

Genesis 6:3 *And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.*

Ephesians 4:30 *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

1 Thessalonians 5:19 *Quench not the Spirit.*

Three things are implied by this text:

1. God's Spirit does sometimes strive with men.
2. Men resist God's Spirit.
3. God's Spirit will eventually withdraw from those who resist.

What is this striving?

It is God setting truth before the mind of man, reasoning, convincing, persuading, even pleading.

What happens when men resist?

As momentum is diminished by constant resistance, so is the moving of God's Spirit.

Why does God stop striving?

He only stops when someone reaches the place where longer striving would do them no good.

The consequences are eternal!

Hardness of heart, a seared conscience, eternal damnation. You may think this is unfair, but God can act as He wishes. Furthermore, it is only because of His mercy that God would strive with man at all!

When God Stops Striving ...

1. He repents of all the good He did for such a rebellious creature.

Jeremiah 18:8,10 ⁸ *If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. ...* ¹⁰ *If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.*

2. He gives that person over to the power of their sin, which He never did when He was striving.

Psalm 81:11-13 ¹¹ *But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.* ¹² *So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.* ¹³ *Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!*
Hosea 4:17 *Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.*

3. He gives them their request (to leave them alone), but sends leanness to their souls.

Psalm 106:13-15 ¹³ *They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel:* ¹⁴ *But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.* ¹⁵ *And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.*

4. He allows sin to harden that person's heart. The things that would have normally drawn them to God (afflictions, altar calls, etc.) now harden them. They can be eternally lost before they even die!

Isaiah 1:5 *Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.*

Proverbs 29:1 *He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*

2 Chronicles 36:15-16 ¹⁵ *And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place:* ¹⁶ *But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.*

- God's Spirit is grieved, then finally quenched. When God relinquishes the contest, YOU LOSE!
- You did not kindle God's fire in your life, but you can extinguish it!
- ILLUSTRATION: Lost in a mine with one flickering candle – DON'T LET THE FLAME DIE!