

Beware of Hyper-Spiritual Narcissists—They Will Split Your Church

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

Yet month after month, the tales of this evangelist's wild spiritual adventures grew more and more incredible. At one point he claimed to have met the apostle Paul in heaven—and then said that Paul told him he was the author of the book of Hebrews. Looking back on these events now, it's hard to believe so many people fell for this man's wild claims.

Anyone with the most basic level of discernment knows God doesn't allow us to talk to dead people to get spiritual information. So why are some of us so gullible?

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In some Spirit-filled church circles, there are super-spiritual people who know how to impress others with their revelations and experiences. In some cases these people are sincere but may have emotional problems or even mental illness. In other cases they are classic narcissists who are full of spiritual pride.

I believe all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are valid today. But we need 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

attention-seeker who lacks character but flaunts his gifts.

Below are seven indicators of a hyper-spiritual person. If you see this type of fraud on display, use discernment and warn others.

1. Their feet rarely touch the earth. Super-spiritual people aren't in touch with normal life. They live in the ozone layer. They may spend a lot of time in prayer and fasting (or claim to), but their relationships are dysfunctional. Jesus didn't live 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. 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). A spirit of weirdness always follows hyper-spiritual people who claim to receive constant revelations.

3. They don't submit to authority. Hyper-spiritual people believe they are more gifted than pastors or other spiritual leaders. They love to criticize pastors, and they find it impossible to receive correction from anyone. They become renegades, and they separate themselves from the body of Christ; meanwhile they cultivate a "ministry" on social media that focuses on finding fault with churches.

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 unhealthy people a microphone before they are healed, they will misuse their platform.

5. They develop a victim mentality. Hyper-spiritual people believe they are constantly being attacked by the devil—as if they are his biggest threat. The slightest problem—from a traffic ticket to a hangnail—becomes evidence of a demonic conspiracy against them. We need to help people realize that Satan actually has a lot more important things to do than stop Brother Jimmy or Sister Karen from singing a song in church on Sunday.

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6. They become harsh and judgmental. People with narcissistic tendencies can become bitter and resentful if they don't find an audience for their visions and prophecies. They may even condemn everyone to hell for rejecting them. I know of some angry Christians who ended up splitting a church because they became convinced the pastor was evil or the whole congregation was in sin. Bitter people eventually become destructive. Don't let them hurt others.

7. They often end up in serious deception. Super-spiritual people who reject correction or accountability are headed toward disaster. Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, started his 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—claiming that an angel gave him secret information.

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People who become so focused on their spiritual superiority end up denying Jesus and justifying their own sinful behavior. Don't let hyper-spiritual narcissists take your congregation down the wrong road. Let's cultivate humility, promote healthy character and guard the flock from dangerous wolves.