



**Simplicity
Church**
NETWORK

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SIMPLY ORGANIC FAITH

Red Flags & Green Flags: A Discernment Guide for Spiritual Language

RED FLAGS

Signs of spiritual
language used to control

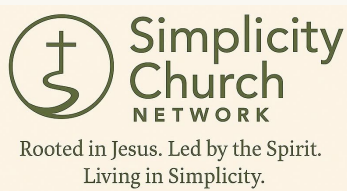
GREEN FLAGS

Marks of healthy,
Christlike communication

"By their fruit you will recognize them."

MATTHEW 7:16

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Red Flags & Green Flags

A Discernment Guide for Spiritual Language

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Discern the Fruit of the Language

Not all spiritual-sounding words reflect Jesus. Sometimes, language meant to sound holy is used to control, confuse, or intimidate. Other times, it brings freedom, clarity, and grace.

This guide helps you discern the difference. You'll find two checklists:

RED FLAGS

Indicators of spiritual misuse

GREEN FLAGS

Marks of healthy, Christlike communication

SCRIPTURE ANCHOR

"By their fruit you will recognize them."

MATTHEW 7:16

RED FLAGS

Signs of Spiritual Language Used to Control

Check all that apply from your experience.

- ☐ “God told me” was used to silence your input or disagreement
- ☐ Asking questions was labeled as rebellion or lack of submission
- ☐ Scripture was quoted at you in ways that brought shame or fear
- ☐ Disagreement with a leader was framed as disobedience to God
- ☐ People claimed spiritual insight about your life without your consent
- ☐ Urgency was created using spiritual pressure (“Act now or disobey God”)
- ☐ Prayer was used to shame, expose, or manipulate
- ☐ You were told your discernment couldn’t be trusted
- ☐ The speaker emphasized their own authority or anointing
- ☐ You consistently felt guilt, fear, obligation, or confusion afterward

What the Pattern May Be Telling You

0-2

Mostly healthy experiences

3-5

Some concerning patterns—ask Jesus for clarity

6-10

Likely spiritual control or abuse. Jesus sees. Healing is possible.

A gentle reminder

When people use spiritual language to control you, they're not speaking for Jesus.

What Healthy Spiritual Language Looks Like

These traits reflect how Jesus speaks and how mature spiritual leaders communicate.

- ☐ Makes room for questions and dialogue
- ☐ Uses Scripture to build up, not tear down
- ☐ Shares spiritual insights with humility and openness (“I sense...”)
- ☐ Points to Jesus, not themselves
- ☐ Invites prayer, not pressure
- ☐ Encourages you to hear God for yourself
- ☐ Demonstrates fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
- ☐ Applies Scripture in full context
- ☐ Promotes freedom and clarity, not fear
- ☐ Leaves you feeling loved, not spiritually dominated

Look for the Character of Jesus

“The wisdom from above is... peaceable, gentle, open to reason...”

JAMES 3:17

How to Use This Guide

- For personal healing and evaluation
- To cultivate healthier spiritual communities
- As a conversation starter with mentors, pastors, or spiritual friends

REFLECTION

Pause, Notice, and Pray

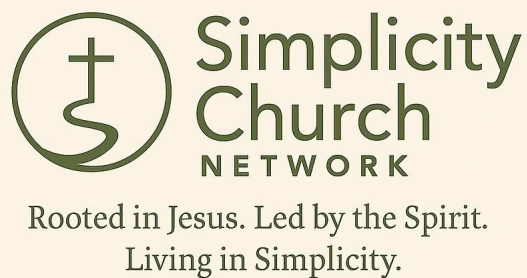
Which red flags have I encountered? How have they affected me?

Which green flags do I want to seek—or model—in my own life?

Where is Jesus inviting me to heal, grow, or speak differently?

PRAYER

Jesus, open my eyes to what is true and healthy. Heal what's been harmed. Grow in me a voice that sounds like Yours—full of grace and truth. Amen.



Discern by the Fruit.

Healthy spiritual language should increasingly lead toward Jesus, truth, freedom, humility, love, and clarity.

“By their fruit you will recognize them.”

MATTHEW 7:16

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