctor was here only about thirty minutes ago and told me I had only three or four days to live."

I dropped on my knees by the side of his bed, and if ever I wept and prayed and pleaded with a soul, I did with him. When I looked up, his face was like a flint, and he was shaking his head and saying, "I can't. I can't. I can't!"

And he died and went to Hell.

"My spirit shall not always strive with man."

Do you understand why, when I give my invitation, I plead with people to do just one thing? Do you remember how many times you have heard me say, "If the Holy Spirit has spoken to your heart, come?" Christian or unsaved, when the Holy Spirit speaks to you, if you yield instead of resisting, the victory will be yours.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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