

# Why Talking Badly About Your Spouse Is Relationship Poison

Jefferson and Alyssa Bethke want to tell you: Don't talk badly about your spouse in public. It could have major consequences for your marriage. Find out why in this video. (P.S.: Don't just send this video to your spouse, saying, "You need to watch this." This video's for you too.)

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# Jentezen Franklin: The Number One Responsibility of Every Man

Jentezen Franklin believes 1 Kings 20:39-40 holds the keys to learning the primary responsibility of every man. It's a battlefield story—fittingly, because every day for believers we wage a spiritual battle. But can you stay focused on your calling?

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# How to Stop Your Kids From

# **Fighting on the Way to Church**

We've all been there. You're driving to church, and the kids just will not stop fighting. Christian comedian Ken Davis has been there—and he shares some of the hilarious ways he gets back at his kids.

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## **MercyMe Encourages Believers to Praise God Through Dance**

Sometimes the only way to show your love for God is through dance. After all, that's what David did! MercyMe celebrates God's goodness with some dance moves in this music video for "Shake."

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## **Why Christians Need to Be Prophetic Voices Against Injustice**

America needs the spirit of Martin Luther King, Jr. It needs strong Christian leaders speaking the truth in love. Leaders who are prophetic voices, crying out against sin and injustice, calling people to the feet of Jesus through acts of mercy and non-violence.

Dr. King was not only a man of prayer but also action. Through his dedicated preaching, teaching, writing and marching, he led a movement that helped change the unjust laws of segregation in the United States. Hearts and minds were transformed through his scripturally based philosophy and leadership.

The church should not hibernate within its four walls. Instead, it should be mobilized and take-action while praying. Acts of mercy and compassion should be constant, flowing out into the streets through power evangelism. This needs to be a lifestyle of love, not just an annual branded and marketed one-week campaign of kindness. The church's social action must not compromise sharing the gospel, being saturated in prayer.

I remember being part of an evangelistic small group when, in the year 2000, over 400 anarchists came to Eugene, Oregon. They wanted to have illegal concerts under the bridges and in the parks of the city for several days. This festival was leading up to a "reenactment" of the previous year's Father's Day riot. The county was on edge. And we had 24 hours of prayer in the basement of a church, where we also prepared food and other necessities for the outreach.

Food, water and blankets were given to the anarchists and to the police. Some of the anarchists told us that we were the first Christians ever to reach out to them. Hearing this I was grieved, knowing that it is tragic when the church does not reach certain segments of people due to differences. The anarchists tried to look and act intimidating, but through conversation we saw they are flawed people looking for answers in a messed-up world, needing God's love just like everyone else.

On the day of the "reenactment," I was carrying water jugs just in case the riot police would use tear gas. Both the cops and the anarchists knew who we were and what we were doing. We were revealing Christ's love to everyone during those troubled

times. I prayed in the Spirit out loud while the police worked hard at keeping the peace for the community. But I saw hatred at work as well.

I learned early on in life that hate blinds us to the truth. If we hate fellow Christians, then we walk in darkness and are spiritually blind (1 John 2:11). Hatred is to be put to death when we are in Christ (Col. 3:5-11). Hate and "anti-hate" groups are haters when both use the same tactics, instigating violence and intimidation to stop the other's agenda. They are consumed with their ideology, blind to the repercussions of their hatred and lawlessness. Innocent people and family are caught in-between.

Haters are spiritually bound, while their violence and lack of rhetoric shows that they are uncivil and unreasonable. Their pride eventually leads to a fall (Prov. 16:18). Their actions and time in prison emotionally imprisons their friends and family. What works best is love, as Proverbs 10:12 says, "Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins."

Followers of Jesus are called to love. In John 13:34-35, Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." Our actions need to line up with Jesus' life. Living in a prejudiced culture, Jesus broke racial and social barriers. In talking with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4, Jesus brought salvation to a group of people considered "inferior" by the Jews. He modeled racial reconciliation and forgiveness in a hostile political environment, and He expected His followers to do the same.

In Matthew 28:19, Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The koine Greek word for "nations" is *ethne*, defined as "nations" and "people," (William D. Mounce's *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New*

*Testament, page 163*). Political boundaries are not implied, but ethnic groups are. Jesus was stating that the gospel is for all races, people and cultures. God's love is for everyone.

The message of love needs to be applied around the world. God is love (1 John 4:8). He loved us so much that He sent His Son who died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead (John 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:3-6). The only hope the world needs is found in Jesus. While the world is rioting, looting and screaming at one another, we need to be the rational voice of reason and dialogue, holding firmly to the word of life (Phil. 2:16).

Colossians 3:12-15 says, "So embrace, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, a spirit of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and longsuffering. Bear with one another and forgive one another. If anyone has a quarrel against anyone, even as Christ forgave you, so you must do. And above all these things, embrace love, which is the bond of perfection. Let the peace of God, to which also you are called in one body, rule in your hearts. And be thankful."

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# Neuroscience Study Proves

# Being Generous Makes You Happy

“The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will be watered also himself” (Prov. 11:25).

In recent years, many studies have suggested a link between generosity and happiness. However, the neurobiological mechanism responsible for this connection has remained elusive.

*Until now.*

## **The Neural Link**

The journal Nature Communications recently published a paper titled “A Neural Link Between Generosity and Happiness.” The paper reports findings from a study conducted by researchers from the University of Zurich in Switzerland.

The study found that participants who committed to practice generosity scored higher in markers of self-reported happiness. What’s more, the increase in happiness was strongly correlated on a neural level to specific changes in activity in key areas of the brain.

Thorsten Kahnt, PhD, assistant professor of Neurology in the Division of Comprehensive Neurology, co-authored the paper.

According to Kahnt, “There have been reports that people who spend money on others are happier, but it was always unclear why that is the case. This paper reveals the neural mechanism for why these two concepts are related.”

## **The Experiment**

Researchers recruited 50 participants who were told that they were to each receive 25 Swiss francs (around \$25 U.S.) every

week, for four weeks. Each participant was then randomly assigned to one of two groups.

One group served as a control group, and each member pledged to spend the money on themselves. The second group was populated by participants who pledged to spend the money on other people.

Each participant was then asked to complete a seemingly unrelated task where they had to make decisions benefitting either themselves or others. During this process, researchers measured the participants brain activity using functional magnetic resonance imaging also known as "fMRI."

## **The Results**

The results showed that those who were asked to use their money on others made more generous decisions when faced with the unrelated decision-making task. Those who were told to use the money on themselves did not show this increase in generosity. Additionally, when subjective happiness levels were measured post-experiment, those in the generosity group reported much higher levels of happiness.

However, the most significant finding of the study was that the increased happiness of the generosity group tightly corresponded to the findings garnered through the fMRI measurements.

The researchers discovered that, when making generous decisions, the generosity group exhibited significantly increased activity in a region of the brain called the temporo-parietal junction (TPJ). The control group did not exhibit this increased activity. Generally, the TPJ is correlated with social cognition and empathy.

The research also found that the generosity group showed an increase in connectivity between the TPJ and another part of the brain called the ventral striatum. The ventral striatum is

known to be related to reward and happiness.

“The connectivity between these two parts of the brain was modulated by the generosity that subjects showed in the experimental task,” said Kahnt. “And what’s interesting is that the signal of the striatum itself was directly related to increases in happiness.”

## **The Divinity of Generosity**

Generosity is one the core teachings of Christ. Christians have always known the value of generosity, and now science is finally catching up.

“Let every man give according to the purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7). {eoa}

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# **Prophecy:                    Expect                    the Unexpected                    &                    Sudden                    God- Encounters**

The Lord spoke to me clearly when I was in Singapore: “Expect the unexpected.” When I meditated on this, He showed me many

things, including sudden encounters with God.

In this season, we're going to see God move in extraordinary ways. Of course, we have to position ourselves in faith to believe and receive. That's why I've filmed this teaching video to unpack the prophecy with Scriptures that will build your faith and prepare your heart for what God is doing in this season.

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## **Prophecy: God Desires You to Be Delivered from the Spirit of Death**

Gabe Ahn, pastor of HRock Church, gives a prophetic word to his congregation in this moving clip. Ahn says, "It's so easy to fall into this spiritual boredom... and a lot of that's because you're emotionally dying inside."

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## **7 Common Stumbling Blocks That Tempt Leaders Into Sexual Sin**

Unfortunately, we have all too often heard of spiritual leaders (i.e. pastors) who fall into sexual sin. As a

spiritual leader who has worked with other spiritual leaders for many decades, I have observed the following demonic strategies employed by seducing spirits. Since I am a man, I will speak in the context of a male leader being tempted.

The following are seven common strategies to seduce spiritual leaders:

### **1. Counseling alone with the opposite sex**

It is a no-brainer that a spiritual leader should rarely, if ever, conduct a private counseling session with a person who has the potential for a mutual attraction. When alone in such a setting, emotional intimacy develops because of the nature of the conversations. This easily leads to a strong emotional connection that can result in sinful physical and emotional intimacy. To protect their spiritual leaders, church boards should have clear guidelines prohibiting this kind of counseling arrangement.

### **2. Praying alone with the opposite sex**

Satan comes as an angel of light and not with a red suit and a pitch fork. I have seen people with a seductive spirit attempt to use "religious reasons" for proximity to a spiritual leader. Using religious terminology and/or action to seduce an unsuspecting believer is nothing new, based on the admonition found in Proverbs 7:6-27. The rule of thumb is to never conduct private prayer sessions with a person of the opposite sex as it can lead to unbiblical emotional, spiritual, and physical intimacy.

### **3. Working alone with the opposite sex**

It is a common thing to hear that a spiritual leader fell into sin with their secretary or co-worker. This is because of the commonality of dealing with the same issues together as a spiritual team can easily lead to emotional and physical attachments—way beyond what is normal in the work environment.

The enemy can easily have a foothold when a spiritual leader spends an exorbitant amount of time alone with their (attractive) secretary or co-worker.

To limit exposure to seduction, spouses of spiritual leaders should be part of the vetting process of who works with their spouse, and the church board should insist on guidelines that limit their alone time and emphasize team meetings.

#### **4. Private social media connections**

Spiritual leaders who utilize social media for their work and ministry have much exposure to those with seducing spirits (e.g. I am continually receiving personal contacts and/or seductive pictures from beautiful women via Twitter and Facebook, and it is my M.O. to immediately delete names from my account that are suspect). One way to limit exposure of this kind is to allow your spouse the ability to view all your social media as well as text messages at any point they desire. Also, a spiritual leader should allow an assistant access to view all their accounts on a regular basis to make it difficult to hide unbiblical relational dynamics.

#### **5. Altar ministry**

During the church service, it is common after the message for people to respond to the teaching by coming to the front for prayer. I told my female leaders years ago to watch out for any potential female who continually responds to my messages and insists on being prayed for by nobody but me—I told these trusted female leaders to move them away from me and pray for them so to protect me from their possible veiled advances.

#### **6. Soul-tie attractions**

When in church ministry, you are continually in proximity to all kinds of people—including those you can possibly be attracted to spiritually, emotionally, and physically. It is not hard to imagine the potential for dangerous soul ties to

develop if the way is made for continual contact with a person with the potential for a soul tie (under the ruse of church activity or ministry). At the end of the day—spiritual leaders can use and abuse their position of authority and will be held more accountable in the eyes of God if they indulge their desires and pursue such soul ties.

Even without physical intimacy, spiritual leaders can be guilty of committing “emotional adultery” with a person who is not their spouse. Unfortunately, much of the time these relationships end in full blown sexual intimacy and adultery.

## **7. Marital conflicts**

All church ministry is fraught with tension that can spill over and negatively affect the marriages of spiritual leaders. This coupled with meeting and working with attractive church members (who treat spiritual leaders with respect and understanding) can lead to temptation, seduction and adultery.

In closing, if a spiritual leader wants to fall into sexual sin, it will be hard to stop them since there are too many opportunities to fall. For those who have a heart for God and walk in the fear of the Lord it is incumbent upon them to cultivate accountable relationships, craft strict guidelines, and be self-aware and honest with themselves regarding their motives when relating to those of the opposite sex.

My prayer is that this article will help lift the standards of holiness in church ministry and that church leadership will take whatever steps necessary to protect their spiritual leaders from seducing spirits and adultery. {eoa}

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*books or to subscribe to his weekly newsletter go to .*

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# **Why Jesus Wouldn't Want You to Quit Your Job to Go Into Full-Time Ministry**

How many times have you heard someone say they're thinking about leaving their job to enter ministry? Maybe you've even said it. But Christian vlogger Joseph Solomon thinks Jesus would want you to reconsider that position. He dives into Scripture to explain why.