

Encourage

Inspiration for IPHC Leaders

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The **Convicting Power** of the Holy Spirit

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BY J. LEE GRADY





IT IS TIME FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT'S REFRESHING

As we begin a month-long celebration of Pentecost, let's pray for a fresh visitation of the Holy Spirit in our churches.



BY DOUG
BEACHAM

DOUG BEACHAM is the presiding bishop of the IPHC. He has served in various roles in the church including Georgia Conference Superintendent, executive director of Church Education Ministries, and executive director of World Missions Ministries.

Lutherans look to Biblical passages related to justification by faith for their theological emphasis. Roman Catholics look to Matthew 16:18 and Peter as the rock for their emphasis. Wesleyans look at the holiness of God.

Pentecostals start with Acts 2:1-4. The day of Pentecost and the fulfillment of “the promise of the Father” (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4) is the foundation of biblical empowerment to effectively serve Christ in this lost and shattered world. We don't neglect other biblical doctrines; rather, the Holy Spirit is the lens through which we view the remainder of the Bible.

Through the Spirit we discern the presence of Christ throughout the Word; through the Spirit we discern God's faithfulness and power as Creator;

through the Spirit we discern our lost condition; through the Spirit it is revealed that our Father has adopted us as His own children; through the Spirit we discover the glorious liberty we have as His children as we live faithfully in this world.

We are calling the global IPHC family to give special emphasis throughout the month of May to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost Sunday is May 24, and we are praying for the Spirit to be poured out on all of our congregations in a fresh way. We believe there are literally thousands who will receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, as on the day of Pentecost, and their lives will be radically changed as witnesses to Christ.

I encourage you to take advantage of the resources at iphc.org/thread that provide excellent material for children, students, and adults. You will find an ad for this web site on page 11 of this magazine.

The Fifth IPHC Global Assembly in Hong Kong will be in full swing by the time you read this article. Our focus there is on our vision as "A Place of Hope and A People of Promise" and our 2015 core value, "We Prayerfully Value Pentecost." IPHC leaders from around the world will be interceding for us to be filled with the Spirit!

Early Christians, and our forefathers who experienced the baptism in the Spirit in the 1906 Azusa Street revival, understood the following concerning the Pentecostal experience.

1. Pentecost empowers us to witness to Jesus Christ. Speaking in other tongues is a personal witness in our spirit that we can live and speak about Jesus in ways that bring liberation and hope.

2. Pentecost changes the

atmosphere of God's presence in the community of faith. While our experience of the baptism in the Spirit is personal, it is not individualistic. The Spirit brings us into community and solidarity with others. The Spirit reveals the grace at work in others and manifested through the gifts operating in their lives. The Spirit releases the love of Christ among us as we see one another as "brothers and sisters" in Christ.

3. Pentecost releases God's divine

presence, which can miraculously change any situation. At the same time Pentecost releases divine patience that enables us to persevere with hope and love. Divine patience is a spiritual manifestation affirming the reality that God's kingdom is greater than the kingdoms of this world.

I've often thought of the Apostle Paul's brief ministry in Thessalonica. Acts 17:1-9 tells us of the brief period of time Paul ministered in the synagogue – three weeks. While he may have been there longer before speaking in the synagogue, the implication of the text is that it was a short period of ministry that led to people accepting Jesus as the Messiah, to the formation of a small house-church congregation, and to a foundation that was rooted in the Word.

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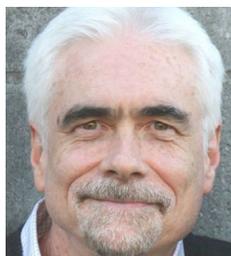
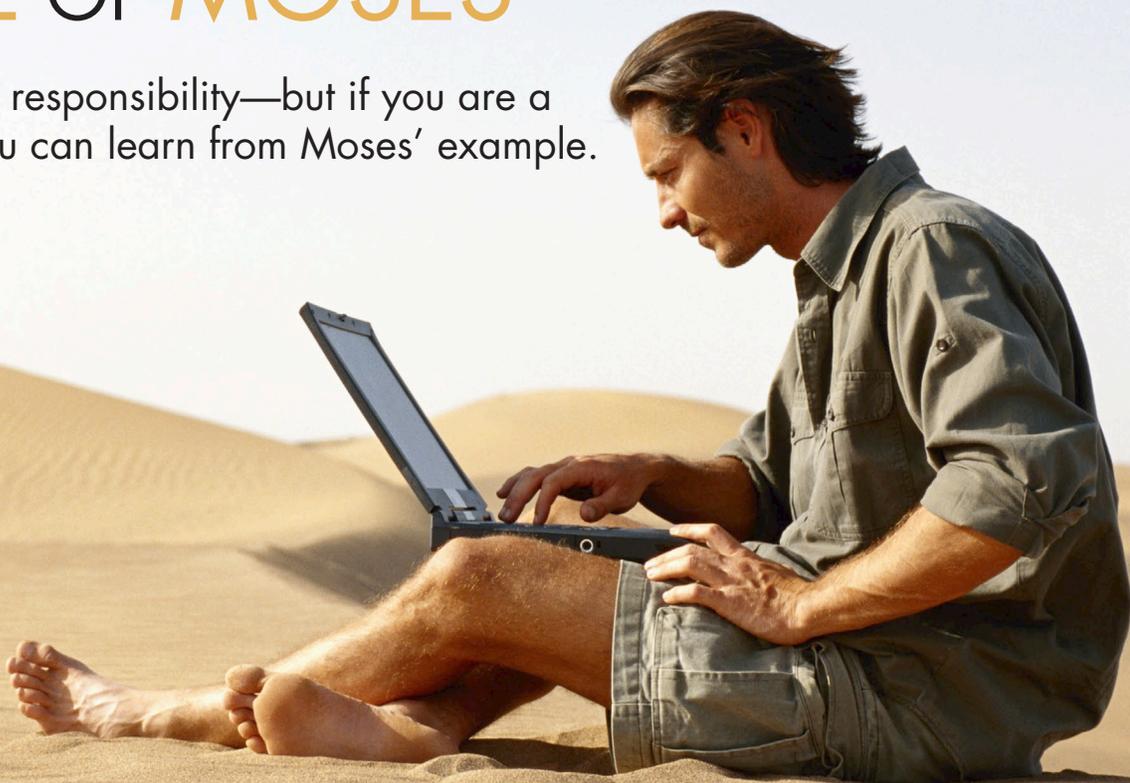
In fact, when you read Paul's two letters to that congregation, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, you discover that in those few weeks he taught them about grace, the Holy Spirit, God's call, holy living, Christian community and eschatology.

My prayer is that over the next five weeks in May, the Holy Spirit will come in such anointing upon us that this entire movement is changed in a short period of time! I believe the Spirit is going to empower people to not be afraid or ashamed to witness. I believe the Spirit is going to call hundreds of men and women into full time ministry as pastors, evangelists, missionaries, prophets and teachers.

I believe congregations struggling to survive will find renewed life as the Spirit of life moves among them. I believe there will be a fresh and generation-long response to holy living that will manifest divine grace in a grace-less world. Come Holy Spirit! ☐

LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF MOSES

Moses had a huge responsibility—but if you are a pastor, so do you! You can learn from Moses' example.



BY RUSSELL
BOARD

RUSSELL BOARD and his wife Sandra have pioneered the work of the IPHC in Japan since they moved there in 1989. Since 2002 Russell has served as World Missions continental director for the Asia/Pacific region, overseeing churches in 18 countries.

Many view Moses as the greatest leader in the history of Israel. He was the man chosen by God to lead his people out of Egypt and into the land of promise. What a daunting task! What a colossal responsibility! Yet the truth is that every pastor undertakes a task similar to Moses' momentous mission.

Just as Moses was called to lead his people out of slavery in Egypt, every pastor is called to lead his people out of the bondage of sin and the mastery of the world, and into a life of freedom as children of God. As Moses had to confront and conquer the dominion of Pharaoh and the demonic powers behind his throne, so every pastor must learn to stand against the antagonism of the world, and to wield the word of truth to overcome the forces of darkness.

As Moses saw the power of God displayed in bringing deliverance from and victory over his enemies, so the pastor can count on the truth that God's power in us is greater than the devil's power in the world (1 John 4:4).

Moses led his people safely through the wilderness. Pastors are called to help their people navigate the snares and pitfalls that lie along the path of their journey through this fallen world. When the world presents its illusions and fantasies to lure people back under its sway, the pastor must remind his people of what slavery was really like, and keep them moving forward on the path God has for them.

When people face a shortage of resources, the pastor must help them to believe and receive the provision of God. When they don't know the way to go, the pastor must remind them of God's guiding presence, and help them to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit.

While not expected to ascend Mount Sinai and receive tablets inscribed with the finger of God, every pastor is called to deliver the Word of God to his people. He must take time away from the cares and distractions of the world, to enter into the holy presence of God, and listen to his voice.

The Scriptures have been given not only to show the way of salvation, but to give guidance and instruction on all aspects of life in this world including: family, interpersonal relationships, education, commerce and government. Through study and prayer, the pastor must learn to accurately teach the truth of Scripture (2 Timothy 2:15), and apply it to the present concerns of the people of God.

Moses refused to lead the people anywhere without assurance that the Lord himself would accompany them every step of the way (Exodus 33:15). The pastor must feel the same sense of desperate dependence on the Lord in all ministry activities.

Natural gifts of eloquence and leadership are wonderful. Conferences, seminars and books on management techniques can build useful skills. Expertise in the use of the latest in hi-tech equipment can enhance the worship experience of the congregation. But without the anointing of the Holy Spirit on every aspect of ministry preparation and practice, all is for naught. The pastor must truly believe Christ's declaration that "without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5), and determine to make top priority the seeking and safeguarding of God's presence.

"The pastor should do whatever he can to make it possible for his successor to take the people beyond where he himself has led them."

Moses remained faithful to lead and care for God's people in spite of setbacks and failures. When they arrived at the border of Canaan, Moses was prepared to lead the people across the Jordan, but they gave in to fear and balked at entering the Promised Land. His patience was sorely tried during the ensuing years of wilderness wandering, Moses himself erupted in anger and disregarded God's explicit instructions, for which he forfeited his own opportunity to enter Canaan.

Yet in spite of unwarranted criticism and unceasing complaints, in spite of his own failures and disappointments, Moses never gave up on his people or his mission. He refused to abandon them and continued to devote himself to their welfare. Like Moses, every pastor can expect to make mistakes and suffer mistreatment, and must then face the choice of either giving up or continuing to lead and serve in response to the call of God.

Finally, like Moses, pastors must lead God's people into full possession of their inheritance. The generation of Israelites led out of Egypt by Moses was privileged to see the power of God displayed in unprecedented ways as He gave them victory over their enemies, and provided for all their needs in the wilderness. They were given the opportunity to take possession of the land promised hundreds of years before to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Because of his own failure and the recklessness of his followers, Moses was unable to lead the people into possession of their inheritance. Yet Moses never lost sight of the vision and

goal God had given him, and did everything in his power to make provision for Joshua to lead the people where he was unable to take them.

In the same way, every pastor is called to maintain and communicate a multi-generational vision that extends beyond his own term of service. The pastor should have an eye to the legacy he leaves behind, and do whatever he can to make it possible for his successor to take the people beyond where he himself has led them.

Pastors are challenged with a task of solemn responsibility far beyond their capacity to achieve. But take comfort in this: the same God who led and empowered Moses is ready to lead and empower us as well! We are promised in 1 Thessalonians 5:24: "Faithful is He who calleth you, who also will do it" (KJV). □



SEVEN DISCIPLINES TO ACHIEVE VICTORY OVER SIN

Are you struggling with sinful habits? Welcome to the war!
Here is a battle plan to overcome.



BY BRAD
CHANDLER

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The apostle Paul often talks in strong terms about getting rid of the sin in our lives (Colossians 3:1–17). Sin needs to be dealt a deathblow if we’re ever to really grow in our life with Christ. We have to get to the place where we hate sin—but this won’t happen by beating yourself up with condemnation and shame. It requires facing sin for what it really is and seeking freedom in Jesus.

Remember, we can’t put new clothes *over* old clothes. We have to take *off* our old self and *clothe* ourselves with Christ, (Galatians 3:27 NASB) receiving His grace and mercy.

We want easy steps to dealing with sin in our life. We want something bite-sized and not too hard to handle. But it’s *not* that easy. It’s a war. It’s a struggle—because it’s a fight against something that feels good—at least at first. That’s why the fight against sin in our lives requires discipline.

The following seven ways to defeat sin in our lives are *not* easy.

They're disciplines that require time and effort. At the end of the day though, disciplines will only work as a result of a changed heart. God can transform your heart through these disciplines.

PRAY.

When you pray and seek God's face, you begin to fall more in love with Him and out of love with sin. Paul tells us to be alert—praying constantly (Ephesians 6:18). Prayer is a preemptive attack against lies we believe and it's the first punch we throw when the enemy starts to attack. When we pray, we allow ourselves to be transformed in God's presence and to hear his voice on how to respond. That's why the Bible says emphatically, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17 NASB).

READ THE BIBLE.

The tricky part about sin is that we don't always think it's a big deal. But it's so big of a deal that Jesus had to die for us. When you read the Bible, you can see clearly how God loves us—but hates sin. In fact, God hates sin because He loves us! The Lord doesn't want you to have to struggle in bondage, but He wants to give you life. "I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11 ESV). Even when Jesus was tempted to sin in Matthew 4:1–11, He responds with Scripture. If you're committing regular time to reading the Bible and memorizing it, you begin to learn what God says about living a life that's pure and holy and you will desire the freedom that God has for you.

FIND ACCOUNTABILITY.

You can't do life alone. Consider Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 (ESV), "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up." Accountability is finding someone that you can trust to be honest with you. This could be a mentor, or friend of the same gender. Whoever it is, it should be someone that you can walk the journey with and one who has walked the journey before.

Accountability only works if there's honesty; you have to be willing to expose yourself and be vulnerable in healthy relationships. Though encouragement is a key aspect of accountability, find someone who won't gloss over sin, but is going to tell you the truth in love.

CONFESS SIN.

The reason we struggle with habitual sin is that we keep it in the dark, secret parts of our heart. James 5:16 says, "Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed." When you confess it, you bring it out into the light. God doesn't want to shame you, but give you freedom. There's something so freeing about not hiding sin anymore.

PRACTICE FASTING.

In Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline* he says, "Fasting reveals the things that control us." Fasting is a temporary, voluntary act of going without something to commit time to the Lord and develop a hunger for him. In Scripture, fasting is usually related to food. The hunger that our physical bodies feel in this season reminds us of our weakness and deep need for grace.

You can also do a media fast (no television, no phone, no computer) for a season. I've heard that it takes seven weeks to break a habit and sin is habitual. What if you could take a season of forty days, fasting one day a week and really attack that sin in your life?

FIND SILENCE.

Silence is a luxury in our loud, busy culture. When we unplug for a few minutes and silence all of the voices trying to compete for our attention, we're able to hear the only voice that deserves our attention.

There's great beauty in getting alone with God. No buzzing gadgets. No ear buds bookending our heads. It's in these moments that we come face to face with our darkest places that are usually covered by the static noise of life. Satan tries to speak shame and condemnation, but in silence you're able to distinguish between the enemy's voice and God's. God's voice is full of love, tenderness, forgiveness, and mercy.

FINALLY—BE LOVED.

Recognize your identity as a beloved son or daughter of the King. When you are known and loved by God, it changes everything. Our pleasures are changed—we find greater delight in God's presence. "...In all things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:37–39 ESV). □

"Prayer is a preemptive attack against lies we believe and it's the first punch we throw when the enemy starts to attack."

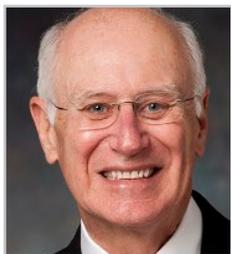
THE CONVICTING WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Spirit does not just empower us for the work of ministry. He draws sinners to repentance.



On Easter Sunday this year, I preached at The Ark PHC in Singapore. This congregation is primarily reaching Chinese university and post-university aged people. There were approximately 40 people gathered in a small classroom converted into a sanctuary for Sunday mornings.

The pastor, Yau Che Ming, asked me to give an invitation following the message. My interpreter and I prayed before the service that the Holy Spirit would do the work that only He can do. At the close of the message I asked if anyone wanted to respond to the gospel. A young woman and an older man lifted their hands. They joined me and the congregation in the prayer of faith based on Romans 10:9–10.



By DOUG
BEACHAM

DOUG BEACHAM is the presiding bishop of the IPHC. He has served in various roles in the church including Georgia Conference Superintendent, executive director of Church Education Ministries, and executive director of World Missions Ministries.

The young lady who gave her heart to Christ that day told me that for more than a year she had been talking with the pastor about Jesus Christ. She had issues to be clarified in her mind before she could make that decision. The man was a long-time friend of Pastor Yau. Over these years the pastor has shared his faith in Christ with his friend. This day that faithful relationship led to the friend accepting Christ as his Savior.

I was impressed by the loving patience of Pastor Yau in working with people who were on this journey to Christ. In both instances, there was an ongoing work of the Holy Spirit preparing these two people, Pastor Yau, and me for that decisive morning.

This event reminded me of an aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit that we sometimes overlook, to the detriment of our witness and the souls for whom we care. The IPHC holds to an Arminian Wesleyan perspective. We view the work of the Holy Spirit in terms of what John Wesley called prevenient grace. Wesley taught that the Holy Spirit works in our lives to bring the truth of the

gospel to us, and that the Spirit enables us to make a decision with our free will.

Thus, we can accept the message of the truth or reject it. This is based on Jesus' words that when the Holy Spirit comes, "He will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8 NKJV).

When we recognize this work of the Spirit among the unsaved, we discover that despite our ignorance, disobedience and rebellion against God, "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). The many places where we could have died, or fallen so deeply into sin that our lives were ruined, were instead preserved by acts of grace of which we did not know.

The patience of the Holy Spirit in our own lives leads us to be patient with those for whom we are praying. We don't give up praying because the Holy Spirit is still seeking the lost!

It takes time for the truth of our witness to reach into the heart of the lost. Only the Holy Spirit can open their hearts to the gospel. We are part of the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit's prevenient grace in everyone we meet.

What are the tools the Spirit uses to bring conviction to the lost? Each man and woman has a conscience with a more or less developed sense of right and wrong. But those in themselves may not sufficiently reveal to a sinner his true condition. And his conscience certainly does not reveal the solution in Christ's atonement. In one way or the other, each individual needs awareness

from God's law and saving provision by His grace.

The Apostle Paul understood God's moral law to be holy and just and good (see Romans 7:12; Galatians 3:19–24); he understood that he would not have known sin unless the law had revealed sinful acts (Romans 7:7). In referring to the law—the Torah—Paul meant basically the Ten Commandments and the various applications of those commandments revealed throughout the Bible. The law does not save us, but it reveals God's truth about the human condition. Without the proper diagnosis that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), there is little hope to comprehend that the death of Jesus paid the price of our redemption (Romans 3:21–26).

Let's be clear: we don't preach obedience to the law in order to be saved. That's legalism and makes faith of no effect (Romans 3:28; Romans 4:13–25). We must speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) so that the heart of the sinner can listen to Holy Spirit conviction.

This is not contrary to the gospel message.

Jesus began His ministry with the proclamation, "The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

The Gospel message makes it clear that one's old life is a barrier to entering into the new life of God's kingdom (John 3:3, 5).

Repentance is part of the Holy Spirit's work in bringing one to "believe in the gospel." Repentance does not mean a person has to

behave better before being born again; repentance means that he or she recognize that the way they are going is the way of death (Proverbs 14:12), and by turning to Christ they turn away from their own destruction.

But how does this occur in our lives? It happens through confession and transformation. The Apostle Paul understood that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). The hearing of the Word allows the Holy Spirit to bring conviction to the human heart. To confess is to believe that the gospel is correct about our condition and God's remedy through Jesus Christ.

Our response of faith leads to the Holy Spirit pouring out God's love into our hearts (Romans 5:5). The Holy Spirit bears witness in our hearts that we are children of God and can call God "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:12–17; Galatians 3:26 through 4:7). The Holy Spirit is the seal, the guarantee of our inheritance in Christ (Ephesians 1:13, 14).

The doctrines that form the basis of our name, Pentecost and Holiness, are as much a work of the Holy Spirit in bringing increasing freedom from the tyranny of sin and empowering us to fruitful service for Christ's Kingdom. In sanctification, the Spirit continues His convicting work in us.

In many aspects of life, the Spirit easily reshapes us like the potter shapes clay. But in the stony areas, the Word and Spirit chisel away at the hardness of our hearts. That is why the Word and Spirit work together to transform us (John 17:17; Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6:17).

As Pentecostals, we believe that the Holy Spirit prepares the unsaved to hear the message of salvation. The Holy Spirit then anoints and empowers us to effectively share the good news through spiritual gifts working together with our natural talents to help us bear witness to the victory of Jesus Christ over sin, death, and hell. □



DON'T LET SUPER- SPIRITUAL PEOPLE HURT YOUR CHURCH

The Holy Spirit's gifts must be exercised with humility and grace. Don't allow prideful people to abuse your congregation.



BY J. LEE
GRADY

J. LEE GRADY is an ordained IPHC minister who serves as contributing editor of *Charisma* magazine and editor of *Encourage*. He also directs The Mordecai Project, an international missions organization based in Florida. He is a member of the IPHC's Sonshine Conference.

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 Christians 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 "ooh, 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 Pentecostal Christian, and I believe all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are valid today. I believe in prophecy, visions, dreams from God, angels and miracles. But I also 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, please seek spiritual counsel immediately. And if someone like this is influencing your church, put up the barriers now before they hurt someone.



“Super-spiritual people who reject correction or spiritual accountability are headed toward disaster.”

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 accountability 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. □

thread

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