

Healing Spiritual Abuse with Reiki

A Christian Perspective

BY ELIZABETH POWELL



savior at an early age. Looking back, I thought my soul was good for all eternity; why was I miserable? Soon, I found out a lot of other people felt the same way. It wasn't until I left home that I realized that, since birth, I was raised in a fear-based Christian home. When families and churches engage in this kind of fear-based Christianity, it opens the door to spiritual abuse.

We often hear about other forms of abuse like physical, emotional, and mental. However, rarely do we hear the term "spiritual abuse." According to WebMD, "Any attempt to exert power and control over someone using

I KNEELED BEFORE MY BED to pray. I clasped my hands, and a rush of thoughts and desires clouded my mind. Praying was so easy for me all my life, but I couldn't find the words after getting married and leaving my home. With tears in my eyes, I finally said to God the very thing I didn't want to say. "I can't do this anymore; I don't know how to talk to you." The way I had been taught wasn't working. I thought back to all the times I heard how I didn't deserve God to love me. If you question God or what the church says, then you must not be in good standing. The devil is in everything, including my questioning thoughts. By nature, I am a sinful lowly person. I have always had a very spiritual connection to God as a devout fundamentalist Christian woman. I felt shame and guilt knowing that I would have to skip a prayer for that night and many other nights to follow.

I thought to myself, I am so burned out on praying to a God I'm supposed to fear. I grew up in a strict Christian home. I had all the necessary things in life: love, shelter, clothing, food, and so forth. Surely, I should be grateful, as I know others had it worse than me. I accepted Jesus as my

ing religion, faith, or beliefs can be spiritual abuse. Spiritual abuse can happen within a religious organization or a personal relationship."¹ We see this in cults or extreme religious practices. Sometimes it's even accompanied by other types of abuse. According to a study on behalf of the church's Child Protection Advisory Services (CCPAS) from Bournemouth University, they received 1,591 responses from Christians. Of the people surveyed, 1,002 identified as having experienced spiritual abuse.²

Examples of Spiritual Abuse and Fear-Based Christian Worship

This list isn't extensive, but it provides some of the most common examples for understanding aspects of spiritual abuse.³

- Using religious beliefs and guilt to accuse, belittle, and condemn the victim to engage in activities (i.e., sexual, or non-sexual in nature) in which they do not want to engage.
- Exploit doctrines of forgiveness and reconciliation to

God

Fear Based

You reap what you sow. God punishes me for what I do or don't do. You are judged by your actions, thoughts, and how you obey the church.

Love Based

God gives us mercy and grace. He doesn't punish, merely helps us learn life lessons from situations we put ourselves in. He requires our free will love. Our relationship is based on our communication and how I speak to myself daily.

- demand a victim forgive those who have abused them.
- Use their sophisticated knowledge of the Bible to position themselves outside of the teaching and authority of church leaders.
- They may pressure the victim to “move on” from ongoing hurts, playing them off as ungodly bitterness and resentments and instructing that forgiveness of any abuse will restore ones standing with God.
- Teaching that you are undeserving of God's love and using the “Wrath of God” to control thoughts, behaviors, and chosen lifestyles.
- Using religious doctrine and shame or guilt to influence a persons choice in deciding how they choose to worship.
- Teaching that God will punish a person for thoughts, decisions, and behaviors if they do not comply with the person's wishes or definitions of what a person's life should entail.

How Reiki Helped Me Recover

I decided I didn't want to abandon my connection with God because of someone else's limiting beliefs and lifetime of false understandings of God. I found a different church; I incorporated yoga into my daily life. Then I found Reiki. I scheduled my first Reiki appointment with a local healer. My first session was intense and released a lot of energy. I felt at peace, more confident, and had clarity. Soon after I tried to pray again, words of genuine expression flowed out. It felt freeing to speak to God in *my* way—not the way I was programmed. Eventually, the more I did this, the more I found my voice and decided how my relationship would look with God. I was free to design how my thoughts, beliefs, and lifestyle would look while listening to what God had to say to me directly, not through someone else.

Two years later, I became a Reiki practitioner trained in Reiki I & II, in the Usui tradition, by a local Reiki Master. As I began my self-Reiki sessions, fears and false beliefs fell away, and I rebuilt my relationship with myself and God. Taking my body out of the fight-or-flight response helped me calm the storm of emotions, returning me to a state of surrender and trust. Knowing God is my source moved me from a fear-based relationship to one based on love. I knew I needed to help others with this and similar issues to have a deeper and more meaningful relationship with God and self.

How Reiki with Spiritual Coaching Has Helped Others

I offered my Reiki services locally, and soon a line of Christian women flooded my door, many with similar stories of spiritual abuse. During my Reiki healing practice, I incorporated the spiritual coaching techniques I had learned from both trainings. A spiritual coach is someone that takes a spiritual approach to normal life coaching practices. We help others delve beneath the subconscious to help you become more congruent with the life you want to live. Remember that iceberg psyche picture? We help you tap into the subconscious that is beneath the waterline.



I follow the energy through hand placements, tapping into energy centers in the body. The Distant symbol helps to recover memories and experiences, and incorporating the Mental/Emotional symbol supports understanding the

limiting beliefs and traumatic experiences. As I move my hands and scan the body, I take the client through a series of prompts and questions about their spiritual journey.

Clients would report back to me they felt God’s peaceful energy and connection; they felt relaxed, experienced more of a connection to who they truly are, and could be released from the negativity they were carrying. Over time, they rebuilt their relationships, set healthy boundaries, found peace and clarity, and created daily habits to promote mental and emotional health, including consistent Reiki sessions.

What Can a Christian Reiki and Spiritual Coaching Session Accomplish?

While Reiki isn’t associated with any religious beliefs, it’s important to find a Reiki practitioner with whom you feel comfortable. I have found that Christians connect and feel more comfortable with a Reiki healer that also practices their similar foundational beliefs. While all spiritual and non-spiritual believers are welcome, Christian Reiki uses the foundational Reiki practices and concepts of Christian-centered beliefs.

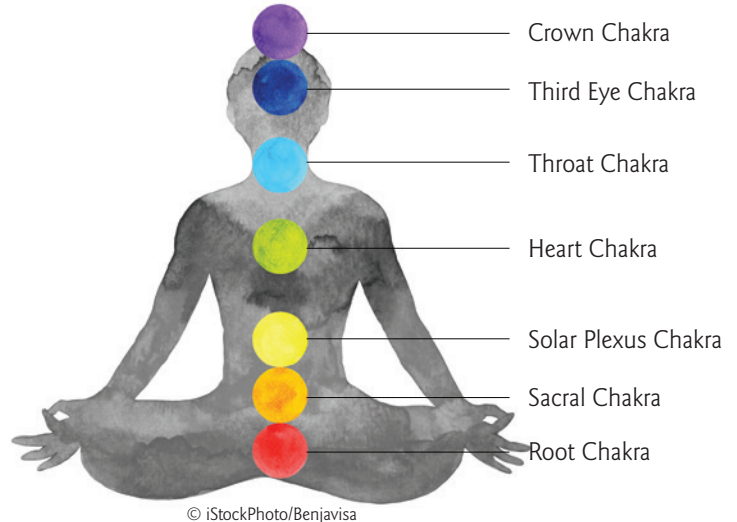
During a Reiki and spiritual coaching session it is important to help someone:

- 1. Find their voice**—Invoke the Mental/Emotional symbol and use coaching to clear traumatic experiences, allowing a person to cleanse the body of pent-up emotions such as anger. This approach relaxes the client with Reiki and asks them to speak their truth about God or their abuser. This process may also help the client find understanding about their experience, gratitude for it, and forgiveness. Finding their voice helps strip away the false ideas learned in the past.
- 2. Set their boundaries**—Using the Power symbol, helps the client understand they are protected and gives them the strength to overcome challenges. Because of this, they are able to set healthy boundaries which help them feel safe and allow them to know when their emotions are compromised, so they can speak up and stop further abuse.
- 3. Remove limiting beliefs**—The Distant symbol is used to heal limiting beliefs from the past. Once these beliefs are deconstructed, the client can put the pieces

back together in the way they want. This reconstruction allows for a more intimate experience with God, providing clear knowledge of what God expects from them from God’s perspective versus an outside source.

- 4. Opening the Chakras**—*Chakra* means “wheel” and refers to energy points in your body along the spine. They are thought to be spinning disks of energy that should stay “open” and aligned, as they correspond to bundles of nerves, major organs, and areas of our energetic body that affect our emotional and physical well-being.⁴ I focus the Reiki energy and symbols in the crown, heart, and solar plexus energy centers, or where I feel led to do so. Most spiritual connections start with a clear crown center. Still, it’s important to know the person has the personal power (solar plexus) to develop a new relationship with God and feel confident about doing this. In addition, the heart chakra plays an important part. This area focuses on forgiveness of the past, compassion for self, and accepting the love of God.

Chakra System



What to Do If You Think You Have Been Spiritually Abused

Should you feel that you have been spiritually abused, please reach out to local professionals such as shelters, non-profit organizations, counselors, or online resources such as www.thehotline.org. Many can be used with Reiki and complement each other. Finally, if you are a Christian and have questions about Reiki, there are great scriptures such as:

- Luke 9:2
- John 14:12-14
- 1 Corinthians 12:7-11
- John 3:12

It's common for Christians to display fear of Reiki since it is a concept outside of their beliefs. I remind them that Reiki doesn't require any spiritual beliefs to receive its benefits. Receiving Reiki doesn't alter your state of salvation. First, decide if you have or are currently experiencing any of the examples of spiritual abuse presented here. If you are uncomfortable because the limiting beliefs of others have made you feel a false understanding of God, or a disconnection, seek support. Reiki and spiritual counseling can help you find your voice, set new boundaries, remove limiting beliefs, and establish a new relationship with God. ■



Elizabeth Powell is a Reiki practitioner, a fitness instructor, and spiritual coach. She became a Reiki Level I & II practitioner June 2021, receiving her training and attunements from Reiki Master Carrie Jeroslow. Since then, Elizabeth has been helping fellow women, particularly Christian women, deal with issues such as spiritual abuse, removing limiting beliefs, and reconnecting to God and Self. In addition, she enjoys teaching Zumba, yoga, meditation, and energy-healing classes. You may reach her online at www.ElizabethPowellFitness.com.

Endnotes

- ¹ WebMD Editorial Contributors, "Spiritual Abuse: How to Identify It and Find Help," WebMD (WebMD, December 1, 2020), <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/signs-spiritual-abuse>.
- ² Lisa Oakley and Justin Humphries, "2018-01-07 Understanding Spiritual Abuse in Christian Communities," Spiritual Abuse Resources, <https://www.spiritualabuseresources.com/e-news-archive/2018-01-07-understanding-spiritual-abuse-in-christian-communities>.
- ³ Erica Hamence, "Part 2: The Characteristics of Spiritual Abuse," Common Grace, July 21, 2017, https://www.commongrace.org.au/the_characteristics_of_spiritual_abuse.
- ⁴ Gretchen Stelter, "Chakras: A Beginner's Guide to the 7 Chakras," Healthline (Healthline Media, December 19, 2016), <https://www.healthline.com/health/fitness-exercise/7-chakras>.