

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

“¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ That which I am speaking, **I am not speaking as the Lord would**, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting. ¹⁸ 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

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

1 Corinthians 3

“¹ And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. ² **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,** ³ 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

“¹⁹ 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

Naive



another on
the far side
of complexity.

Wise

2 Corinthians 11

“²⁰ 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?***

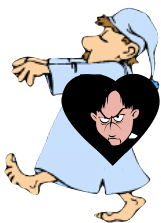


Examples of spiritual abuse

- ***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

“²¹ 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.