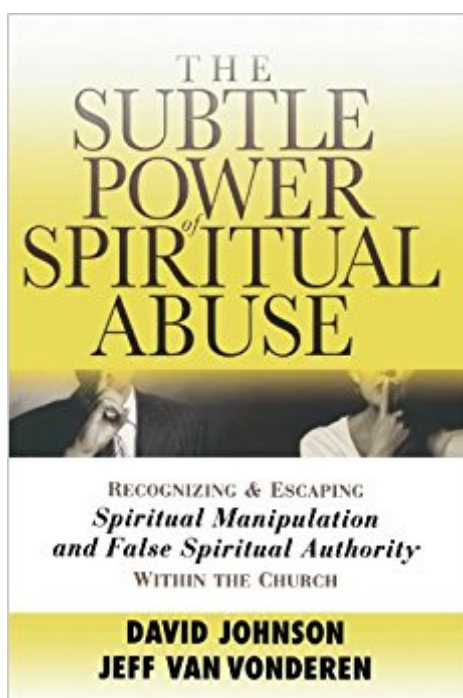


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# The Subtle Power Of Spiritual Abuse: Recognizing And Escaping Spiritual Manipulation And False Spiritual Authority Within The Church



## Synopsis

In a breakthrough book first published in 1991, the authors address the dynamics in churches that can ensnare people in legalism, guilt, and begrudging service, keeping them from the grace and joy of God's kingdom. Written for both those who feel abused and those who may be causing it, *The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse* shows how people get hooked into abusive systems, the impact of controlling leadership on a congregation, and how the abused believer can find rest and recovery.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

David Johnson has been the senior pastor at Church of the Open Door in Maple Grove, Minnesota, since 1980. During this time, the church has grown from a congregation of 160 to 3,000 people. A much sought-after speaker, he is a graduate of Bethel College and received his theological training at Bethel Seminary and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. His *Growing in Grace* radio broadcast is syndicated internationally. David and his family live in Minnesota.

Very helpful book, highly recommended. I was in a "denomination" dominated by spiritual abuse for forty years. This book has been an important part of the healing process for me. Highly gospel-centric. My only slight criticism is that some of the examples are egregious (though sadly real and more common than we want to think.) Don't get hung up on how gross the examples are. The principles of spiritual abuse (abuse of authority, legalism and performance-based religion, shaming and fear) still apply when the causes are more subtle. This book will help you see how the good news of Jesus Christ, His finished work on behalf of helpless sinners, the unearned

forgiveness and new standing as beloved children of God, is the answer to spiritual abuse. I was especially impressed with chapters which help to understand how to avoid further abuse, and how to decide whether you should stay or leave an abusive situation. So grateful to God that He put me in a new church that is focused on the gospel of His grace, not on our performance.

I actually didn't know how to rate this book. I don't "love it" as my 5-star rating would indicate. What I appreciate is that it was written... and that it was written to pour light on a very dark subject. The material in this book was instrumental in freeing someone very special to me as they were going through much about which the book warns. If you're feeling that your position in the Messiah is based on "how well you're doing" in your works -- especially when the checklist is being mandated by someone in an authority position, please read this book. Experience that your position is secure in His work and not your own. If you feel conviction, though, internally -- from the still, small voice, THAT is what you heed... and He will give you the strength to become more refined.

This is such a well written, compassionate book. I came out of an abusive church, and it has been so helpful to have the abuses named and called out as wrong. As the authors write, one of the big things that happens in these churches is that if you talk about a problem, it is because you are the problem. You end up thinking that you are crazy or just a terrible sinner. This book gives back the power to say "No! There is a problem and it's not just me." It's a hard book to read, as I suppose any book about trauma is, but it has been incredibly healing.

powerful!truth! So glad that I made this purchase. After years of questioning what we were witnessing and feeling like we were alone and maybe even wrong it was refreshing to read these encouraging words that affirmed we were seeing clearly. I would recommend ANYONE in ministry read this book or really anyone that has experienced any kind of abuse could find healing in these pages! I have already given my copy to someone else that I felt may need to read these hope filled words!

I buy this book for everyone that I can get to read it. This book was a text book at our Seminary and a must read for anyone who is a Christian. The authors' answer the question: What part is God's and what part is mine, in life. Just read this book; it is a wonderful read. I lost count how many times I've reread it personally.

One of the best books I've read on this topic! Def a must read if you have ever experienced spiritual abuse! There's also a website that VanVonderen and Johnson mention in this book that has also lead to other resources that have been tremendously helpful. This book is a summation of those resources. A great and helpful read for someone who has been victimized by wolves in sheeps clothing. This book was very helpful to me in putting into words what I was feeling and experiencing but couldn't pin point. Very grateful to have come across this book.

Spiritual abuse is powerful and effective because it is usually subtle. This book does a great job of uncovering and exposing the ways it is so widespread and accepted when it is not seen for what it is.

I first stumbled upon this book doing research on the topic of scripture twisting. I did not expect to receive any personal benefit from reading this but once I read the first paragraph, I knew this book was for me. The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse is a page turner. It is filled from beginning to end with spiritual guidance on how to identify and heal from the effects of spiritual abuse. Many of the examples are eye opening and if you have endured spiritual abuse to some extent, you may find yourself reliving those experiences. Though this may sound painful, if you give this book a chance you will find the Authors are guiding you along the path toward healing and grace. I would highly suggest this book as a tool for anyone looking for healing or looking to understand the wounded.

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