



WOW: Word Of the Week

Cringe

February 5, 2025

Welcome! WOW. Words for life. This week's WOW developed over time, with a progression of words: grieve...uneasy...cringe! Cringe. The definition I want to focus on is "embarrassment, awkwardness." Let me explain.

The preacher was talking about "grieving" the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30). I checked the word in the biblical text on my phone—nothing special. Grief, sorrow; distress. One translation said "do not fret...." Do not distress the Holy Spirit. I checked more translations. Another word entered my mind—uneasy. Do not make the Holy Spirit uneasy. God gives us the indwelling Spirit as a gift at our baptism. May my words, attitudes, actions never cause uneasiness!

Later that week my son and I talked about my 2025 WOW words. He asked what was coming up. He applauded my desire to follow up "Knowing Jesus" with "Knowing the Holy Spirit." (I am committed to writing more often about the Holy Spirit in 2025.) Somewhere in the conversation about grief, distress, uneasiness – I thought of this week's word. Cringe. Do not make the Holy Spirit cringe.

Look at the context (Eph. 4:23-32). Renewed spirit, new self, new ways of speaking, suitable words, because we are part of a new spiritual body. Avoid sin. No stealing. Generous sharing. The conclusion, 4:31-32: "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." Can we ever remember the list? Can we get it right?

Help is on the way! This week's WOW: Cringe! Do not embarrass the Holy Spirit in his ever-presence. Avoid awkwardness—for yourself, for the Spirit. Paul emphasizes—this is God's HOLY Spirit. Do not make God's Holy Spirit cringe.

You get the point without multiplied comments from me. Live cringefree. Cringeworthy actions, attitudes, outbursts? Avoid them. A hopefully memorable WOW: cringe. Do not embarrass the Holy Spirit! Do not make the Holy Spirit cringe as he accompanies you everywhere you go.