

## Are you vulnerable to spiritual deception?

- Do you demand black & white answers to difficult questions?
- Do you have a history of getting “off balance” on issues?
- Do you allowed yourself to be manipulated by others?
- Are you reluctant to question authority?
- Are you looking for heroic leaders?



## 2 Corinthians 11:16-21

### The profile of a “spiritual victim”

### 2 Corinthians 11

“<sup>16</sup> Again I say, let no one think me foolish; but if you do, receive me even as foolish, that I also may boast a little. <sup>17</sup> That which I am speaking, **I am not speaking as the Lord would**, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting. <sup>18</sup> Since many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also.”

***They have a diet problem.  
They need milk not solid spiritual food.***

*Test of victimization #1*

***Do you expect simple,  
black and white  
answers?***



### Hebrews 5

“<sup>13</sup> **For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the Word of Righteousness: for he is a infant.** <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern both good and evil”

### 1 Corinthians 3

“<sup>1</sup> And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. <sup>2</sup> **I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able,** <sup>3</sup> for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?”

### *Characteristics of a soft spiritual diet*

- ***Worldly paradigms***
- ***Premature confidence***
- ***Rules rather than principles***
- ***Black and white with no gray***
- ***Lack of experience & exposure***

2 Corinthians 11

“<sup>19</sup> For you, being so wise, bear with the foolish gladly.”

**They have a discernment problem.**  
*They can't tell the wise from the foolish.*



Test of victimization #2

**Do you have a track record of following the wrong people?**

**There is a difference between “simplistic” and “simple.”**

There are two types of simplicity, with respect to the complexities of life

one on the near side of complexity



another on the far side of complexity.

**Naive**

**Wise**

2 Corinthians 11

“<sup>20</sup> For you bear with anyone if he enslaves you, if he devours you, if he takes advantage of you, if he exalts himself, if he hits you in the face.”

**They have a dependence problem.**  
*They let themselves be abused.*



Test of victimization #3

**Do you tend to have boundary problems or lack critical thinking?**

*Examples of spiritual abuse*

- **Allowing leaders to control personal parts of your life.**
- **Being made to feel guilty for the mistakes of others.**
- **Being made to serve the ego needs of leaders.**
- **Being pressured to relinquish all critical judgment or critique.**

**An unhealthy posture**



**Hard heart with soft mind**

**A healthy posture**



**Soft heart with hard mind**

2 Corinthians 11

“<sup>21</sup> To my shame I must say that we have been weak by comparison. But in whatever respect anyone else is bold (I speak in foolishness), I am just as bold myself.”

**They have deference problems.**  
*They have poor relationships with authority.*

Test of victimization #4

**Do you prefer law and control over grace and freedom?**





*An unhealthy posture*  
*Confusing human authority*  
*with Divine authority*

*A healthy posture*  
*Respecting human authority*  
*while being watchful of it.*



## *The profile of a* *Spiritual Victim*

- ✓ **Diet** (can't take solid spiritual food)
- ✓ **Discernment** (false confidence)
- ✓ **Dependence** (poor boundaries)
- ✓ **Deference** (relationship with authority)

### *How to guard yourself*

- ✓ Learn to identify the **warning signs** of false authority and a victim mentality.
- ✓ Remember that the “Word of the Cross” is **Grace**.
- ✓ Note the emphasis of Jesus’ mission as expressed in **Paul’s letters**.
- ✓ Proceed with **caution**, a gracious heart, and critical thinking.