

Counterfeit Presence

Scripture shows that demonic spirits (unclean spirits) are drawn to — or given *legal access* by — certain attitudes, behaviours, or spiritual conditions in a person's life. These are the things that invite their counterfeit presence rather than God's true presence. We are living in times where people rejoice over atmospheres that seem positive but are not actually God's presence. Nowadays people like to use the word "Aura" a lot. In modern language it usually refers to: **A subtle field of energy believed to surround a living being — in mystical, New Age, or occult circles, this "aura" is described as coloured energy that reflects a person's mood, health, or spiritual condition.** It can also just speak of a **distinctive atmosphere or impression** someone gives off — for example, "She has an aura of confidence." Counterfeit spiritual presence is a negative, oppressive atmosphere created not by the Holy Spirit, but by manipulative or demonic influences working through people or systems. It's sad that such "aura" is often celebrated more than God's manifest presence. The word "aura" originates from Latin, where it means "breeze" or "breath of air". This Latin word, in turn, is derived from the Greek word "aura," which also means "breeze," "breath," or "gentle wind". The term was adopted into Middle English in the late 14th century to describe a gentle breeze. By the late 19th century, it began to be used in spiritualist contexts to refer to a subtle emanation surrounding a living being.

Scripture shows that these counterfeit spiritual "climates" often appear through **fleshly or demonic** means, and they mimic a sense of authority or power but are completely contrary to God's Spirit. I have sometimes picked up books to read and then discovered that the captivating nature of the book had a presence associated with it, that was not the presence of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes I go into bookshops and other types of stores and the moment I open the pages of a book I am captivated by the content but experience a sharp headache that only disappears if I stop reading. There is a clash between God's Spirit within me and the contrary spirit emanating from the book. My wife and I often talk about a "cobwebby" feeling we get when we enter certain spaces with occultic trinkets and new age themes. As leaders we are social architects, in other words we create climate. What climate or presence are you generating wherever you go?

In effect, all these other "presences" *counterfeit* the presence of God, because:

God's Spirit brings freedom

2 Corinthians 3:17 "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

God's Spirit brings peace

Philippians 4:7 "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

God's Spirit brings love and truth

1 John 4:16 "So we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them."

1. Ecstatic Gatherings:

2 Corinthians 11:14 – “*Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.*”

→ Not everything that feels “spiritual” is from God.

What People Feel at Raves / Concerts / Ecstatic Gatherings:

Collective Emotional Energy

- Large crowds in sync (dancing, cheering) create a powerful emotional atmosphere — a phenomenon known as collective effervescence (Emile Durkheim – French Sociologist).
- People feel “connected” or even “transcendent,” often describing it as a kind of “high” or “spiritual experience.”

Physical and Chemical Influences

- Loud music, flashing lights, sleep deprivation, and drugs (e.g., MDMA (Ecstasy), psychedelics) can amplify emotions and perceptions.
- This can mimic spiritual sensations — euphoria, warmth, connectedness, or even visions.

Spiritual Influences (Discernment Needed)

- Some environments are charged spiritually, but not all spirits are holy (1 John 4:1).
- The atmosphere at raves may open people up to spiritual realms — but without discernment, that can include deceiving or counterfeit spirits.

Ask: Does this presence point me to Jesus, to truth, to repentance, to love, to peace — or just to feelings, escape, or self-indulgence?

I have used the example of raves, but this principle applies to any kind of gathering or music genre, including certain sects in South Africa. **When you dance to music that glorifies the enemy’s doctrine, desires and strategies you are celebrating that which attracts demons. You are partnering and co-labouring with the devil to bring about his plans.**

Contrast with the Presence of the Holy Spirit:

Rave Presence

Holy Spirit Presence

Often euphoric, overwhelming, chaotic

Brings peace, clarity, order

Based on emotional/physical stimulation

Rooted in truth, not emotion alone

Can feel “spiritual” but lack direction or truth

Reveals Jesus, convicts, comforts, leads

May fade quickly, leaving emptiness or anxiety

Leads to lasting fruit (Gal. 5:22–23)

Can involve loss of control

The Spirit empowers self-control (2 Tim. 1:7)

There are many experiences or atmospheres that feel “good” or spiritual but are counterfeit or even demonic in origin. These can mimic the presence of God, offer temporary peace or euphoria, yet lead people away from truth, repentance, or Christ.

Here are examples of counterfeit spiritual “presences” that seem good but can be spiritually dangerous:

2. Ecstatic trance-dance spiritual rituals

The rituals at ZCC and similar churches are culturally rooted and psychologically impactful—and while they may yield genuine spiritual experiences, scholars warn they can also open the door to emotional manipulation, psychological distress, or demonic influence if unchecked.

Aspect	What Research Shows
Ecstatic Trancing	Induced by rhythmic music, dancing—common in many cultures, not uniquely spiritual.
Clinical Interpretation	Often dissociative or neurological—must not automatically be labeled supernatural.
Spiritual Risk	Charismatic environments can inadvertently invite deceptive or demonic spirits.
Sociocultural Context	African-initiated churches (like ZCC) merge healing, prophecy, and protective rituals.
Moral Panic Concerns	Media/fear-driven mislabeling can stigmatize community practices unnecessarily.

3. New Age and Mystical Practices

- Examples: Energy healing, Reiki, crystals, third-eye meditation, astral projection, spirit guides.
- Why it feels good: These practices offer peace, clarity, or supernatural experiences.
- Spiritual danger: They open people to deceptive spirits and bypass Christ.

“Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales...” — 1 Timothy 4:7

“No one comes to the Father except through Me.” — John 14:6

The Danger of Mantras and Eastern Meditation

Mantra	Meaning / Purpose	Spiritual Root
Om or Aum	Believed to be the sound of the universe / Brahman	Hindu cosmology (Brahman deity)
Om Namah Shivaya	“I bow to Shiva” — worship of the god Shiva	Hinduism
Ong Namo Guru Dev Namo	“I bow to the Divine Wisdom, the Divine Teacher within”	Kundalini Yoga / Sikh mysticism
So Hum	“I am that” — unity with the universe	Vedantic philosophy

Mantra	Meaning / Purpose	Spiritual Root
Sat Nam	“Truth is my identity” — used to awaken kundalini	Kundalini Yoga

Biblical meditation:

- **Centres on God's Word, not emptying the mind (Psalm 1:2, Joshua 1:8)**

Psalm 1:2 “But whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.”

Joshua 1:8 “Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”

"Always on your lips" – speak it, declare it, confess it.

"Meditate... so that you may be careful to do" – the goal is obedience, not altered consciousness or personal power.

"Then... prosperous and successful" – spiritual fruit and life success come from aligning with God's truth.

- **Invites the Holy Spirit, not impersonal energy or cosmic forces**
- **Is rooted in truth and relationship, not vibration or repetition**

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...” — Colossians 3:16

4. Mediums, Psychics, or Ancestral Contact

- **Examples: Séances, tarot cards, spiritism, communicating with the dead.**
- **Why it feels comforting: People feel connected to lost loved ones or receive guidance.**
- **Spiritual danger: The Bible forbids these (see Deut. 18:10–12); demons often impersonate the dead to deceive.**

“Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists...” — Leviticus 19:31

What Is a Séance?

A séance is a **spiritual ritual** where people attempt to **communicate with the dead** — often with the help of a **medium, spirit guide**, or through **divination tools** like:

- Ouija boards
- Pendulums
- Automatic writing
- Channeling

- Table tipping or rapping sounds

Participants believe they are **contacting deceased loved ones**, spirits, or ancestors for guidance, closure, or messages.

According to the Bible, these spirits are NOT dead loved ones — they are deceiving spirits (demons) impersonating the dead.

1. The Dead Do Not Return to Speak

“No one can redeem the life of another... they will never return to their houses.”

— Psalm 49:7,11

“The dead know nothing... never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun.”

— Ecclesiastes 9:5–6

2. God Forbids All Contact with the Dead

“Let no one be found among you who... practices divination or sorcery... or who consults the dead.”

— Deuteronomy 18:10–12

“Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them.”

— Leviticus 19:31

3. Saul’s Tragic Mistake (1 Samuel 28)

- King Saul sought out a medium to summon the prophet Samuel.
- God condemned him, and his fate was sealed (1 Chronicles 10:13–14).

1 Chronicles 10:13–14 (ESV): 13 So Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the Lord in that he did not keep the command of the Lord, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance.

14 He did not seek guidance from the Lord. Therefore the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

- This story is often misused to support séances — but it’s a clear example of what not to do.

⌚ Why Séances Feel “Spiritual” or Comforting

People may experience:

- **Accurate knowledge (that seems supernatural)**
- **Familiar voices or mannerisms of the deceased**
- **Peaceful feelings or false “closure”**

But these manifestations are demons mimicking human behaviour to create trust, deepen deception, and eventually gain control.

“Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.” — 2 Corinthians 11:14

5. Eastern Spiritual Practices

- Examples: Kundalini yoga, chanting mantras, idol worship in Hindu temples.
- Why it feels spiritual: These invoke power, energy, or inner peace.
- Spiritual danger: These practices may awaken false spiritual power not from the Holy Spirit.
- Scripture:

“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too.” — 1 Corinthians 10:21

Kundalini Awakening Can Involve:

- Shaking, convulsing, uncontrollable laughter or weeping
- Out-of-body experiences
- Visions or voices
- Feeling "possessed" or "taken over"
- Long-term psychological or spiritual disturbances

Many who experience these effects (even non-Christians) say it felt powerful but terrifying — and later report torment, confusion, or oppression. Many Christian leaders believe Kundalini experiences mimic demonic manifestations, and should not be mistaken for the Holy Spirit.

Is Any Yoga Okay?

This depends on what you're asking — physically vs. spiritually:

Physically (as Exercise)?

- Stretching, breathing, and movement aren't inherently evil.
- But you must ask: Are the poses rooted in worship?
Some yoga poses were historically acts of devotion to Hindu gods (e.g., Surya Namaskar = "sun salutation" to Surya, the sun god).

Spiritually?

- Most yoga systems — even when marketed as secular — are based on Eastern spiritual systems: karma, chakras, reincarnation, enlightenment.
- The words, music, mantras, and symbols used in yoga classes can open spiritual doors, even if participants are unaware.

“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too.”

— 1 Corinthians 10:21

“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. What fellowship can light have with darkness?”

— 2 Corinthians 6:14

What Can You Do Instead?

- Many believers who want movement and health, practise Christian alternatives like:
 - Stretching with worship music
 - PraiseMoves, Holy Yoga, or WholyFit (*cautiously reviewed*)
 - Pilates (not spiritual in origin)
 - Breathwork combined with Scripture meditation

🔥 How Is Kundalini Yoga Different From Other Types of Yoga?

Aspect	Kundalini Yoga	Other Common Yoga Forms
Spiritual Intent	Designed to awaken spiritual energy (serpent force)	May focus on stretching, relaxation, or fitness
Mantras & Chanting	Frequent and Hindu-rooted (e.g., "Ong Namo...")	Less common in fitness-style yoga
Energy Activation	Explicitly works to activate chakras and open third eye	Rare or omitted in basic yoga classes
Origin & Philosophy	Deeply rooted in Tantra and occult mysticism	Still Hindu/Buddhist in origin, but sometimes secularized

6. Occult Symbolism or Rituals

- Examples: Using sigils, affirmations tied to magic, Wicca, or "harmless" spells.
- Why it feels empowering: These offer control, influence, and self-realization.
- Spiritual danger: Occult power is real — but not from God. It enslaves over time.
- Scripture:

"Let no one be found among you... who practices divination or sorcery..." — Deuteronomy 18:10

A sigil is typically a custom-designed symbol that represents a specific intention, desire, or spiritual entity. The user creates it, charges it with emotional or spiritual energy, and then "releases" it to manifest the desired outcome.

The Bible strongly condemns sorcery, divination, and any form of magic or spirit manipulation:

"Let no one be found among you... who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft." — Deuteronomy 18:10

"Those who practice magic arts... will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur." — Revelation 21:8

Sigils are often used as a form of idolatry, creating a symbol of personal will to replace dependence on God.

7. False Peace (from Compromise or Denial)

- Examples: “All paths lead to God,” “If it feels right, do it,” or avoiding truth to keep harmony.
- Why it feels good: It soothes anxiety and avoids conflict.
- Spiritual danger: It’s peace without truth, which lulls people into spiritual blindness.
- Scripture:

“They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. ‘Peace, peace,’ they say, when there is no peace.” — Jeremiah 6:14

8. Love and Light Culture (without Christ)

- Examples: Spiritual influencers (talk show hosts etc) who preach positivity, universal love, and “vibes” — but deny sin, Jesus, or the cross.
- Why it feels attractive: It appeals to emotion, inclusion, and hope.
- Spiritual danger: It is light without source, a form of godliness without power or truth.
- Scripture:

“Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.” — 2 Corinthians 11:14

“They will have a form of godliness but deny its power.” — 2 Timothy 3:5

How to Tell the Difference:

True Presence of God

Counterfeit Presence

Glorifies Jesus

Glorifies self or spirit “energy”

Leads to repentance and truth Leads to comfort without correction

Produces lasting peace and fruit Produces temporary buzz or confusion

Aligns with Scripture

Contradicts or ignores Scripture

Grows love, holiness, humility Inflates ego or sensuality

Presence brought about by specific actions and leadership styles

This is important because actions by leaders and parents tend to create climate and culture.

1. Manipulation

Galatians 5:19-20 19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;

20 *idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions...*

Witchcraft and manipulation are linked. They involve twisting people's emotions or thoughts to control them. (Galatians 5:20, KJV uses "witchcraft" where others translate "sorcery" — the Greek word *pharmakeia* — linked to controlling influence). All of these acts of the flesh are in contrast to the fruit of the Spirit.

2. Domination

Domination is enforcing one's will by power or fear. Jesus forbade this kind of leadership:

Matthew 20:25–26 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant..."

Ask yourself, "what type of climate or presence is created if I am domineering?"

3. Intimidation

Intimidation is the act of using fear to silence or force people. Scripture says God has not given us a spirit of fear.

2 Timothy 1:7 "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline."

This Spirit **does not** produce:

- **Fear or timidity** (Greek: *deilia* – cowardice, lack of courage).

Instead, the Spirit produces:

- **Power** (*dynamis* – divine strength, boldness),
- **Love** (*agape* – selfless, Spirit-driven love),
- **Self-discipline** (*sōphronismos* – sound mind, self-control, wise restraint).

4. Accusation

- The devil is called *the accuser of the brethren* (Revelation 12:10), working through people to create an atmosphere of condemnation

5. False spiritual authority

- Claiming to speak or act for God, but motivated by pride or self-interest
- Jesus warned of false prophets. *Matthew 7:15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves."*

The Climate They Create

These forces create a **spiritual climate** of:

- **Fear**
- **Confusion**

- **Shame**
- **Control**
- **Oppression**
- **Division**

How to Discern the Difference?

God's presence feels:

- Liberating and non-coercive
- Peaceful and joyful
- Holy
- Empowering in a righteous way
- Loving, truthful and non-condemning

Counterfeit presence feels:

Manipulative

Fear-driven

Controlling

Self-exalting

Confusing

Pressuring

Rushing

If you sense a negative “climate” — whether in a church, home, or workplace — it’s wise to test the spirits (1 John 4:1), and measure the *fruit* (Matthew 7:16).

1 John 4:1 “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

Matthew 7:16 “By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?”

Key Insights:

- **“By their fruit”** – True character and spiritual origin are known by the **outcome** of a person’s life and teaching.
- Ties directly to the **Fruit of the Spirit** (Galatians 5:22–23).
- **Spiritual fruit** is a sign of a genuine, Spirit-led life. A lack of it — or the presence of **harmful behaviour** — reveals the truth.

What are the actions that open doors to demonic presence?

We have studied what the Holy Spirit is attracted to. Here’s what the Bible shows demons are attracted to:

1. **Unrepented sin**

- **Sin that is harboured and wilfully continued gives place to the devil.**

“Do not give the devil a foothold.” (Ephesians 4:27)

2. Bitterness / unforgiveness

- Bitterness opens a spiritual doorway to torment (see Matthew 18:34–35, the parable of the unforgiving servant).

3. Idolatry

- Worshiping anything other than God attracts demonic influence.

“The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God.” (1 Corinthians 10:20)

4. Occult practices

- Involvement with witchcraft, fortune telling, charms, or any form of magic explicitly invites demonic presence.

“Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them.” (Leviticus 19:31)

5. Sexual immorality

- Sexual sin is strongly tied to demonic deception and bondage in Scripture (see 1 Corinthians 6:15–20).

6. Pride and rebellion

Pride was the original sin of Satan (Isaiah 14:12–15), and a rebellious heart resists God’s authority, attracting counterfeit spirits.

“Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.” (1 Samuel 15:23, KJV)

7. Deception and false teaching

Following “doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1) allows demonic presence to counterfeit God’s truth.

1 Timothy 4:1 “The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.”

8. Fear

The spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1:7) can open a person to oppressive demonic influence, drawing them away from God’s peace.

Jeremiah 1:17 “Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them.”

9. Covenants or generational ties

Idolatrous or occult covenants in a family line (Exodus 20:5) can also give demons a claim.

Exodus 20:5 “You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me...”

When God's people turn to idols (whether physical or heart-level), it leads to **distance from His presence**, as seen in Ezekiel 10 (the glory departing the temple).

In contrast, God's manifest presence is attracted to:

- ✓ Humility
- ✓ Repentance
- ✓ Purity
- ✓ Worship of Him alone
- ✓ Faith
- ✓ Surrender

“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.” (James 4:8)

In conclusion, we are living in an age where feelings are celebrated more than truth, and atmospheres are mistaken for anointing. But not every spiritual presence is the Holy Spirit. We must be people who test the spirits, discern the fruit, and carry the true climate of God's Kingdom — one of peace, freedom, holiness, and love. Let us not settle for the counterfeit when we have been invited to walk in the real. As temples of the Holy Spirit, may we cleanse our hearts, renounce every false presence, and cultivate the kind of worship and surrender that attracts God Himself.

So here is your charge: Guard your atmosphere. Be vigilant over the climate you create — in your home, in your leadership, in your worship. Reject manipulation, renounce compromise, and flee every form of spiritual deception. Seek the Lord with humility and truth. And may the manifest presence of God — not hype, not energy, not empty experience — be the atmosphere that surrounds you, empowers you, and draws others to Jesus. **We are called to carry the real. So, let's carry it with conviction.**