

Don't Let Super-Spiritual People Hurt Your Church

A few years ago a prominent charismatic evangelist gained a wide following when he said an angel was visiting him regularly during his televised revival meetings. The angel was supposedly dispatched to unleash the next great healing revival in the United States. One big problem: The revival didn't happen.

Yet month after month, the tales of this evangelist's wild spiritual adventures grew more and more incredible. At one point he wrote that he visited heaven and met the apostle Paul—and then said Paul admitted he was the author of the Book of Hebrews. A 2,000-year-old theological mystery was solved!

Looking back on these events now, it's hard to believe so many charismatics fell for these wild claims. Anyone with the most basic level of discernment knows God does not allow us to talk to dead people to get spiritual information. So why are we so gullible? I call this the "oooh, ahhh" factor.

In our charismatic circles, there are some super-spiritual people who know how to impress others with their revelations and experiences. They know how to get us to say, "Oooh, ahhh." In some cases these people are sincere but may have emotional problems or even mental illness. In other cases they are simply full of spiritual pride and end up being used by the devil to bring confusion and division into the church.

Time after time I have made it clear I'm unapologetically a charismatic Christian, and I believe all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are valid today. But I believe God is calling us to clean up our act and stop allowing fringe elements to discredit the power of God. Nothing is more dangerous to a genuine revival than a hyper-spiritual "charismaniac" who

flaunts his gifts while displaying a lack of character.

Here are seven indicators of a hyper-spiritual person. If this describes you or someone you know, please seek spiritual counsel immediately.

1. Their feet rarely touch the earth. Super-spiritual people live in the ozone layer. They are not in touch with normal life. They may spend a lot of time in prayer (or claim to), and they may even fast or impose severe discipline on themselves, but their relationships are dysfunctional. Remember: Jesus did not live His life like a guru, floating around while dispensing ethereal wisdom. He lived in the real world and interacted in a healthy way with people. So should we.

2. They place too much emphasis on dreams, visions and spiritual manifestations. God speaks to us through His Spirit, and He can use dreams, visions or prophetic words. Yet His message always flows with love and brings peace. On the contrary, a spirit of weirdness usually follows hyper-spiritual people who claim to receive constant revelations. Paul warned the Colossians about people like this when he said: "Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen..." (Col. 2:18).

3. They find it difficult to submit to authority. Hyper-spiritual people are usually full of pride and believe they are more gifted than pastors or other spiritual leaders. Therefore they find it impossible to receive instruction or correction from anyone. They become renegades, and they separate themselves from the body of Christ, which only puts them in a spiritually vulnerable position.

4. They crave attention. A super-spiritual person often lacks affirmation and love. Their emotional deficit pushes them to seek attention from people, and they find it by impressing

others. Some people who seek to serve as intercessors or counselors, or even as members of the worship team, may actually need inner healing before they can be effective in these roles. If you give these people a microphone before they are healed, you will regret it!

5. They develop a victim mentality. Most of the hyper-spiritual people I know believe they are constantly being attacked by the devil—as if they are his biggest threat. The slightest problem in life—from a traffic ticket to a hangnail—becomes evidence of a demonic conspiracy against them. We need to help people realize they are not the center of the universe, and that Satan actually has a lot more important things to do than stop Brother Bubba or Sister Lulu from singing a song in church on Sunday.

6. They become harsh and judgmental. Charismaniacs who don't find a receptive audience for their visions and prophecies sometimes become bitter and resentful—and they end up condemning everyone to hell for rejecting them. I am aware of situations in which angry Christians ended up splitting a church because they became convinced the pastor was evil or the whole congregation was in sin. People who are full of bitterness will become instruments of the devil. Deal with them before they hurt others!

7. They often end up in deception. Super-spiritual people who reject correction or spiritual covering are headed toward disaster. Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, started that cult after he declared that all Christian denominations were false churches. He cut himself off from the body of Christ and started the biggest heresy of the 19th century. People who become so focused on their spiritual superiority end up denying Jesus and justifying their own sinful behavior.

Church should be a healthy place. Don't let hyper-spiritual people take your congregation down the wrong road.

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