

Spiritual Origin of Character

Human Spirit and Human Character

- Basic character
 - Num 14:24, “But because my servant Caleb has a different **spirit** and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.”
 - Ps 78:8, “They would not be like their forefathers — a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose **spirits** were not faithful to him.”
 - Pr 11:13 (ESV), “Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in **spirit** keeps a thing covered.”
 - Pr 14:29, “A patient man has great understanding, but a **quick-tempered** man displays folly.”
 - “quick-tempered”; Heb literally: “short spirit”
 - Pr 16:18, “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty **spirit** before a fall.”
 - Ps 32:2, “Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose **spirit** is no deceit.”
 - Isa 65:14, “My servants will sing out of the joy of their hearts, but you will cry out from anguish of heart and wail in brokenness of **spirit**.”
 - Isa 66:2, “This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in **spirit**, and trembles at my word.”
 - Mt 5:3, “Blessed are the poor in **spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
 - Lk 1:17, “And he will go on before the Lord, in the **spirit** and power of Elijah.”
- Aptitudes
 - 1 Co 12:1, “Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.”
 - “spiritual gifts” (Gk, *pneumatica*)(adj.): spiritual
 - 1 Co 12:4, “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same **Spirit**.”
 - “gifts” (Gk, *charisma*): (1) free or gracious gift (undeserved); (2) a spiritual endowment or enablement
 - related to *charis*, grace; so we might describe *charisma* as “grace-gift”
 - 29 documented aptitudes: Administration, Apostleship, Celibacy, Craftsmanship, Deliverance, Discernment, Encouragement, Evangelism, Faith, Fine Arts, Generosity, Healing, Helping, Hospitality, Intercession, Interpreting of Tongues, Leadership, Mercy-Giver, Miracle-Worker, Missionary, Pastoral Care, Prophetic Insight, Self-Sacrifice, Serving, Speaking in Tongues, Teaching, Voluntary Poverty, Word of Knowledge, Word of Wisdom

- Conclusion: Our aptitudes (*charisma*, spiritual gifts, enablements) are major features of our character and originate in our spirits; i.e., character is a feature of our human spirits.
- Traits
 - Gal 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the [**spirit**] is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”
 - vs 19 makes a general reference to “the flesh”; obviously meaning human flesh
 - vs 22 makes a general reference to “the spirit”; context is still humanity
 - Two possibilities
 - These are God’s qualities that become ours as the Holy Spirit develops them in us and we become like Christ.
 - OR, Because God gives everyone what they need to be effective in life, regardless of their spiritual condition, we might argue that we already have these traits but they’re affected by our spiritual rebirth.
 - These qualities are fruit (product, expression, result) of our spirit
 - God’s traits we can have, A to Z (incomplete): agape, anger, authority, brotherly kindness, commitment, compassion, confidence, contentment, courage, creativity, emotion, endurance, excellence, fairness, faith, forgiveness, free will, gentleness, goodness, grace, honesty, honor, humility, humor, imagination, joy, justice, kindness, knowledge, meekness, mercy, oddness, patience, peace, perseverance, purity, rationality, satisfaction, self-control, sincerity, trustworthiness, understanding, virtue, wisdom, zeal
 - Conclusion: There’s strong evidence that our character traits, like our aptitudes, also are qualities or expressions of our spirits.
- Personality vs. character
 - Our spirits are stable, generally experience only small or slow changes
 - In contrast, our psyches are very dynamic, change easily and quickly
 - Our character — our fundamental, true selves — includes the spiritual qualities we’ve seen in scripture: grace-gifts, fruit of the spirit
 - I use “personality” to represent our dynamic outward expression
 - Conclusion: Our character is a function of our spirits and remains consistent with time. Our personality usually expresses our character, but can be very dynamic.

The Effects of Salvation

- In the Creation account, how many times did God create something out of nothing? (Hebrew word *bara*)
 - What did the first creation out of nothing produce?
 - What did the second creation out of nothing produce?
 - What did the third creation out of nothing produce?
- Gen 2:15-17, “¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.’”
 - What would happen if they ate the forbidden fruit?
- Gen 5:3-5, “³ When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth. ⁴ After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. ⁵ Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.”
 - Can we assume that aging is a part of sin’s curse?
 - Gen 1:14, “And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years.’”
 - How long did Adam and Eve live in the Garden of Eden before they sinned?
 - How “old” was Adam when he sinned?
 - God told Adam in Genesis 2 he would die when he ate the forbidden fruit, not 930 years later.
 - How can we explain this apparent discrepancy?
 - Mt 8:22, “But Jesus told him, ‘Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.’”
 - What did he mean by that?
 - Eph 2:1-2, “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air.”
 - Were you alive as a sinner? How could you be considered alive but dead?
 - Col 2:13-14 (ESV), “¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”
 - Does that mean a sinner’s human spirit is non-existent or non-functional? Explain.
 - The human spirit is very functional regardless of the person’s spiritual condition.
 - Does a person have to be saved for their aptitudes or spiritual enablements to function?

- I believe God gives every human the aptitudes (i.e., grace-gifts or spiritual enablements) and character traits they need to be successful in life.
- I believe your character didn't change when you were saved, but how you expressed your character did change.
- God's grace extends to everyone, regardless of their spiritual condition.
 - Mt 5:45, "He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."
 - Why does God provide sunshine and rain for everyone, regardless of their spiritual condition?
 - 2 Co 9:9, "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor."
 - Jas 1:17, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights."
 - Who is the source of every good and perfect thing in this world?
 - Ro 11:29, "for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable."
 - "gifts" (Gk, *charisma*): grace-gifts
 - I believe God gives all human beings at conception the qualities they need to be effective in life
- Conclusion: Salvation is spiritual rebirth, which affects every aspect of the person's spirit, including their character.

Closing

- You are primarily a spirit being, you have a psyche and are temporarily living in a physical body.
- Your spirit, the real you, is the source of your character and was born again at salvation.

Blessing

May you begin to understand and be awed by the radical transformation God's grace performed on your human spirit. May that awe motivate you to worship him for his grace and goodness.

Proposed Model for Human Structure

| Human Spirit | |
|---|--|
| Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● eternal ● exists in spiritual realm ● stable | Traits or functions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● source of human life ● matures, strengthens ● interacts with God ● basic character (true self) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ aptitudes (spiritual gifts, natural abilities) ○ traits (fruit of the spirit, other godly traits) |
| Human Psyche | |
| Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● eternal ● exists in spiritual realm ● volatile/dynamic | Traits or functions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● personality (expression of oneself) |
| Human Body | |
| Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● exists in physical realm ● temporal | Traits or functions |