

'Suicide Squad' Blurs the Line To Good, Bad And Evil

One of the most anticipated superhero films in recent years, Warner Bros.' *Suicide Squad* unashamedly proclaims that it's about the "Worst. Heroes. Ever."

Based on characters from DC Comics, the anti-superhero film turns the superhero genre upside down with its bad versus evil premise.

The anti-superhero film, which had a hefty \$175 million budget, won't disappoint devoted fans with its jam-packed action and humor. But Christian parents will want to think twice with taking their preteens and younger children due to the movie's extreme violence, scary occult scenes and prevalent profanity.

The film begins with ruthless U.S. intelligence officer Amanda Waller (Viola Davis), who wants to assemble a team of the world's most dangerous, incarcerated super villains—hired assassin Deadshot (Will Smith); psychotic, ex-shrink Harley Quinn (Margot Robbie), who is the girlfriend of the Joker (Jared Leto); prolific thief Captain Boomerang (Jai Courtney); reptile-skinned mutant creature Killer Croc (Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje); heavily tattooed, pyromaniac El Diablo (Jay Hernandez); and Slipknot (Adam Beach), who can "climb anything."

The group is also joined by archeologist June Moon (Cara Delevingne), who has been possessed by an almost 7,000-year-old witch named Enchantress and ninja-like character Katana (Karen Fukuhara), who wields a magic samurai sword that stores the souls of all it has killed. Also making appearances with brief parts are Batman (Ben Affleck) and the Flash (Ezra Miller).

With her right hand man Col. Rick Flag (Joel Kinnaman), who is June's boyfriend, Waller wants the criminals—in exchange for reduced jail sentences— to defeat an enigmatic ancient entity, who wants to be worshiped by humans.

Waller believes the so-called Task Force X, a group of disparate, misfits with next to nothing to lose will do her bidding. However, once they realize they weren't picked to succeed but chosen for their inevitable failure, their defacto leader Deadshot rightly calls them the Suicide Squad. The ragtag team must then wrestle with die trying or decide if it's every man for himself.

Despite an abundance of characters, there is a true chemistry on the screen, especially between Harley Quinn and the Joker, who surprisingly is featured in only about 25 minutes of the 123-minute film.

With elements of *Guardians of the Galaxy* and the original *Ghostbusters*, *Suicide Squad* features a weak, convoluted plot about battling a demonic enemy.

Critics have slammed *Suicide Squad* with a 31% positive score on Rotten Tomatoes, so fans have tried to shut down the aggregate movie reviews site. Nevertheless, tracking suggests an opening weekend in the range of \$115 million to \$125 million, which is good enough to make it the largest August domestic release of all time—surpassing the surprise \$94.3 million debut of *Guardians of the Galaxy* in 2014.

Coming on the heels of this year's DC Comics Universe-launching *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*, *Suicide Squad* seeks to overcome that film's negative critical reception with more humor and the characters seem to be having fun.

Of strategically building the film with a slew of supervillains, director David Ayer has said: "It's a bunch of bad guys with good hearts. I think there's room for different

versions of this superhero genre. It's like the cowboy movie, which was Hollywood's bread and butter for 70 years. We're gonna continually find ways to reinvent this."

Ayer has mostly directed bloody and gory films, but *Suicide Squad* is a litter tamer with little blood than his other movies such as *End of Watch*. However, *Suicide Squad* drips a dark tone with creepy and disturbing images pushing that PG-13 rating to its absolute limits.

Suicide Squad could have easily been rated R, the rating of *Deadpool*--which made box office history earlier this year with a record \$134.2 million opening that was attributed to its vulgar humor and edgy approach to the superhero genre. The edgy approach to the genre means will likely push more families over the edge who want to enjoy superhero movies suitable for the younger set and not just mature audiences.

Content Watch: *Suicide Squad* is rated PG-13 for sequences of violence and action throughout, disturbing behavior, suggestive content and language. God's name is used in vain several times and El Diablo's fire-spewing powers are called "a gift from the devil." El Diablo also has a horrific back story about his family. One scene takes place in a strip club where Harley Quinn dances with another woman. Though they are shown intimately kissing, no lips appear to touch. Harley Quinn also wears short shorts throughout the movie, and the Joker refers to her as "the fire in my loins, the itch in my crotch." Although the violence is mostly bloodless, there are several decapitations of humanoid beings, who are also shown sliced in half. Additionally, there are at least two scenes in which people are shot point blank in the head. One character who disobeys order has his head blown off by an internal explosive device. There are many scenes of prison torture of inmates. One character is possessed by a witch and many of the scenes where the character is invoked are frightening. Some characters are transformed from humans to faceless, zombie-like creatures. Several men attempt to assist a man who has

had an attack, but he turns on his helpers and consumes them. There are numerous expletives from nearly start to finish. Numerous characters are seen drinking hard alcohol and red wine. {eoa}

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Prophecy: Dealing With the Demonic Thrones Over Your City

Over 200 intercessors gathered in Orlando recently to praise, worship, pray, prophesy and wage war against anything that opposes God's will. Honestly, it was one of the most powerful six hours of intercession I've ever experienced.

I'm hoping to see this harp and bowl style meeting rise up in cities across the nation. Order and Spirit-led liberty marked the meeting. Under the leadership of Ken Malone of Forerunner Ministries, we took authority over the seven mountains, we cried out to God for our families, we prophesied the Lord's will in the region and more.

Early in the meeting, the Holy Spirit told me He wanted to deal with thrones in the region. He revealed that worship takes place at altars and many have focused on tearing down the altars built to Baal, Jezebel and other false gods. That's appropriate, of course, but He also showed me people also worship at thrones and he wanted to dethrone some of the demonic seats of iniquity.

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Exploring the Thrones

I've written a number of spiritual warfare books, but have not dealt too much with thrones. I've heard the late Derek Prince teach on it a bit but had never explored the concept for myself—until now. Thrones are biblical, but we often neglect to deal with them in spiritual warfare circles because we gravitate toward the Ephesians 6 hierarchy and armor. Consider Paul the apostle's Spirit-inspired words in Colossians 1:13-17:

“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God and the firstborn of every creature. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers. All things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

Check out Jennifer LeClaire's School of the Prophets for prophetic training and activation.

Most spiritual warriors are familiar with principalities and powers, but not as much with dominions and thrones. The word “throne” in that verse comes from the Greek word *thronos*, which means a throne seat, a chair of state having a footstool. We know that Christ's enemies will one day be made a footstool under His feet (Heb. 10:13). Right now, some of them are sitting on demonic thrones.

Taking Down the Thrones

Many people—even Christians—are worshipping at the thrones of iniquity. Some are worshipping at the throne of entertainment; some at the throne of sports, alcohol or money. During the

solemn assembly in Orlando, the Lord gave me part of the strategy: He said when we come together in worship, little by little we will displace the thrones in our regions. Worship is a powerful force. David's worship sent the evil spirits tormenting Saul packing (1 Sam. 16:23).

Psalm 22:3 tells us God inhabits the praises of His people. Where we establish a stronghold of praise and worship, we can unseat demonic thrones. Where we press into spirit-and-truth worship—the kind of “proskuneo” worship where we reverence God the way Jesus described to the woman at the well in John 4:24—we shift the spiritual climate, recalibrate our hearts to His presence, reject sinful attitudes, and rise up in our Christ-given authority to dispossess the enemy.

In studying this out, I came upon a devotional from Derek Prince that confirms what the Lord spoke to my heart. He wrote:

We see that God's people are ordained by Him to come to a place where thrones are set, thrones for judgment, because God's people are ordained to be His rulers in the world today, to sit with Him on the throne of judgment and to rule the nations on His behalf. But the only place where God's people can take their rightful place on those thrones is the place in which they come together in unity to worship the same Lord.

So the exercise of authority by God's people depends upon our coming together. As long as we remain separate, as long as we hold ourselves apart, keeping to ourselves each in our little tribe, our little gathering, our little sect, without meeting together, we cannot exercise the authority that God has appointed for us. The authority depends on coming together. As we come together, we testify collectively that we worship the same God, the same Lord Jesus Christ, and as we make that testimony we have the right to take our place with God and with Jesus Christ upon the thrones of judgment, to stretch forth the rod of authority which has upon it the name of Jesus

and to exercise divine authority and divine judgment on God's behalf. But only as we come together in unity.

This describes the solemn assembly Ken Malone held in Orlando—and I expect to see a change. Sure, we'll have to do this more than once to see true change and we have to follow up with natural activities, but I am convinced we are heading in the right direction in taking on the thrones. {eoa}

A Simple Spiritual Truth That Can Root Out Eating Disorders

Many of you know that the foundational verse for my most recent book and ministry, *Fit for Faith*, is 1 Corinthians 6:19-20:

“What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God, and that you are not your own? You were bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's” (MEV).

The Lord used this verse, among others, nearly eight years ago to heal me of the eating disorder that Satan was using to ravage my body and soul (John 10:10). You can learn the details of that time in my life here, but today I wanted to share a simple truth that has absolutely freed me from the infernal heaps of condemnation that the enemy launches in my direction when I stumble and revert into past sins and struggles: *Repeats of the same spiritual attack are to be expected.*

I've shared publicly that while I was healed and I do stand

victorious in Christ against anorexia and the depression and pride that birthed it, I am not immune to becoming ensnared again. I know from experience and from the testimonials and observance of others that conquering a trial, persevering through a tribulation, or resisting a temptation doesn't drive Satan back to the drawing board where he angrily strikes through the demonic strategies that failed in your life as his soldiers scratch their heads and begin devising a brand new battle plan.

The devil is an old dog with old tricks. And just as he did with Jesus in the wilderness, he'll flee when you resist him, but he'll return after "a season," when "an opportune time" presents itself (James 4:7, Luke 4:13). If he was able to knock you down and draw some blood with a particular dart, don't doubt that he'll select that same arrow from his arsenal again in the future when your defenses are down.

"Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil" (Eph. 6:11, MEV).

Stress and idolatry are two hell-sent arrows that come whizzing into my path when verses like 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 become muted in my spirit by the raucous, fruitless efforts of my flesh. When I become anxious and turn to a WOD instead of God to clear my head. When I relieve stress by controlling my calorie intake with unhealthy compulsiveness instead of releasing all control to my heavenly Abba – *daddy*. If they endure long enough, these foolish activities lead me down a dangerous, dangerous road ...

Just over a year ago, the twin arrows struck me again when a new city, new house, new life as a wife and then a new business began, well, freaking me out a little bit. I began working out more and ignoring the Holy Spirit and my husband's encouragement to rest, to turn to God, to be still (Ps. 46:10). Because I typically lose my appetite when I'm stressed, I was eating less. My temple wasn't being honored at

all, but instead, treated like a sheer sack of dust ... which it once was before I believed and accepted the redeeming light of God who sacrificed His life to dwell within it.

From the time of my wedding in December 2011 to April of last year, my nearly 5-foot-5 frame dropped 10 pounds. With the patient and persevering prayers and encouragement of my husband and the Shepherd's strong, steady staff pulling me gently back to His life-giving Word, the arrows have gone up in smoke again, and I am at a healthy weight once more.

Whatever your weaknesses have been in the past, do not be afraid that they will one day overtake you when our age-old opponent finds you vulnerable. Instead, take heart and have hope that your Redeemer has *already* won the war and is with you this day to fight your battles.

"The Lord shall fight for you, while you hold your peace." (Ex. 14:14)

You see, those of us who have accepted Jesus as our High Priest have the privilege to tend to the holy temple that He inhabits, our bodies. No daily lottery. No special occasion. It's every day, every hour, every second. What an honor, indeed!

Stay fit and stay faithful. {eoa}

Note: Diana Anderson-Tyler was recently interviewed on Blog Talk Radio by Dr. Ray DiBartolomeo, the Doctor of Chiropractic at the Biggest Loser Resort. Listen to the interview.

Diana Anderson-Tyler is the author of *Creation House's Fit for Faith: A Christian Woman's Guide to Total Fitness* and her latest book, *Perfect Fit: Weekly Wisdom and Workouts for Women of Faith and Fitness*. Her popular website can be found at [www.dianataylor.com](#), and she is the owner and a coach at CrossFit 925. Diana can be reached on Twitter.

15 Comforting Bible Verses for Troubled Times

There are so many terrible things occupying the headlines these days, it can be hard to wrap your head around them. When will the madness end?

The people who lived in Bible times were no strangers to atrocity. But many were also well acquainted with the character of God—a loving, protecting Father quick to console His people. He comforted them then and comforts us now.

Take a few moments to soak in these passages of Scripture and let them sustain you in the days ahead.

1. Psalm 27:1 – *“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom will I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom will I be afraid?”*

2. Deuteronomy 31:8 – *“The Lord, He goes before you. He will be with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you. Do not fear, nor be dismayed.”*

3. Psalm 23:4 – *“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”*

4. Job 5:11 – *“He sets on high those who are lowly, and those who mourn are lifted to safety.”*

5. Lamentations 3:22-23 – *“It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed; His compassions do not fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.”*

6. **John 14:27** – *“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”*

7. **Psalms 46:1** – *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”*

8. **2 Corinthians 1:3** – *“Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.”*

9. **Psalms 119:76** – *“Let your merciful kindness comfort me according to Your word to your servant.”*

10. **John 16:33** – *“I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.”*

11. **Psalms 139:11-12** – *“If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light shall be as night about me,’ even the darkness is not dark to You, but the night shines as the day, for darkness is like light to you.”*

12. **Isaiah 49:13** – *“Sing, O heavens! And be joyful, O earth! And break forth into singing, O mountains! For the Lord has comforted His people and will have mercy on His afflicted.”*

13. **Matthew 5:4** – *“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”*

14. **Psalms 55:22** – *“Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be moved.”*

15. **Romans 8:37-39** – *“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities nor powers, neither things present nor things to come, neither height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” {eoa}*

Do you have the complete comfort that comes only from knowing Jesus Christ? Begin your life with Him today.

For the original article, visit .

Prophecy: God Is Calling Nehemiah Intercessors to Rise Up

Complacency, apathy, prayerlessness and all manner of sin has slowly chipped away at America's spiritual walls. Repentance and prayer make up the mortar that will help us rebuild the walls around our nation. Brick by brick, turning away from what grieves the Father's heart and fervent intercession will restore the hedge of protection around our nation.

Here's what I heard the Lord say last week:

"I am calling on intercessors to rise in the spirit of Nehemiah and rebuild the hedge of protection around America. I am calling on those who will refuse to come down from the wall, who will discern the enemy's strategies and refute them, and who will complete the work I've called them to start. I am seeking governmental intercessors to rally other prayer warriors to get in step with what I am trying to rebuild and restore what the enemy has destroyed and stolen. Rise up now and pray. Rise up now and stand in the gap. Rise up now to make up the hedge. I am looking for those who are willing so that My plans may be accomplished in this nation."

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With this, I set out to study what intercessors can learn from Nehemiah's determination to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem. I believe if we operate in this same spirit, we can cooperate with the grace of God to rebuild what the enemy has torn down. Remember, when Nehemiah rebuilt the wall, there was no gap in it (Neh. 6:1). When intercessors truly stand in the gap, determined prayer will eventually close the gaps.

Nehemiah intercessors are weeping in this hour: When Nehemiah discovered the condition of the walls, he "sat down and wept and mourned for days. Then I fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven (Neh. 1:4).

Nehemiah intercessors will engage repentance for America's sins: In Nehemiah 1:5-11 we see the man of God beseeching the Lord on behalf of Israel, acknowledging the nation's sin and reminding God of His covenant.

Nehemiah intercessors will have favor with God and man: Nehemiah asked the king for permission to go rebuild the walls. Not only did the king give him permission, but he gave him supplies (Neh. 2:1-8).

Nehemiah intercessors survey the land: Like Nehemiah you need to assess the damage done so you know how to pray rightly (Neh. 2:11-18). Spiritual mapping comes in handy during this process. I write more about this in my book, *Waging Spiritual Warfare*.

Nehemiah intercessors will be mocked: You can expect unbelievers—and unbelieving believers—to mock your passion for your assignment. Don't let that stop you. They mocked Jesus; surely they'll mock you (see Neh. 2:19; Neh. 4:1-3).

Nehemiah servants have confidence in God's restorative power: Nehemiah declared, "The God of heaven, He will enable us to prosper" (Neh. 2:20).

Nehemiah intercessors cast vision and rally the troops to

press into God's plan: In chapter 2, verses 17-18, Nehemiah says, "You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem is devastated and its gates are burned with fire. Come, and let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no more be a reproach." Then I told them that the hand of my God had been good to me and also about the king's words that he had spoken to me. And they said, 'Let us rise up and build!' So they strengthened their hands for the good work."

In Nehemiah 3, we see the workers working.

Nehemiah intercessors carry a passion for God's work: "So we rebuilt the wall until all of it was solidified up to half its height. The people had a passion for the work" (Neh. 4:6).

Nehemiah intercessors pray day and night: These prayer warriors understand that persistent prayer is required to see breakthrough. Nehemiah 4:9 says, "Nevertheless we prayed to our God, and, because of them, we set up a watch for them day and night."

Nehemiah intercessors persevere in the face of opposition: "When Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabians, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard how the restoration of Jerusalem's walls was progressing and how the breaches had begun to be sealed, it made them extremely furious. So they all conspired together to fight against Jerusalem in order to cause it chaos. Nevertheless we prayed to our God, and, because of them, we set up a watch for them day and night" (Neh. 4:7-9).

Nehemiah intercessors are warriors who aren't afraid to fight: "Those rebuilding the wall and those hauling the loads were working with one hand doing the task, but with the other hand holding the weapon. For the builders, everyone had his sword bound to his side, even while rebuilding. The trumpet blower worked beside me" (Neh. 4:17-18). (Also see Neh. 4:23.)

Nehemiah intercessors confront injustice: In Nehemiah 5, we

see the man of God dealing with oppression and injustice. In verse 6 he speaks, "I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. So I contemplated about this for myself and, as a result, I rebuked the nobles and officials ... "

Nehemiah intercessors will face false accusations: In Nehemiah 6:6-7, his detractors sent a him a letter accusing him of planning a rebellion and threatened to tell the king of his impure motives.

Nehemiah intercessors refuse to be intimidated by the enemy: In Nehemiah 6:8-11, the man of God set the record straight and asked God to strengthen his hands for the work.

Nehemiah intercessors won't be swayed by false prophets: Tobiah and Sanballat hired a false prophet to scare Nehemiah and cause him to stop the work. Once again, he turned his face to God and refused to stop the work (Neh. 6:12-14).

Nehemiah intercessors keep praying until revival comes: Ezra reads the book of the law in chapter 8, which led to repentance. The people mourned and grieved until Ezra finally told them, ""Go your way. Eat the fat, drink the sweet drink, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). Revival hit Jerusalem.

Nehemiah intercessors don't even stop after revival comes: They understand that revival needs to turn into transformation and reformation and it can easily escape our grasp. Nehemiah 13 outlines the man of God's reformations in Jerusalem after the revival. It didn't take long for the nation to start backsliding.

God is calling Nehemiah intercessors in this hour. He will grace us to withstand the mocking, opposition, false prophets and other enemy assignments to thwart the rebuilding of the wall. He will bring transforming revival if we don't give up

and quit. Although the Nehemiah intercessor's job is never really done and the warfare is real, the reward is great. Who will rise up and rebuild the walls in prayer? {eoa}

What Ahab and Jezebel Can Teach Us About the Spirit of Rejection

Double-mindedness begins with rejection and opens the door for an unstable identity and personality. Here are some signs and symptoms that a person may have a spirit of rejection:

- A constant desire for physical love and assurance of self-worth
- Addiction
- Attention seeking
- Despair
- Despondency
- Discouragement
- Envy
- Fantasy
- Fears
- Frustration
- Guilt
- Hopelessness
- Impatience
- Inferiority
- Inordinate affection for animals
- Loneliness
- Lust
- Perverseness

- Pride
- Revenge
- Self-rejection
- Sensitivity
- Shame
- Suicide
- Unworthiness
- Vanity
- Withdrawal

Ahab: A Picture of Rejection

We can look at the lives of Ahab and Jezebel and see not only how Ahab personified the spirit of rejection but also how rejection and rebellion function within the double-minded personality. Both Ahab and Jezebel lived lives that consisted of the very things God hates.

Ahab, the seventh king of Israel, “did more evil in the sight of the Lord than all who were before him” (1 Kings 16:30). He promoted and participated in Baal and Ashtoreth worship. He allowed sexual rites—homosexuality, bestiality, and every disgraceful perversion—and prostitution in the temple of God. Men and women volunteered to serve as prostitutes.

Ahab is also known for his double-mindedness. He was often found waffling between righteousness and the ungodly ways of Jezebel, his wife, who was the daughter of a heathen king. She pushed him to incorporate her foreign gods and religious practices into Israel’s culture (1 Kings 16:31.) This is one of the reasons God commanded Israel not to take any wives from among the conquered people. They did not have a covenant with God and would not be able to understand how He dealt with them.

Jezebel’s influence led Ahab to forget God. First Kings 14:23 states that the people had earlier built up all kinds of images and places of worship to foreign gods in the groves

under the trees. Ahab and Jezebel continued with this practice. There is symbolism that I want to point out so that you will see how these acts revealed that he was being controlled not only by a heathen wife but also by the spirit of rejection.

Strong's concordance relates the word *groves*, as it is used in the 1 Kings 14:23, to Ashtoreth and idolatrous temple worship. These "services" were held outside in the groves of trees near the temple, where huge carvings of both male and female sexual organs were displayed and worshipped.

This is lust and perversion, two demonic spirits that are part of the rejection personality—two spirits that Ahab allowed in because of his relationship to these influences because of his own oppression. Jezebel did her part, but the door was opened through rejection.

The dynamic between Ahab and Jezebel provide for us a picture for how double-mindedness works. Ahab portrays the inward manifestation of double-mindedness (rejection). He was fearful and full of lust, insecurity and self-pity. He was envious, pouty and ridden with guilt and shame.

Jezebel is a demonstration of the outward manifestation of double-mindedness (rebellion). She was stubborn, self-willed, selfish, confrontational, controlling, possessive, and full of hatred, resentment, bitterness, witchcraft and idolatry. She also had a murderous spirit. Nothing would stop her from getting what she wanted.

First Kings 21:4–7 clearly reveals how the couple—one inward, one outward—linked together to form a double-minded union and accomplish wicked things:

Ahab returned home angry and depressed because of the answer Naboth the Jezreelite had given him, for he had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." He lay down on his bed and sulked and would not eat any bread.

But Jezebel his wife came to him and said, "Why is your spirit so sad that you refuse to eat bread?"

And he said to her, "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, 'Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if you prefer, I will give you another vineyard for it.' And he answered, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'"

Jezebel his wife said to him, "Are you not the governor of the kingdom of Israel? Get up and eat bread, and let your heart be happy, for I will get the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite for you."

Ahab would pout in rejection, and Jezebel would rise up to retaliate in rebellion. Together they advanced wicked plots in Israel, driving the country to being rejected by God, led into bondage and left in desolated ruins. This is what the rejection and rebellion personalities accomplish when they work together within double-mindedness. They cannot be allowed to link up. In order to be disarmed, they must be separated and then cast out of the double-minded person.

The Jezebel spirit is domineering, manipulative and seductive. It intimidates, threatens, lies and does whatever it takes to accomplish its end.

Rebellion is a wicked personality that needs to be renounced and cast out. We will remain in bondage to it until we see how wicked it is.

The Ahab spirit is lustful, weak, fearful and tolerates wickedness. King Ahab allowed Jezebel to bring in the worship of Baal. His spirit is passive and will not stand up for righteousness. This inward and withdrawn personality is also wicked and needs to be renounced and cast out. God hates rejection just as He hates rebellion.

Rejection and Arrested Development

Sometimes people who have been rejected, especially early in life, get stuck mentally and emotionally at the time the first and significant rejection experience occurred. Many times they remain childlike in their understanding of life, in processing emotions, and in their behavior toward others, often being selfish and self-centered. It is as if they have been frozen in time. This is called arrested development. It operates in a specific area of the mind, targeting regression from ages thirteen to zero. For every year to which it causes a person to regress, a different spirit manifests. There is a different demon assigned to each age, and each (age) demon has a specific task.

As it operates in reverse, this spirit's main objective is to hinder a person's spiritual and natural growth. It aims to take the person back to the position in the womb and choke him to death. Many people who experience choking in their sleep may be struggling with this spirit. Even if its task is not completed, arrested development opens the door for spirits of terror by night, nightmares (controlled by a demon named Mare), and fear of the dark.

Many people who are bound by this spirit find that they try to escape hardship in life by turning to drugs and alcohol. It works strongly with Ahab, Jezebel, and whoredom spirits to keep the person depressed over her life, forcing her to regress to happier childhood years, while attempting to keep her from developing mentally.

The Word of God teaches us the power of the spoken word—death and life are in the power of the tongue (Prov. 18:21). In his letter to the Corinthians Paul separates and distinguishes the things spoken by children and those spoken by adults. As mature saints we are to speak with the wisdom (mature things) of the Word. In Hebrews 5:12–14 we see that our understanding is to be matured.

Left unchallenged, the spirit of arrested development will

stop a person from maturing past childhood. Adults who still play with toys and collect dolls are manifesting the characteristics of children. This could be the spirit of arrested development manifesting through fantasy and escape of reality, other spirits that come out of rejection.

Through arrested development and the other demonic manifestations we have discussed, we are gaining a clearer picture of how the spirit of rejection desolates the human soul, leaving a person fragmented and in pieces. Controlled by this spirit, people are left unable to be their true selves—the self that God created to showcase His glory.

There is no call, purpose or destiny that can be sustained while a person is controlled by this demon. {eoa}

Excerpted from John Eckhardt's book, Destroying the Spirit of Rejection (Charisma House, 2016). To purchase the book, click here.

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Mentoring Millennials: Don't

Be a Kung Fu Master

“Why can’t he just get here on time?”

“Did you notice her texting during the meeting?”

“Doesn’t he realize you don’t talk that way to an executive of the company?”

“Why is he so uptight about everything?”

“That idea probably won’t work, but they don’t want to hear what I have to say.”

“The deadline is next week. Why do they seem upset I’m not finished yet?”

These are the kinds of questions and statements you might hear when different generations are together in the workplace. Some of them come from the “seasoned” workers, and some from those newer to the workforce. You can probably figure out which is which!

“Generational tensions are inevitable, but they don’t have to leave you stuck,” says Haydn Shaw in his excellent book, *Sticking Points: How to Get 4 Generations Working Together in the 12 Places They Come Apart*. In fact, learning to work through those tensions can lead to a more productive and invigorating environment at work.

Lessons Learned

Here are some lessons I’ve learned both from the literature as well as my own experiences here at Man in the Mirror:

1. People don’t like to be categorized. Just because people are in the same general age group does not mean they are all alike. Several people I know in their twenties have said they don’t like the label *millennial*. Sure, some millennials like

video games and still live at home. But there is a rich diversity of interests, skills, beliefs, worldviews and so on among every age group. Labeling an age group and assigning them a stereotypical list of attributes is, frankly, lazy and demeaning.

2. People under 30 grew up in a world that is much different than the one people over 50 did. They have seen two recessions, they're often in student debt up to their eyeballs, and they've lived their whole life being told they can become whatever they want to be. So frankly, it's no wonder that today's younger person is eager to make more money sooner—particularly for the same work as another (older) worker may be doing, regardless of seniority. And by the way, who created the world the younger people grew up in? That's right! The people who are now hiring them and complaining about their work ethic.

3. Younger people tend to do things with more intensity for shorter periods of time. Again, a generalization, but most younger people I know tend to work in spurts. "Slow and steady" is not a value. I've noticed a great commitment by younger folks to get the job done, but often with great, concentrated bursts of effort—sometimes at odd hours—rather than incrementally over time.

4. Younger people, particularly younger men, crave being mentored—but not being condescended to. The current generation of people in their 20s and 30s may be the least "fathered" generation in American history. Over 40 percent of all children are born out of wedlock, and about the same number don't live with their biological father. I've heard repeatedly from younger guys that they want to have older guys to talk to. I've never had a younger guy say "no" when I've asked him if wants to have grab lunch or get a cup of coffee. But don't think of yourself as the "wise old master" from some bad Kung Fu movie instructing a novice. Think of yourself more like an older brother. Be a listener

and question-answerer, not a lecturer or authoritarian.

A Story

My friend Dennis, a business consultant, told the story of a business owner who had a salesman that she was getting ready to fire. She explained that he was her *best salesman*, but he was infuriating to work with. He was always late to meetings, never turned in his paperwork, and didn't seem to respect her authority. He acted like the rules just didn't apply to him. (Haydn Shaw tells a similar story in *Sticking Points*.)

Dennis' advice? Send him flowers and a note of apology. Then stop trying to make this high achiever adapt to rules that inhibit his ability to succeed! An hour on a report is an hour not selling, in this case.

Younger workers really want to succeed, and they get frustrated when the systems get in the way. Sometimes "loosening the reins" will show a younger worker that you're willing to meet him halfway. Usually they'll appreciate your willingness to adapt, and they'll meet you there.

Got a younger guy at work who is frustrating you? Here's a sure-fire plan to make it work: Get to know him. Grab lunch regularly. Get to know his family background. Find out about his hopes for the future. Don't offer unsolicited advice, but always be ready to answer questions. Be honest, but be open to the idea that you're not always right.

Paul told Timothy to not let the older men look down on him because of his age. Let's make sure that we're not the guys Paul was talking about. {eoa}

Brett Clemmer serves as vice president for *Man in the Mirror Ministries*.

For the original article, visit [.](#)

What the Bible Says About Dating and Courtship

Courtship and dating are some of the least discussed topics in the church. Yet dating has caused the most havoc, destroyed countless lives, resulted in unwanted pregnancies and abortions and even split churches apart.

Since most of the church doesn't teach on this subject, a vacuum exists resulting in our teenagers adopting the worldview of popular culture. This has led many church youth groups to become havens for dating and premarital sex.

I am attempting to give some biblical clarity on this all-important subject for the sake of our local churches and for the sanctity and safety of the next generation who will soon have their own families. The following are guidelines that best fit young people but many of the principles still apply to older and more mature single adults looking for a mate.

Dating

I have taught each of my five children the difference between dating and courtship. Dating is an unbiblical method crafted by the world with no boundaries or ethics with the following assumed rules and values:

- Two people can mutually claim to be “boyfriend and girlfriend” if they are physically attracted to one another and (this is the litmus test) have a crush and claim each other for themselves in a special relationship.
- There are no boundaries or ethics in this type of relationship. Thus, what initially starts off as French

kissing quickly accelerates to petting, fondling and then full-blown sexual intimacy.

- Although they are committed to one another as “boyfriend and girlfriend,” they most often end their relationship after several months when one “feels a crush” for someone else. Thus, the relationship ends with at least one of the individuals feeling devastated and wounded especially because of soul ties that were created from sexual intimacy.

Although the above three points are generalizations, they are true depictions of most cases regarding dating. Its devastating results on the human soul cannot be fully measured! Even worse, the double-mindedness that results from numerous sexual encounters with various people carries into future relationships and even marriage. This is because of unhealthy soul ties that have been developed, increasing the chances one’s marriage will end in adultery and divorce, which drags down children and creates generational curses due to family fragmentation.

It is amazing that most churches and youth groups do not speak about this in their discipleship processes! Every pastor should have church guidelines that include boundaries for how their youth groups should be conducted. Every youth pastor should be trained on the difference between the worldly concept of dating and the biblical concept of courtship.

Dating is revolutionized if the following guidelines are followed:

- Dating should only take place in the context of having an accompanying chaperone with young couples. Or, only group dating should be encouraged. Groups can go to a movie or have an outing, or go for dinner so that two people can sit together and get to know one another in the safety of other trusted believers.

- Dating should not be encouraged for anyone under a certain age. I would say at least 18, although others would say 16.
- Dating should not involve any physical contact. Even something as harmless as a hug can lead to petting, which will then lead to a sexual encounter.
- Youth groups should be taught that believers should not to commit themselves to anyone God hasn't clearly indicated will eventually be their spouse. This is the only way to avoid soul ties through sexual intimacy. Also, parents, pastors or trusted mature people should all be part of the process of discerning the will of God to counter the blindness that comes when feeling in love.
- Youth should be taught to have greater criteria beyond physically attraction. They should be taught what to look for in a lifelong partner: someone who has God-given aspirations with their career, an education, the right concepts of family and God, the ability to handle money well, connected to a local church, and so on.
- People should be taught to back off and not run to a person to whom they are attracted. This is to give themselves enough time to pray, seek counsel and hear from God about the other person before they fall hopelessly in love and reach the point where their heart has already made a choice to be with the other person—whether it be the will of God or not!
- Youth should make chastity vows before they enter high school. With these vows they should pledge to their parents before God they will not give their bodies over unless they are married to the other person.

Courtship

Although the Bible does not lay out specifics regarding courtship, since some of the biblical marriages were arranged by families (for example, the Old Testament patriarch Isaac

and his wife Rebecca were brought together supernaturally by God with the order of Abraham), when we piece together all the principles of Scripture we have a good plan for courtship.

Courtship based on the biblical model of love, romance, sacrifice, dignity and covenant implies the following about how two people could begin a process that may eventually lead to marriage:

Pre-Courtship Stage

A person should not even begin to look for a mate unless they are adequately prepared for the responsibilities of marriage and family, and are themselves emotionally healthy and spiritually mature. When two emotionally needy people get together in marriage, it is usually a disaster.

Go on group dates to get to know the other person or work with them in some meaningful innocuous way. This will enable the development of a deep friendship to help discern the will of God before beginning the process of committing to each other more formally.

Both parties should back off, receive counsel, and pray to hear from God with other mature leaders and/or parents before allowing their hearts to be pulled towards each other romantically. Part of discerning the will of God is judging whether or not the other person meets the biblical criteria and qualifications of being a good mate, being able to raise children and being a family leader.

Attraction should never be only physical. Based on 1 Thessalonians 5:23, we should be attracted to another person in three areas: physically, emotionally and intellectually, and spiritually (this includes personality). That is to say, a person needs to meet the criteria in each of these three areas. For example, it is a huge mistake to marry a person because they are strong spiritually when not attracted to them physically. Or, it is a mistake to marry a person for their

personality when their spiritual life is a mess.

Courtship Stage

Two people who have confirmed it is the will of God for them to be together should begin a process of spending time together. They should make a covenant together before God involving strict guidelines for not having physical contact or being alone where they can fall into sexual sin, and walking in the light and having open communication with one another.

This process should involve marital counseling conducted by older, successful married couples with spiritual depth and experience in raising strong families.

At some point, the man should formerly ask the woman's father, parent, or relevant guardian for permission to marry the woman before he officially proposes to her.

Both families should get to know each other since marriage also unites two families, not just two people.

Money should be set aside during the engagement, and jobs and education should be already secured. This is so the focus of the first few years of marriage is on building the relationship rather than on the distractions that come from financial stress, education and other things that can destroy a relationship (although many make a good case for people getting married young so they can mature emotionally together).

Going into debt and spending a lot of money on the wedding ceremony is not advised. Money should be channeled for life together more than on the one-time wedding ceremony. If you don't have the money, be simple and modest with excellence on your wedding day. Don't overdo it and go into huge debt. Invest in your marriage, not in your wedding day.

Practical and Biblical Understanding of Courtship

During the courtship Bible studies should be done together on the role of husbands and wives, and the purpose of children (Gen. 1:28). The book of Proverbs should be studied frequently together for practical wisdom and prudence in relationships and business.

Couples should especially study biblical love as found in 1 Corinthians 13 and understand that it is the commitment that arises out of covenant that will sustain their marriage—not merely the feeling of love. For example, someone may wake up without those strong feeling of romance and be deceived into thinking they are no longer “in love” with their mate. This gives an excuse to begin another search for their true “soul mate” to experience romance again! All couples must understand the difference between romantic feelings/the world’s definition of love and the biblical definition of love, which is based on action, commitment and sacrifice.

During courtship, much prayer should be offered for wisdom, favor and understanding.

Mentor couples should be secured both during the courtship stage and after the marriage takes place. Mentor couples are experienced married couples who take younger couples under their wings, coaching them through personal issues that will eventually come up.

The courtship should last as long as necessary to work out all the kinks in the relationship. No date for the wedding should be set until numerous marital empowerment sessions and counseling sessions are conducted (we do eight sessions in our church called Marriage Builders), and a test from Marriage Savers is taken (). This will further ensure the will of God is known and there is compatibility between the two people. Of engaged couples that take the Marriage Savers test, 25 percent break up. They realize they don’t have enough compatibility to make a marriage work.

No doubt, some reading this will scoff at my old-fashioned approach. But after 30-plus years of marriage, and having five biological children and hundreds of spiritual children over the past 34 years of full-time church ministry, these principles come out of watching many relationships succeed and many fall apart. {eoa}

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7 Principles Jesus Walked in to Fulfill His Purpose

The Lord Jesus Christ was the greatest motivator and example of living a purposeful life that the world has ever seen! He lived by the Scriptures since He is the living Word of God (John 1:1), and this is why all the greatest books on leadership and management operate with latent biblical principles, whether intentional or not.

The following seven principles are primary ways Jesus empowered and released purpose:

1. He asked questions. Instead of just giving the answers to life's questions, Jesus demonstrated that the best way to teach people was to ask them questions. As a matter of fact, He asked over three hundred questions and only gave answers to three of them. When we allow people to answer questions, it reveals how much they really know, what's really in their heart and involves them in the process of discovery

that enables them to remember and learn better.

2. He had goals and objectives. If a person has no specific goals or desired outcomes, they will never know if they have succeeded or not. If a person has no vision or mission, they are clueless and have no idea what their final destination will be. In contrast, when Jesus began His ministry in Nazareth the first thing He did was announce His vision statement, which was found in the words of the prophet Isaiah (Luke 4:18 and Is. 61:1,2). Furthermore, Jesus operated with objectives and goals which enabled Him to fulfill His mission and vision with a daily understanding of what, when and how to function (Luke 13:32).

3. He invested his time with those who bore fruit. The Pareto principle teaches us that 80 percent of the work done is accomplished by only twenty percent of the people in any given church or organization. Jesus was wise and invested most of His time with disciples who bore much fruit instead of with the crowds. (John 15:1-7 shows that He expected His followers to bear much fruit if they abided in Him.) Even though the Pareto theory was not yet written, Jesus knew that He would get the most results from pouring into a few rather than focusing on the many. Although He ministered to the crowds, the gospels clearly show that He invested most of His time with His twelve apostles and then the seventy disciples (Luke 9:1,10:1).

4. He confronted superficial religion. Jesus did not like superficial religion and attacked religious leaders who misrepresented the heart of His Father (Matt. 23). He insisted that religious leaders allow God to first cleanse the inner man before focusing on outward rituals and religion (Matt. 23:26; Mark 7:15). Jesus also taught that religious tradition often nullifies the word of God (Mark 7:13). Since He confronted superficial religion instead of placating it, He was able to raise up powerful men of God who demonstrated the truth with signs and wonders (Acts 3:6-7).

5. He confronted political power. When Jesus was with Pilate, He confessed that His primary purpose was to be recognized as the King (John 18:37). He was not afraid of offending those loyal to Caesar (which is the main reason He was crucified). He understood that the things that ruled external culture had to be shifted to another king and different gatekeepers if true systemic change was going to take place. Furthermore, He told Pilate that the power of His kingdom did not emanate from Rome but from His father (John 18:36). He did not say that His kingdom was not *in* this world but that it was not *of* this world.

6. He was motivated by compassion. Jesus did not heal merely to demonstrate His lordship but because He was moved by compassion (Mark 1:41). He was great because He had empathy and connected to the pain of those around Him (Heb. 4: 15). Any leader without strong feelings of love for his people will not be motivated to serve and release them to greatness.

7. He was willing to die for His purpose. Life is not worth living if there is no transcendent purpose worth dying for. Jesus not only believed in His mission but also was willing to die on the cross in order to fulfill it (Heb. 12:2). Consequently, He was able to instill and inspire such passion in His followers that most of the original twelve apostles died a martyr's death while preaching the gospel.

Truly, the seed of the early church was the blood of the first and second century church. Even today, two thousand years later, thousands of Christ followers continue to die for the cause of Christ, which is the main reason Christianity became the largest and most formidable movement in the history of the world! {eoa}

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For more understanding of some of the principles found in this article, purchase Joseph Mattera's books Ruling in the Gates and Essays On Cutting Edge Leadership.

Waging Prophetic Warfare: Engage Fully in the Battle

You have probably noticed that spiritual warfare has increased—and is increasing in the last days. It doesn't take a prophet to discern the raging culture wars, the bold rise of principalities like Jezebel, or the spirit of the world that has settled into a front row seat in far too many churches.

Whether we like it or not, we are in a war.

Indeed, passive Christianity is no longer an option for those who want to live victorious lives, especially in this world where antichrist agendas are pushing all things of Jesus out of the public square and sexual immorality is celebrated rather than mourned. We have moved from peacetime Christianity to wartime Christianity. Of course, we are not wrestling against flesh and blood but against principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual forces of evil (Eph. 6:12).

Although the enemy is unseen, it is very real. Whether you are new to spiritual warfare or you're an expert warrior, the days in which we live demand full engagement in the battle. We do not have the luxury of retreating and hoping the darkness will

not overtake us. There is no cease-fire in the spirit. The devil will not back off and call a truce if we lay our weapons down and take off our armor. Quite the opposite; if we give up the fight, we essentially surrender to the evil forces that are warring against our minds, our bodies, our families, our finances, and the fullness of our destinies. But we are not going to do that!

Here is the problem: many believers are finding that the spiritual warfare tactics they have relied on in the past are less effective—or not effective at all—in forcing the devil to flee.

Yet I know that James 4:7 is true: “Therefore submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” Sometimes it feels like I am submitting and resisting with everything in me, yet stubborn devils refuse to obey the Word of God. At times I have wondered if there is a line of demons in formation waiting to step up and take their best shot when one is forced to flee in the name of Jesus. If so, that means we have to live a submitted-resisting lifestyle to hold back the darkness.

I want to rally the troops—the prophetic warriors. I want to reveal to you the power of the end-times spiritual warfare arsenal. God is calling prophetic warriors—those empowered by His Spirit, flowing in the gifts of the Spirit, walking in the fruits of the Spirit, and enforcing the will of the Spirit—to the front lines. Are you ready for the challenge? I’ll guarantee you this: if you will press into paradigm, you will see even old enemies finally flee.

End Times Prophetic Insight

The signs of the times are all around us. Some are questioning if we are in the beginning of the Tribulation. Others are sure we’re at least at the beginning of sorrows. Still others suggest that some of the trumpets named in the Book of

Revelation have already sounded. I don't know about all that, but I do know this: Jesus expects us to discern the signs of the times, and the signs I'm seeing convince me that we're in the end times. Consider Paul the Apostle's prophecy:

"Know this: In the last days perilous times will come. Men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, slanderers, unrestrained, fierce, despisers of those who are good, traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying its power. Turn away from such people" (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

Beyond the dying birds, earthquakes, floods, droughts, famines, beached sea lions, blood moons, wars, rumors of wars, the rise of false prophets, abounding iniquity, health epidemics such as Ebola and the bird flu, microchip implants, and the like, it is obvious that the love of many has grown cold (Matt. 24:12). Police officers are shooting civilians. Massacres are becoming commonplace. Racists are burning down church buildings. And radical Islam has declared war on most of the human race.

The spiritual war is manifesting in the natural like never before seen in our day. Although we can't pray the end times away, we can rise up in the name of Jesus and wage spiritual war against everything that opposes God's will. Of course, that means we need to discern what the will of the Lord is.

And that means we need to tap into the prophetic realm to get supernatural intelligence directly from the Spirit of God. God is calling prophetic spiritual warriors to the front lines.

Now is the time to shed some new light on Joel's prophecy about the last days. For decades we have shared it and declared it, but until now I hadn't seen beyond the surface level of the prophecy:

“And it will be that, afterwards, I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions. Even on the menservants and maidservants in those days I will pour out My Spirit. Then I will work wonders in the heavens and the earth—blood and fire and columns of smoke” (Joel 2:28-30).

I believe those prophetic manifestations are part of the end-times prophetic warfare arsenal. Many have pulled back from the battle lines—and even broken rank—because of wounds sustained in battle. But God is raising up a new breed of prophetic warriors—Special Forces—who will march in tandem with the Holy Spirit and see victories. The key to triumph is to follow the Holy Spirit’s battle plan and timing.

Excerpted from Waging Prophetic Warfare: Effective Prayer Strategies to Defeat the Enemy, by Jennifer LeClaire (Charisma House, 2016).

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