

# Stephen: A Man With a Face Like an Angel

Acts 6:8-15

## Introduction

“synagogue”

“disputed”

“secretly instigated”

Unable to prevail publicly contending with truth, they withdraw privately to conspire to induce men to lie, to commit perjury.

“and gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel” (v15)

i.e., calm, peaceful, steady, unflinching, resolute, fearless.

Earlier, the apostles stood before the same council and spoke truth:

“And they recognized that that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

“you will recognize them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:16).

Compare the countenance of Stephen to his rage-filled murderous executors!

*How does one gain such a countenance as Stephen?*

**That which fills you, controls you.**

Stephen was “full of” [*abundant, ample, complete*] therefore, *controlled by five internal features*:

- 1) *the Spirit,*
- 2) *wisdom,*
- 3) *faith,*
- 4) *grace,*
- 5) *power* (Acts 6:3,5,8).

We can see the result: **calm, confident, courageous.**

Jesus said you can know what’s *inside* someone’s heart by observing what’s being produced *outside*.

## Five Controlling Characteristics of Courageous Christians

### 1. Spirit-filled

To be Spirit-filled is to seek God’s will and obey it. This, all believers are called to:

“...be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). This is an *imperative*, a command.

That believers *were sealed* is an *indicative* – it is certain, realized (Eph. 1:13; 2 Cor. 1:21-22).

Being *Spirit-filled* is seeking to live consistently under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Barnabas “was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith” (Acts 11:24).

“If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” Galatians 5:25

Romans 8:3-6

Galatians 5:16

## 2. Wisdom

Holy Spirit illuminated, biblical Truth accurately and diligently applied to life.

This is *wisdom from above*. This we are all promised if we sincerely seek it from God.

“A man's wisdom makes his face shine, and the hardness of his face is changed.” Ecclesiastes 8:1

“Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her.” Proverbs 4:8

“A wicked man puts on a bold face, but the upright gives thought to his ways.” Proverbs 21:29

It is God visiting His faithful saint seeking wisdom from above that receives the blessing of a glowing countenance.

“Light the candle within and the face without will shine.”

Ephesians 5:15-17

James 3:17-18

## 3. Faith

To be filled with faith is to trust God fully in any and every circumstance.

*When do we need faith the most?*

Jesus gives us 5 main examples of “little faith” all in Matthew:

- 1) When we are anxious about life (Matt 6:25-34).
- 2) When we are afraid of perishing (Matt 8:23-27).
- 3) When we ‘step out’ of our comfort zone (Matt 14:28-33).
- 4) When we see no visible means of provision (Matt 16:5-10).
- 5) When we attempt great things for Jesus (Matt 17:14-20).

## 4. Grace

This undeserved favor from God comes from walking by the Spirit in faith and obedience.

Stephen demonstrated *grace received* and *grace given*. He was kind, gentle, polite, and obliging.

## 5. Power

This is divine power. All believers possess the ability to harness divine power.

Acts 4:32-33

**Counterfeit Power** = that which is desired for selfish reasons that glorify man and not God.

“there was a man named Simon,...” Acts 8:9-10

Acts 8:18-20

Ephesians 3:16-21

“for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” 2 Timothy 1:7

“The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” James 5:16

**The result of being full of the Spirit, wisdom, faith, grace, and power: *Calm, Confident, and Courageous.***

“let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16