

Spiritual Abuse

Denying a person's right to exercise their free will is abuse. It forces a person from their true identity by restricting their ability to act according to their convictions and character.

Physical abuse means to control by physical strength or presence. Emotional abuse uses feelings or emotional responses to coerce or control. Spiritual abuse controls by invoking a spiritual being, authority, belief, or tradition to deprive others of choice.

Symptoms

- Control: demanding certain behavior.
- Brain washing: controlling beliefs and worldview.
- Isolation: protecting a broken system.
- Shunning: threat of separation from community as punishment.

Protection

- Complete submission to God keeps us from abusing.
(Walk in the Spirit, Abide in the Vine, Sonship)
- Submit to God and be free from abuse.
(Rebellion versus Submission, chain of command - Acts 4:19-20)

Spiritual Leadership: To equip the saints ... to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Eph 4:12-13)

- **Parenting:** Raising a child from dependence on man to dependence on God.
- **Shepherding:** The role of pastor to equip believers into dependence on God.
- **Eldering:** Leading a community into spiritual maturity and dependence on God.

Misused Authority: Enforced dependence (co-dependency).

- **Cult:** A religion or religious sect, considered to be extremist or false, whose followers live under the guidance of an authoritarian, charismatic leader.
- **Legalism:** Overly strict or rigid adherence to the law, to a religious or moral code, or to a doctrine or creed.
- **Fundamentalism:** A usually religious movement or point of view characterized by a return to fundamental principles, by rigid adherence to those principles, and often by intolerance of other views and opposition.
- **Living from the Soul:** Operating based on what I feel, think, or want rather than abiding with the Spirit.

Establish Freedom: Warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. (Col 1:28)

- Understand authority's chain of command (Rom 13:1-2)
- Learn to listen to the Spirit (1 Jn 2:20, 27)
- Walk by the Spirit (Gal 5:16, 18)
- The Berean defense (Acts 17:11)
- Confess God as Lord (Jn 6:68-69)
- Repent to Sonship (Rom 8:14-17)