

*Guarding the Things
That Are Sacred*

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace World Outreach 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 © 2002

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 5

Chapter 1 6

THE PROCESS OF LEARNING: A LOST ART

Chapter 2 12

THE HONOR CODE OF HEAVEN

Chapter 3 18

THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION

CONCLUSION 23

INTRODUCTION

So often we treat the things that are sacred as very common because we become familiar. When we do not discern the subtlety of Satan's influence, familiarity is an easy trap to fall into. His demons work to promote the "common" and discredit the sacred.

As this booklet reveals, seeing sacred things as God sees them is something that only the Holy Spirit can reveal as we humble ourselves and become disciples—"learners"—through the Word of God.

Chapter One
**THE PROCESS OF LEARNING:
A LOST ART**

“And when [Jesus] was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, in-somuch that they were astonished, and said Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter’s son?...

“And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house.

“And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief” (Matthew 13:54-58).

“And our adversaries said, They shalt not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease” (Nehemiah 4:11).

“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Corinthians 2:11): Know your enemy.

“And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt

“speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust” (Isaiah 29:4).

Ignorance of demons is one of the great problems in Christianity today. Just as ignorance of disease has caused many to lose their lives unnecessarily, many people suffer with spiritual infections because they are ignorant of demonic activity.

The Bible tells us that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness in this world’s system (Ephesians 6:12). Yet, few believers understand the specifics of what demons do. Though the Bible offers detailed instructions on waging spiritual warfare and specific knowledge of enemy strategies, many Christians are ignorant of the devil’s devices. In Revelation 12:10-11, the devil was defeated by the specific application of the Word of God.

Many have a general understanding of a premise in the Bible, but few Christians know how to derive the proper presuppositions, intense amplifications, and then specific application of the conclusions found in the Word of God.

We are instructed in Isaiah 28:9-10 to study the Scriptures “line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.” Many believers hear general premises from the Word of God preached from the pulpit. Yet many never go on to understand precise presuppositions because of a lack of study. They leave out learning the intense amplification of a presupposition that brings a practical application of a precise conclusion.

Understanding the Process

When examining a subject, we first look at the *premise*: a proposition supporting or helping to support a conclusion. Next, we consider the *presuppositions*: conditional elements of the premise, such as a preceding event, condition, or cause. This is followed by intense *amplification* of the presuppositions: a broader and deeper understanding of the subject through correlation of information (“line upon line”), which leads to a *conclusion*: a reasoned judgment based on the information gathered. Finally, the subject is ready for *application* based upon the precise conclusion.

Therefore, if salvation of a sinner according to John 3:16 is the subject, and forgiveness

through the shed blood of Jesus Christ is the premise, grace is a presupposition for forgiveness. We find through amplification (by a careful exegesis of the Scriptures) that grace is a multifaceted, undeserved gift, given to cover the multiplication of sins. If we agree, then we must not just acknowledge the subject of salvation as a fact. We must appropriate it personally and extend it to others, since we must conclude that salvation by the Blood is a free gift to any who will receive it.

This is the basic process of learning, of which so many teachers have lost sight. They have lost the process and art of teaching proper educational principles that are meant to give people insight through observation, perception, understanding, and application. This process is so relevant for anyone to be successful and effective in life.

Understanding God's Order

Demons are constantly working to make our minds wander and miss out on the great process of receiving truth. These forces of Satan do everything in their power to get a Christian to take what is sacred and treat it as common.

Consider King Uzziah as an illustration. For

fifty-two years, he was one of the most magnificent kings, “till he was strong” (2 Chronicles 26:15). Then this king took it upon himself to take up the censer with its incense and offer it to the Lord, which only the priests, the sons of Aaron, were commissioned to do. When confronted by Azariah, the high priest, the king became angry. His heart was lifted up with pride to his own destruction (2 Chronicles 26:16).

For fifty-one years, Uzziah served God magnificently. But then he committed this very serious sin. He was not to do something that only certain people were sanctified to do. While Uzziah grew angry against the priests, leprosy broke out upon his head, and he was rushed out of the temple. He had to be removed to the house of the lepers where he lived in loneliness, separated from the temple and from those he had ruled for years and years. After he died, he was buried in a field and not in the place of the kings. What was Uzziah’s offense? He had taken the sacred and treated it as something common. King Uzziah had become familiar with the things of God.

We treat the sacred as common when we listen carelessly to a message from the pulpit. The Bible has plenty to say about this. We are to lis-

ten to every word with the attention of a ready servant. They are words of life sent by God to prepare us for the next step. But when we take the sacred and make it common, the Holy Spirit is grieved, the flesh comes in, and the consequences can be devastating.

Chapter Two

THE HONOR CODE OF HEAVEN

Jesus came into Nazareth, His home town, and He taught in the synagogue there. But the people didn't respond. They couldn't understand how He had this wisdom. "Is this not Mary's son?" they said. "We know his brothers, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. Who does he think he is?"

They were offended by Jesus, which prompted Him to declare, "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country" (Matthew 13:54-57).

Given the response in Nazareth, it should be easy to understand how so many Christians constantly take what is sacred and turn it into something common. Church attendance ought to be a time to be built up and instructed in the Word as we take our place in the Body of Christ. Yet for many it has become a social and religious activity, with little eternal impact.

The Herd Mentality: Satan's Tool

"But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

"The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

"Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.

"And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.

"Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matthew 27:20-25).

On crucifixion day, the chief priests and elders persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas to be released and for Jesus to be crucified and destroyed. No doubt, demons played a big role in manipulating and controlling the masses gath-

ered there before Pontius Pilate.

What happened after they succeeded in persuading the governor? The chief priests and elders went and watched Jesus die on the Cross. Someone extremely sacred was treated as common as they put nails through His hands and feet and spat upon Him. They disregarded all the glorious things that they had seen and heard from Him and rendered them as common.

The First Offender

Lucifer taught doctrine in heaven and led music for the angels, but iniquity was found in his heart (Isaiah 14:11; Ezekiel 28:12-15). He wanted to become like God; he would not respect the honor code of heaven. Lucifer turned the sacred into something common, and he was cast down to earth as Satan, the devil, the father of lies.

“And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

“And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?” (Genesis 3:8-9).

God used to come and teach Adam and Eve

in the cool of the day. After their fall, He came to meet them at the regular place and called out, "Where art thou?" They were trying to hide from the Lord; they had taken the sacred and made it common.

The world didn't recognize its Creator (John 1:10). His own people did not receive Him (John 1:11). His brothers and sisters didn't believe on Him until after His resurrection (John 7:5). His disciples forsook Him (Matthew 26:56). Later, they went back to fishing after He had told them not to, even after they had twice seen Him in His resurrection power (John 21). All of this is taking the sacred and treating it as something common.

The Premise for Relationships

Marriage is one area that is very sacred but often is treated as common. Marriage makes two people one flesh, one heart, one soul, and one mind. This oneness comes through the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, the Cross of Calvary, and the Finished Work. In a marriage, each party must understand that we are all sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all. He perfects forever those who are sanctified by that one sacred offering (He-

brews 10:14).

This verse is the premise that brings in a conclusion of every provision possible for us because of intense amplification of the presupposition of what happens when we come to God just as we are, in all of our bankruptcy.

No matter what we have done, no matter what we are, no matter what has happened to us, we can come and receive the treasure of Jesus into the empty vessel of our souls.

When a man comes to Jesus Christ, he enters into the precise, absolute, tactical, practical application of the reality of Christ's initiation. Instantly, he can experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the filling of the Word of God. Then this fullness can flow over into all the other areas of life, like marriage for example.

The Role of Authority

So many take the sacred and turn it into something common by going against bonafide authority. The boss in a business is the boss. The teachers are the authority in the classrooms. The father and mother are the heads of the family. The president of a country has special leadership over the congress and his cabinet.

A pastor is given a level of authority in the

congregation. He never invades people's privacy, but he is given the right to represent God in the pulpit. He is authorized to do so with the authenticity of a divine premise with its presuppositions and intense amplification in the expression of the amazing application of the reality of relevance in the sequences of life's needs.

Chapter Three

THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Romans 4:5).

Jesus Christ takes the common and makes it sacred. This is what happened when we got saved. We were very common, yet Jesus took us in before we even changed. He made us accepted in the beloved (Ephesians 1:6)

Every believer in the Body of Christ is sacred; every believer is precious; every believer is loved equally by God who is love (1 John 4:8, 16). Every believer is under grace; every believer is sanctified—set apart for God’s purpose—through the Blood of Jesus, once and for all.

A Jewish man from New York City became a Christian and returned to his native Germany while the Holocaust was going on. He willfully left America, knowing he was likely to be killed, and went to Germany. He gave the Gospel to as

many people as he could before dying in the gas chambers with his people. Because he guarded the truth of God's Word as sacred, God used him to bring light in the darkness.

God Does Great Things

Let me tell you of a young man from Rome, New York. His parents were not Christians. In the early 1970s, he got saved and became hungry to know more about God. Somehow, he found out about our Bible college and came, totally on fire for God. Late at night when he thought nobody knew it, he was sometimes seen praying outside, on his knees, even in the snow with the winter wind blowing. He eventually married a beautiful lady. They became a tremendous couple and have raised a great family. He has gone on to be one of Europe's most successful missionaries, planting churches from Finland to Hungary and deep into the former Soviet Union. His name is Pastor Thomas Schaller.

Another young man from Springfield, Massachusetts, heard our radio broadcast after he was saved. Though he faced many trials that were designed to take him out of God's plan, that didn't stop this young man from responding to God's call and going to Africa. Today, be-

cause he guarded the call of God as sacred, we can identify eight thousand Christians in many churches, in many countries across the continent of Africa, who are Finished Work believers. He and his beautiful wife have made an unbelievable impact—and all because one man chose to follow the call of God. His name is Pastor Steven Scibelli.

Trials and persecutions cannot stop those who are doing God's work, God's way, based upon God's premises, God's presuppositions, and God's intense amplifications. God's precise absolute wisdom brings a divine conclusion as His original glory produces His image in His body of believers, to do His work and to show His very life. This is taking the common and turning it into the sacred.

Honor in the Body of Christ

One of the great codes established in the Body of Christ is honor. I know teenagers who display such amazing manners and politeness with dignity. The honor they show their leaders, as well as their peers, is touching. They already understand the honor code in the Body of Christ.

As Christians, we are to honor delegated authority wherever it exists (1 Timothy 2:1-3). We

honor one another (1 Peter 2:17). We put great esteem, special value, high honor, and sacred appreciation on the Word of God as we hunger after it (Job 23:12).

To honor is to place a high value upon another person, considering him as very special because he is God's creation. It is to show respect for God's redemption and God's life, having oneness because of the love of God. The result is to have amazing honor for all men—saved or unsaved.

“Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed” (1 Samuel 2:30).

“Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase” (Proverbs 3:9).

Jesus said, “Do not withhold from Me the honor that is due to Me, and do not withhold from others what is due to them. And, if you withhold kindness and love and forgiveness, you dishonor God and dishonor the honor code of grace and mercy.”

We have honor for the unsaved, honor for

our families, honor for our bosses, honor for everyone placed in positions of authority, though not at the expense of obedience to the Truth (Acts 5:29). We reveal great esteem according to the instructions of Philippians 2:3: "Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

By practicing God's honor code, we take what is common and make it sacred. We become true disciples, learning God's ways, hungering after His righteousness, yet remaining perfectly satisfied with the fullness of the life we have in Christ.

CONCLUSION

Recently, a number of high school and college students participated in a great time of evangelism throughout our city. They took what other people would call common—their free time—and turned it into something sacred. They honored Jesus' Great Commission to seek and to save the lost.

When we honor God, He gives us absolute peace (Psalm 29:11). According to the original Hebrew text, this peace is a peace that stands strong even in the midst of raging storms—physical, mental or spiritual. This peace means that God is in control of your life, even when you are under the deepest pressures of life.

That peace can be ours when we keep sacred the things that God considers sacred and allow the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to protect, provide, and bless us. The Lord gives peace and wisdom to help us live in the divine premises and presuppositions that produce the

ultimate conclusion of going forward and reaching our goals and purposes in Christ.