

15 Narcissistic Religious Abuse Tactics

By [Christine Hammond, MS, LMHC](#)

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If you suspect religious abuse, ask your clients this: is spiritual perfectionism demanded? Are you terrified of not being accepted? Does the narcissist in your life have crazily ridiculous implausible spiritual expectations?

There was a time when your religious beliefs brought you companionship and peace, but now you struggle with intimacy, insecurity, and comparison. You used to find security in your faith,



but now there is only sanctuary in ceremonies and rituals. How did you get here?

A narcissist uses their religious belief to manipulate, control and dominate you through fear. They systematically take the life out of your faith and replace themselves in the center.

It doesn't matter the religion. Major organizations such as Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Jewish or even minor

sects such as Mormon, Taoism, Confucianism, New Age, or Rastafari can be used. Even those who do not profess a belief in God such as Atheistic, Agnostic, or Satanism can be included.

It is not the type of belief but rather how the faith is used that makes it abusive.

1. It begins with dichotomous thinking, dividing people into two parts. Those who agree with the narcissist's beliefs and those who don't. Interestingly, only the narcissist is the judge and jury of who belongs on which side. Your opinion is insignificant.
2. Then the narcissist makes fun of, belittles, and shows prejudice towards other beliefs. This tactic is done to remind you that if you change your views, you will be treated likewise.
3. Suddenly the narcissist becomes elitist and refuses to associate with people or groups they consider impure or unholy. They prefer isolation and insist you do the same while condemning others who don't.
4. Next, the narcissist requires that you completely adopt their point of view. There is no room for differing opinions or questioning their authority. Any voicing of opinions to the contrary are met with threats of abandonment or divorce. There is no free will for you.
5. Demands of total submission without question follow. You are not free to question their authority and any attempt to do so is met with spiritual, physical, and/or verbal discipline.

Name calling, chastising, and the silent treatment are common maneuvers into compliance.

6. The narcissist is no longer satisfied with private dominion but instead needs the appearance of power in public. They expect strict adherence to whatever image they have created regardless of the accuracy of that image. Even the slightest hint of challenging their façade is met with quick and cruel reprimands.
7. To further intimidate, the narcissist labels people who don't comply with their beliefs as disobedient, rebellious, lacking faith, demons, or enemies of the faith. This is done in front of others to reinforce their opinions and instill fear inside and outside the family.
8. There is huge emphasis on public performance. They demand perfection and happiness at all times. Religious activities such as attending church have extreme demands, excessive expectations, and rigidity. No allowances are given even for grieving over the loss of a friend or relative.
9. Strict adherence to their rules and regulations are commanded with absolute statements about insignificant issues such as hair color or style. Non-compliance is met with severe discipline and even excommunication.
10. To further segregate, the narcissist uses secrecy or withholds information to a few select worthy individuals. Sometimes they require proof of advanced spirituality or some deeper level of commitment before they will share.
11. Questioning the narcissist is worse than questioning the religion. Blind obedience to the narcissist is expected as their opinion is more important than the religion. In essence, they have replaced your religion with themselves and you are expected to worship them.
12. The narcissist frequently uses their religious position of authority to connive for their own personal benefit which is often financial. They will justify this behavior by saying they deserve it because they are better than others. You, however, will not be included because even your best is not good enough.
13. For the narcissist, the end justifies the means. They may engage in criminal misconduct or cover up the transgressions of others in the name of their religion. This includes covering up sexual abuse, physical abuse, financial felonies, and misdemeanors. They believe they are above the law and therefore can subvert it.
14. To complete the isolation, estrangement from extended family members and friends outside of the religion is mandatory. This includes shunning, alienation, or persecution. You are completely alone now with only them as the voice in your life.
15. At the end of this, you find your own beliefs have lost their vitality and your religious growth is stagnant due to the constant abuse by the narcissist. It is not unusual for you to question your faith and even abandon it due to the sadistic behavior.

You don't have to be subject to religious abuse. Study these steps and refuse to be part of any organization that encourages this behavior. Your faith is far too precious to be destroyed by a narcissist. Don't let them steal your joy.

Christine Hammond is the award winning author of The Exhausted Woman's Handbook available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble and iBooks.

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Christine is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor by the State of Florida with over fifteen years of experience in counseling, teaching and ministry.

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