

Taking Care of Your Soul

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 messages 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 © 1997

Cover Photo: © 1996 SoftKey International Inc. and its licensors

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	5
---------------------------	---

<i>Chapter 1</i>	7
------------------------	---

THE PROBLEM OF OVERDEVELOPMENT

<i>Chapter 2</i>	13
------------------------	----

FUNCTIONING IN GOD'S THOUGHTS

<i>Chapter 3</i>	17
------------------------	----

FUNCTIONING IN GOD'S LIFE

<i>Chapter 4</i>	20
------------------------	----

REFLECTING GOD'S GLORY

<i>CONCLUSION</i>	23
-------------------------	----

INTRODUCTION

So many people are consumed with what they consume, without understanding the effects of imbalance. In America, for example, we are bombarded with information regarding proper nutrition. Some individuals accept canned statements from the “experts,” follow certain diets, and, often, end up with strange illnesses. And why? They received dangerously unbalanced information without a premise: They did not understand God’s design for growth, development, and nurture of the human body.

In this booklet, we will examine the importance of having God’s balance in our lives. Instead of suffering the effects of wrong choices that have plagued mankind since the Fall, we can properly appropriate the whole counsel of God. Then, looking into the mirror of the Word, we can receive reflections of precise light as we are changed from glory to glory.

Chapter One

THE PROBLEM OF OVERDEVELOPMENT

“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7).

God breathed into man the breath of life, and *man became a living soul*—this is extremely important. The reality of all divine intelligence is based on the origin of all destinations. The origin of something always determines the line of development and, ultimately, its destination.

Without exception, any situation that develops in a way that is not pleasing to God, had the wrong origin. This is the reason the Bible says a Christian is never to marry a non-Christian: The origin of a relationship determines both the line of its development and the destination of the marriage.

The origin, or source, of our thoughts and

emotions always determines the lines to their ultimate destination. So, God breathed into Adam the breath of life—the human spirit (Job 33:4; 32:8)—and man *became* a living soul. Although he had a living soul, man was never designed to live in his soul. But after the Fall, man went from *being* a living soul to living *in* his soul. Now, natural energy would come from his soul instead of supernatural power from a divine origin.

Uncontrolled Soul Growth

The moment Adam and Eve partook of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, they entered into the process of having overdeveloped souls. Their souls became overdeveloped through knowledge. No longer did they simply *have* living souls, but they had soul-life; they were living in their souls. The breath of God no longer had dominion to control the life of man.

God had intended that the human spirit, with its origin in God's Holy Spirit, would be the source for what man became in his life. But now, Adam had a soul that was developing too rapidly. In reality, this overdevelopment of the soul was uncontrolled, untimely development.

I may go to an Ivy League college—which

certainly isn't wrong—and get brainwashed with atheism, Darwinism, gnosticism, or the many emanations of knowledge that are the premise for all intellectual development. I thank God for education. But the problem is that though my soul may be developing very rapidly, it's an uncontrolled development.

Imagine if I were to wake up some morning and say to my wife, "We've got to talk." She says, "Yes?" Then I tell her, "I've never dared to be honest with you, but I don't love you." What's happening? My soul has had an untimely development outside of the perceptive capacity and comprehension of my human spirit.

Suddenly, I realize that when the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge entered my perceptive lobe, I began to enter into reasoning powers outside of God. Let me say that again: When I partook of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, I began to develop reasoning power independent of God in my overdeveloped soul, uncontrolled in its development.

When Eve saw that the Tree of Knowledge was pleasant to her eyes, her emotions began to be controlled by something from the external realm. From that point on, women have had a

tendency to become emotional, allowing something from the outside—from another source—to control their response to reality. “Pleasant to the eyes,” “good for food” (Genesis 3:6). The mind now reasons outside of God, and the emotions now emote from the outside with life’s circumstances.

God never said through His Holy Spirit, “I want you to search yourself.” In Psalm 139:23-24, the Psalmist said to God, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” David was saying, “I’ll never search myself—I’m not supposed to. But *You* search me. If I search myself, I’ll only end up living in denial and confusion, with a reasoning process outside of God.”

Conversion of the Subjective Mind

If doctrine does not bring us into the totality of the divine life of Jesus Christ, then it is of no value. Many Christians have stagnated with the Word of God; their lives have become stationary. They may feel proud that they know the Word, but they do not understand the Word of God. To understand it is to appropriate it in the realm of divine reasoning.

Often, the independent power of free volition will usurp authority over doctrine. Light will always permeate any place it is allowed to enter, but it will not invade any area where it is not given an entrance. The entrance of God's Word brings in light and understanding to those who otherwise have a low degree of divine perception (Psalm 119:130).

According to Psalm 36:9, in God's objective light, the believer receives subjective light. This means that when I let objective light in, the Holy Spirit brings in subjective light. In other words, He adds subjective light to the objective light I've received from the Word of God.

When this takes place, the subjective mind is cleansed and purged, washed from the effects of opinions and the evaluation of human reasoning. If a woman says, "My husband is a monster; all he wants is sex," she has human reasoning without spiritual understanding. She has a subjective distortion of her husband while she has an objective understanding of how he should behave. This creates a conflict. Half of her soul—her subjective mind—is not converted.

If a man goes into business working in sales, does well for a season, and then business cools off, his confession may be, "Well, it's just the

time of year.” Yet, any godly man who understands the origin of peace, power, and wisdom can always live in its effect: *success*. But this one reasons with his overdeveloped soul, which has given him a crutch to be ineffective in selling. “I was doing well last August,” says the businessman, “but I’m not doing well in January.” That statement is the product of human reasoning without faith.

When I choose instead to reason *inside* the Word of Life, God will fully develop my soul in the life of His Son. When my life has its origin in the human spirit, instead of originating in the soul, it quickens the operation of my human soul. At last, I can experience the effects of God’s life in my human body.

Chapter Two

FUNCTIONING IN
GOD'S THOUGHTS

Everything in the soul-life has to be checked, evaluated, and handed over to death. As this happens, the spirit-life keeps rising, increasing, and we now have a controlled life. God uses His light and truth to lead us into precise thinking with Him. The believer has now entered into *purity*—the human spirit controlling the capacity of the human soul. *Impurity*, however, is a mixture of the soul and the spirit fighting for control. The result is confusion, double-mindedness, and a divided heart.

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not evil, to give you an expected end” (Jeremiah 29:11). God’s thoughts toward me are always peaceful. That’s objective truth. But if I am impure, my subjective mind will never accept the light of Jeremiah 29:11. The details of life become

a hindrance to the conversion of my whole man.

Wives who cannot get along with their husbands have not had their souls developed in the spiritual realm. God doesn't expect them to wait until the Rapture to have it happen. Nevertheless, they reason it out in their souls.

Though many people have legitimate sicknesses, others are hypochondriacs. A hypochondriac has a soul that is undeveloped in Christ. They acknowledge, confess, and submit to every single pain, every abstract projection, and every penetrating signal from the air. They are instruments of demonic communication. You can talk to them for hours, yet they remain undeveloped, because their subconscious mind never gets converted in the objective light of healing.

If I have something wrong with me, I shake it off. If I *still* have it, I shake it off, get up with joy, clown around with people, exchange love, and preach the Word. Then I think to myself, "Boy, that was gone quickly!"

The Lord Jesus Christ wasn't lying when He said to us, "I found you guilty and decided to condemn you. I decided to crucify your flesh, and I decided to bury it. I did it, historically. Now, this truth is available experientially. It's retroactive. It's an absolute truth given to you in

the authenticity of My love, in the supreme, gracious provision of mercy, through the steadfast application of faith. I know My thoughts toward you, thoughts of peace, *not* of evil.”

Knowing that this is God’s objective promise to us, we must seek it on the basis that He only thinks peace toward us, no matter where we’re at. This objective promise gives us the provision of supernatural energy to seek it.

Supernatural Energy, Supernatural Gifts

People have natural energy and natural gifts. But beyond that, we have supernatural energy and supernatural gifts. More than one person has come into the ministry with their natural gifts, but they didn’t last long. They may come into the sales force of a Christian company, but their natural gifts don’t take them very far. Many professional people are gutless when it comes to deriving their life through wisdom from above. It takes a supernatural operation of discipline in order to make an impact on the economy of the Christian community.

Businessmen—though they may not be emotional—are often moody when it comes to understanding success. They must realize that a successful person lives in the reality of faith and

the discipline of grace. They are mobilized by the conviction that, if you sow, you will reap. A real salesman, for example, has very few “down times,” because he learns to overcome through supreme wisdom from God. If he can’t pray and get victory in sales, why would he ever want to go on the mission field? It isn’t that God decided not to bless the salesman—the salesman decided to goof off.

God’s thoughts are thoughts of peace. He doesn’t bless us for nothing, but He says, “Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord” (Jeremiah 29:13-14a). This means we will find Him in every detail, and in every need of our lives.

Chapter Three

FUNCTIONING IN GOD'S LIFE

When God's life controls the human soul, the believer enters into divine pleasure. Psalm 16:11 says there are pleasures forevermore at God's right hand. We were created for His pleasure (Revelation 4:11). Knowing this, we begin to understand that God gives Christians pleasure in living. Whether it is in working or in making telephone calls, we can have fun; our joy can remain.

The human spirit brings God's knowledge into the intellect, so the soul can derive its power from the kingdom of Christ. Then, the free volition has plenty of information to make right decisions and the conscience functions with Jesus Christ's norms and standards of grace. The self-conscious part of the soul begins to focus on the throne ministry of the indwelling Christ. The believer who lives like this discovers that his old sin nature—now in a dormant state—no longer

causes schizophrenia or psychosomatic diseases.

“I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23*b*). This is God’s order: first the human spirit, then the soul, then the body. God says, “I have an order, and I will never reverse it. Man has reversed it, but I will not. My order is the Holy Spirit breathing into man the breath of life—the human spirit—making him a living soul.”

But, man left the resources of the human spirit to live in his soul. Now, it is no longer a “living” soul; the believer has given place to all kinds of problems where he will emote over his circumstances by overthinking outside of truth. This is a tough way to go. A person with an overdeveloped soul can no longer think with God. Sure, there are times that he thinks with God, but this believer has an impurity—a mixture—in his soul.

Having God’s Order

When the Holy Spirit begins to fill my soul through my human spirit, then I enter into God’s order. When I understand how channel A (the perceptive lobe), channel B (the human spirit), and channel C (the human soul) operate,

then my spirit, soul, and body will function in God's order.¹ Now, when I pray, I expect God to hear, even if I don't have feelings. I no longer emote in reaction to what is happening in my life. I don't live in my emotions, but I live in the Spirit, rising up to control my capacity for self-essence.

When the spirit, soul, and body function in the order of Creation, followed by the flow of the derived life of redemption and restoration, then we can redeem the time. Our times truly are in God's hands.

Out of God's Order

I may pray, "Oh God, heal me. Jesus, please heal me," but if that prayer is from my soul, and if I regard iniquity in one area of my life, then God does not hear my prayer (Psalm 66:18). It's an abomination to Him (Proverbs 28:9).

I may be the most sincere person in my human soul. My life may be beyond outward reproach, but the deep is not calling to the deep (Psalm 42:7). Objective light does not become subjective substance.

1. Refer to *The Hearing Heart* for more information on this subject (Grace Publications, 1996).

Chapter Four

REFLECTING GOD'S GLORY

As a pastor, I desire that my congregation discern what is going on in the kingdoms (of darkness and of light) on both a local and national level. If you see that there are thousands of cases of the flu, you know *that* is not of God. So, rather than becoming passive and just receiving what thousands are receiving, discern what caused it.

Now, for example, if you're a man, maybe you went outside in January only wearing your undershirt and caught the flu. Your flu certainly isn't of the devil; it was caused by a stupid mistake! But when we function in divine order—spirit, soul, and body—then the gates of hell cannot prevail against us. If people around me are having thoughts of adultery, I don't get infected with those thoughts, because I am living in an order where they can't get in.

Wherever light can get in, it will come in.

Wherever darkness can enter, it will. Light always overcomes darkness, but darkness can also overcome light. If I turn the lights off, the darkness replaces the light. But when I turn the switch, the lights come back on, taking the place of the darkness.

Where the Spirit of the Lord Is

The soul of Adam always wants to usurp authority over the human spirit, which derives life from God. You may confess, “I’ve had a rough month.” Well, you weren’t made to simply emote nor to reason over the circumstances of your life. You were made to receive substance from the Word of God and live in reflected glory: “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:17b-18).

As we look into the mirror of God’s Word, we receive reflections of precise light and we are changed into God’s image from glory to glory. Here, *glory* means the substance of God’s divine nature being reflected through our humanity. It means that we reflect the precise attribute of God’s nature that is needed for the moment. As

God's divinity begins to control our humanity, our humanity becomes an instrument for God's divinity. Together with God, you cooperate in the essence of your soul, realizing that you still have an individual soul, but now your individuality is covered by God's divine life.

CONCLUSION

“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Galatians 5:24). They that have Christ *have crucified the flesh!* and the affections and lusts thereof.

“This is interesting, Lord. Do you mean that the affections that I should not have, have been crucified too? Is that absolutely true, God?”

“That’s exactly right. I wouldn’t lie to you, would I?”

“My lusts have been crucified. If my spirit, soul, and body function in the order of my creative design through redemptive rehabilitation, then my lusts are gone—forever!”

If this is absolutely true—and it is—then why can’t more people experience it? Because, they live in the historical reality of faith without an experiential relationship to Christ. What a statement!—the theological, historical reality of dogmatic faith without the experiential relevant relationship of fellowshiping with His life.

Conclusion? They have objective life with no subjective conversion.

A person may say, “I’ve been wounded for *so* long, it’s going to take me a long time to be healed.” You bet it will—It may take forever. But, it doesn’t have to, because *nothing* is impossible with God.