

What Spirit Are You Of?

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace Church located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from a message preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

GRACE PUBLICATIONS
P.O. BOX 18715
BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.

Copyright © 2000

Grace Publications is a ministry of
Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 5

Chapter 1 6

EVERYONE TAKES ON SOMEBODY'S SPIRIT

Chapter 2 13

CHOOSE WHICH SPIRIT YOU WILL SERVE

Chapter 3 20

*CAST DOWN PROJECTIONS,
STAND FAST IN FAITH*

CONCLUSION 25

INTRODUCTION

To take on a spirit means to take on another personality. When Peter said that if he had anything to do with it, Jesus would not go to the Cross, it wasn't Peter speaking. Jesus answered him, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matthew 16:23). Scores of words that people say are not God's words. They are Satan's words about situations.

Thank God that He freely gives us His Holy Spirit. With that Spirit comes discernment, wisdom, and all the fruit spoken of in Galatians 5:22-23.

This booklet shows how people can so easily be influenced by spirits that are not of God. It also reveals the truth about the Comforter—the Holy Spirit of God. He is always there to guide, to convict of truth, and to reveal the Father's heart to everyone who receives Jesus Christ as his Savior.

Chapter One

EVERYONE TAKES ON SOMEBODY'S SPIRIT

“And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us.

“And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us” (Luke 9:49-50).

“And when his disciples James and John saw [how the people rejected Jesus], they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

“But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

“For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. *And they went to another village*” (Luke 9:54-56).

In Job 26:4, Job reproved the uncharitable spirit of his “friend” Bildad. “To whom hast thou uttered words? and *whose spirit came from*

thee?" In 1 Samuel 2:2, Hannah went to the temple where the ark of God was. There she prayed for a child and said, "There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God." Hannah took on the spirit of God, and He answered her prayer by giving her a son.

But according to 1 Samuel 2:12, "the sons of Eli [(Hophni and Phineas)] were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD." It is just that plain: Eli's family did not know God, and they were rebellious against Him.

God challenged Eli in I Samuel 2:29a, saying, "Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me...?" In the end, the ark of God's presence was taken by the Philistines, both of Eli's sons were slain, and Eli—stiff-necked and overweight—fell over and died of a broken neck (1 Samuel 4:18).

Everybody takes on somebody's spirit. And even though he was a spiritual leader for Israel, Eli took on the spirit of his sons.

God's Spirit Is Light

First Corinthians 2:12 says, "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit

which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

“(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all [divine] goodness and righteousness and [categorical] truth;)

“Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

“For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in [darkness].

“But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light” (Ephesians 5:8-13).

What does God use to reveal truth? The answer isn't what we think. It is *light*. “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Psalm 119:130). That light is the Word of God and the spirit of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the apostle Paul said, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as [unwise], but as wise,

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:14-16). This is so true: The

days are infected with evil, with Satan as the god of this world and as the prince of the air.

“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:17). In other words, do not be a person who does not think in the light of God, but be one who understands experientially what the will of God is.

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the [Holy] Spirit;

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

“Submitting yourselves one to another in the [reverence] of God” (Ephesians 5:18-21).

Eternal Darkness: The Absence of God's Light

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16).

There are people in hell this minute, crying because they never accepted the Light of God, the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:9).

Every moment of our lives, we are living in

some kind of a spirit—either God’s or Satan’s. Each moment we breathe, the issue is not flesh, and it is not blood. The issue is that we take on a spirit. And whether it is because of our training from the past, ignorance regarding the present, or lack of obedience to what we know, if we do not operate in the Holy Spirit, we take on another spirit.

What manner of spirit are you of? Is it materialism? carnality? fulfilling lust patterns? Or have you taken on the spirit of God, Jesus Christ, heaven, understanding, wisdom, and counsel (Isaiah 11:2)?

Eli took on the spirit of his two sons because, he thought, “Those little darlings wouldn’t lie!” But the Bible says they were sons of Belial (see Deuteronomy 13:13), and they knew not God (1 Samuel 2:12).

Imagine the scene on the mount of transfiguration: Moses and Elijah with Jesus, in glorified bodies, looking down at what was going on upon the earth. In Matthew 17:3, Peter, John, and James were there as witnesses.

Our loved ones who are already in heaven see everything they wish to look at (that God permits) through the crystal sea (Revelation 4:6; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Hebrews 12:1). They are more

alive than we are, because we are in bodies of death. They are more alive because they don't ever have to face physical death again. Just think of it! Our loved ones, who are finally in heaven never have to face death and never have to deal with sin ever again.

Contrast that with the people who are alive in hell, who will never have another chance. They pray, they plead, and they ask God to send someone to evangelize their family, but they know it is too late for them (Luke 16:27). Can you comprehend that?

Perfected Because of a Perfect Plan

We did not earn it, and we did not deserve it, but we are going to heaven. This is the plan of God. We rejoice in *all* things, knowing that the perfect plan of God allows many sad things to happen. It is a perfect plan because we end up perfected. What's more, once we are saved we become positionally perfect all during our lives.

That is why God's plan is perfect. It is not perfect because of what happens. It is perfect because of what God has done for us and because God works all things together for our eternal good. Pleasure is not the issue. Materialism is not the issue. The fact that we are Blood-bought

children of God and members of Jesus Christ's eternal family is the issue, along with the fact that nobody can take away from us what we have been given by God.

Chapter Two

CHOOSE WHICH SPIRIT YOU WILL SERVE

These are the most serious days for a pastor. More compromise goes on today than at any time in the history of the Christian church.

Some teach that there will be a great revival in the Last Days, but the Word of God teaches that there will be perilous times (2 Timothy 3). The Bible says in Matthew 24:12 that the love of many will wax cold. According to Luke 18, there will hardly be such a thing as faith when Christ comes back.

When Joel 2 speaks of the abundance that will come in the last days, it is speaking of the Holy Spirit who would be sent as recorded in the Book of Acts. At the end of the book of Revelation, when Jesus Christ comes to the Mount of Olivet, the Hebrew nation will see the nail scars in His hands, and then they will believe. They will mourn until the spirit spoken of in Joel

comes upon them like a flood in their mourning.

The Word of God says “walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16). We are to walk in the Holy Spirit, and that is so crucial.

The Spirit of God

The Holy Spirit is God’s spirit, revealed in the love of God and the grace of God. Zechariah 12:10 calls Him “the spirit of grace.” Galatians 4:6 speaks of the Spirit of the Son. Philippians 1:19 speaks of the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Romans 8:15 says we have received the Spirit of adoption. Romans 5:5 says that God’s love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:32 reveals the spirit of forgiveness, while Isaiah 11:2 and 3 refers to Him as the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, and of knowledge and reverence toward God. In Romans 1:4-5, when we received Christ, we received the spirit of holiness for obedience, and we have the same spirit of faith (2 Corinthians 4:13).

When we walk in the Holy Spirit, we are walking in God’s life. We have amazing protection, indescribable provision, unfathomable wisdom, perfect peace, and divine guidance, in Romans 8:14. Romans 8:2 tells us about the law

of the Spirit of life that overcomes the law of sin and death. John 10:10^b calls it an abundant life.

That is why I plead with you as a friend, ministering for the sake of edification and not for your destruction (2 Corinthians 10:8)—I plead with you to be confessed up-to-date and walk in the Spirit.

In Acts 2:4, all the Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit. Colossians 4:5 speaks of the spirit of wisdom. To have the spirit of holiness (Romans 1:4) means to be separated completely unto God through the Cross. In 1 John 3:16, it is the spirit of sacrificial love for one another to the extent that we would literally lay down our lives for one another.

In Matthew 14:14 and 15:32, there was a spirit of compassion. In 1 Timothy 5:22, God imparts the spirit of purity, “for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth” (Ephesians 5:9).

Paul said, “I have not only preached the Word unto you, but I have affectionately imparted my own life” (see 1 Thessalonians 2:8).

Satan's Spirit

Satan, on the other hand, also uses his spirits to influence mankind.

Satan tries to bring a spirit of heaviness into our lives (Isaiah 61:3*b*) so that the love of the Father is not abounding in our hearts.

According to Luke 13:11, Satan tries to bring a spirit of sickness to people. For eighteen years that woman was bent over with a terrible illness. She was a good woman; her life was clean. But she took on a spirit of sickness—and it wasn't from God. For eighteen years she lived with a physical sickness that did not come from God.

Satan gives some people the spirit of the world, which is revealed in the way they dress, the way they spend their money, and the pleasures that make them happy. It is the spirit of the world (1 Corinthians 2:12).

Second Chronicles 18:21-22 says that Satan brings in a spirit of lying. He entices people into a "group" spirit, so that they always stay in their own little social circle and show respect to some more than others.

Proverbs 13:20 says, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools [—people who don't think—] will be destroyed." That is true with so many young people.

In Job 13:9, regarding his relatives and his friends, Job said, "You hang around mockers, so

you have a mocking spirit toward me.” But in Job 26:4, he said, “You don’t know where that spirit is coming from.” Numbers 5:14 mentions a spirit of jealousy.

Identify Personality Traits

These spirits are personalities. Their method equals one person taking over another person. These spirits are demons (Matthew 17), and they take on people from the day they are born. Often, nobody detects it, and therefore it is never dealt with.

In 1 Kings 21:25, Ahab took on the spirit of Jezebel. He took on the spirit of his influential, powerful, wicked wife—and he was a king!

In Genesis 12:10-13, Abraham told Sarah to lie to King Abimelech, and she lied. First he lied, and then she took on the spirit of her husband. Genesis 20:2 says the same thing about Abraham lying again. But in Genesis 26:7, Isaac took on the spirit of his father, Abraham. He lied to King Abimelech’s men and said that his wife was his sister.

As in the illustration of Eli the priest, parents often take on the spirit of their rebellious children. As with King Ahab and Jezebel, a husband may take on the spirit of an influential wife. As

with Abraham and Sarah or Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10), a wife may take on the spirit of her husband when he is wrong. As with David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:2-4), a woman will take on the spirit of a man she is attracted to and sin with him. She takes on an unclean spirit. That spirit is Satan.

I swear to you in tears, I plead with you to pay attention to what God is saying: That spirit is of Satan. And how did Jesus deal with that spirit when it was presented to Him through one of His disciples? He rebuked it, saying, “Get thee behind me, Satan” (Matthew 16:23).

Members of a family may begin to take on spirits that destroy the family unit in their relationship to God.

Do Not Compromise Godly Convictions

A church will take on the spirit of their pastor when he doesn't preach the whole counsel of God, when he is legalistic, when he doesn't give invitations at the end of the service—just so he can draw large crowds.

Instead of taking on the spirit of listening to the Word and living by every Word of God through Christ, emotional people take on the spirit of emotionalism.

Hosea chapter 4 shows how some people take on the spirit of whoredoms.

As a pastor, I must tell the truth. I learned a long time ago that the fear of a man is a snare (Proverbs 29:25). Therefore, I cannot compromise the truth to avoid offending some people in the church.

Then there are people that take on the spirit of God's love (John 15:12) and the spirit of God's righteousness through the Word of God (2 Peter 1:4). They take on the spirit of integrity (Psalm 26:11), the spirit of joy (John 15:11), the spirit of honor (1 Timothy 5:17; Romans 12:10), and a spirit of power with God and with men (Acts 1:8).

Chapter Three

CAST DOWN PROJECTIONS, STAND FAST IN FAITH

Satan's full-time work is to send projections. He projects according to people's wants and needs. He projects according to people's training. He projects according to people's failure and tries to convince them that they can't be delivered.

Satan is always trying to make people take on his projections. Women will swear before God that they are right in their subjectivity. Men will become guilty and unnecessarily be ashamed of projections that they don't have to be ashamed of—unless they start entertaining them and fulfilling them.

A domineering husband will be used to send projections to the wife. When their parents give them standards, children will send projections that they are being mistreated and that they do not have the liberty to live a normal life.

We must not take on the spirits that Satan projects. Thank God that we do not need to receive projections. I will not be defeated today, because I refuse to accept the spirit of defeat.

There was a beautiful lady named Abigail, in 1 Samuel 25. David wanted to kill her husband, Nabal, who denied David and his men provisions and was terribly ungracious. But Abigail said, "Let God deal with him." (See 1 Samuel 25:25-26.) In the end, David was deeply blessed because he took Abigail's advice, and he took on her spirit of wisdom.

In Numbers 14:24, Caleb had "another spirit with him"—a spirit which was of God, which two and a half million of the nation of Israel did not have. They received projections of defeat.

In Deuteronomy 34:9, Joshua was "full of the spirit of wisdom," and like Caleb, he stood firm on the promises of God (Joshua 1:3-6).

In Acts 6:5, Stephen was full of faith and wisdom and power because he made a decision to live in God's Spirit.

The Spirit of the Age

There is a spirit of the age that works in children of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2). It starts in very slowly. It begins by just giving in a little,

and then giving in a little more, until finally you justify your behavior. Reaction is followed by stubbornness, and then rebellion. Ephesians 4:27 says, "Neither give place to the devil." When Satan has a place in the life of a person who refuses to get right, then God may take him home early, even though he is born again (1 John 5:16).

The disciples had already seen Jesus Christ twice in His post-Resurrection revelation, so they knew that everything they believed about Him was true.

But Peter had taken on the spirit of shame. He took on the spirit of guilt because he denied knowing the Lord, and he couldn't accept the spirit of forgiveness. So at the Sea of Tiberias, along with several other disciples, Peter said, "I'm going fishing" (see John 21:3).

In Luke 5:5-10, Peter was told never to go fishing again, except to go fishing for men. Still, he said, "I'm going fishing," and every man that was with him took on Peter's spirit. They all got into the boat, and they all disobeyed God, including John, who referred to himself several times as the one whom Jesus loved.

Earlier, John had said to Jesus about some other people who were preaching, "Those people are not with us, and I forbade them to use

Jesus' name in casting out demons" (Luke 9:49).

But Jesus said, "They are not against us, so leave them alone."

Redemption's Story

In Luke 9:54, John made another impulsive statement when he and James wanted to call fire down from heaven. They had taken on the spirit of Satan to destroy lives, but Jesus said, "I didn't come to destroy lives, but to save lives."

The most beautiful thing about that story is found in Luke 9:56: "*And they went to another village.*" Those disciples went soul winning again! Instead of destroying lives as John and James wanted to do, they went to the next village to proclaim the Good News.

The fruit of the Spirit is revealed in faith obedience. It is in becoming a living manifestation of the Word of God through our lives (2 Corinthians 3:2, 3).

The fruit of the Spirit is manifested when we can say, "Here I am, God. I may not be able to give You a lot, but I'm giving You everything I can, and I love You with all of my heart. If I fail, I love You just as much, and I know that Your love never changes. I hate everything about my sin when I do fail."

You see, in Acts 4:31, 32 and Acts 2:1 the disciples were in one place, with one accord, one soul, one heart, one spirit. They had no division, no mocking spirit, no criticism. God's Spirit was moving among them.

And in Acts 17:6, they turned the world upside down—the wicked, careless, slothful, evil world. These men that were called ignorant and unlearned (Acts 4:13) along with a few godly women turned the world upside down *while* they were being persecuted, placed in jail, hated, and lied about. They turned the world upside down.

Peter would die for the faith. The apostle Paul would die for the faith. James and Thomas would die for the faith. They lived for God and died for God, and each of them went to heaven with the martyr's crown.

They had a single eye and their whole body became filled with the light (Matthew 6:22). They hated worldliness. They hated the things that were in the world (1 John 2:15). The love of God the Father was inside their hearts, moving, motivating, ministering, leading, guiding, and living through them. And that is exactly what God wants from His children.

CONCLUSION

The apostle Paul said, “Some preach a Jesus that we have not preached. They have received a spirit that we haven’t received. They accept a gospel that we have not accepted” (see 2 Corinthians 11:4). Another Jesus, another spirit, and another gospel.

Some people are so preoccupied with who they are on earth, they don’t know what it is like to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We need to live knowing that any one of us could be called to meet God at any moment—and no one is excluded from that possibility.

Romans 8:15 talks about the spirit of bondage, but Galatians 5:1 talks about the spirit of liberty. And when the Wicked—the antichrist—is revealed, the Lord will consume him with the spirit of His mouth (see 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

Psalms 107:20 and Jeremiah 17:14 speak about the spirit of healing. Romans 12:1-2 speaks of the spirit of renewal and the importance of

being conformed to Christ and not to this world.

In 1 Peter 4:14, we are given the spirit of glory so we can live completely in the Finished Work, practically speaking, using rebound when we fail. And in 1 Corinthians 4:21, Galatians 6:1, He has given us the spirit of meekness.

In Psalm 22:3, God inhabits the praises of His people, and He has given us the garment of praise instead of the spirit of heaviness (Isaiah 61:3).

That is what God desires for all of us, not just for pastors and leaders. Not one of us is any better than another, and God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

Heavenly Father, have Your way in our lives. Let us know what spirit we really are of. We come as sinners, growing, who desire to grow with You and to watch You do great things in our lives. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.