

Avoiding Jezebel's Passive-Aggressive Codependency Trap

Ahab is passive. Jezebel is aggressive. Together, they create a deadly, codependent power couple who wants to steal, kill and destroy anyone who stands in their way.

Although Jezebel is the aggressor of this corrupt codependent couple, Ahab is aggressive in his own right—just not outwardly so. Understanding the concept of codependency is vital to recognizing the Jezebel-Ahab dynamic.

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines codependency as a "psychological condition or a relationship in which a person is controlled or manipulated by another who is affected with a pathological condition"; or, more broadly, "dependence on the needs of or control by another."

Ahab was dependent on Jezebel's control, and Jezebel was dependent on Ahab's needs. Together they ebbed and flowed to get what they wanted from each other—and to get each other to do what they wanted.

Of course, codependency isn't reserved for Jezebel-Ahab type relationships. You can be codependent without coming under the influence of a Jezebel or an Ahab spirit. But where you find Jezebel, you often find a codependent Ahab and vice versa.

Passive-Aggressive Codependents in Action

In the 1 Kings 21 account, we witnessed passive-aggressive codependents in action. Jezebel executed her aggressive plan perfectly, using passive Ahab, fearful eunuchs and others to do away with her opposition. Although these individuals were clearly influenced by spirits, modern psychology attempts to explain these behaviors, and we can learn plenty about the workings of Jezebel and Ahab from a quick study.

According to the New York University (NYU) Langone Medical Center, a person with a passive-aggressive behavior pattern “may appear to comply or act appropriately, but actually behaves negatively and passively resists.” This is what Ahab did when Naboth told him no. On the surface, he seemed to comply with Naboth’s wishes and went away peacefully. But he behaved negatively—climbing into bed and refusing to eat—in passive resistance.

NYU also lists symptoms of passive-aggressive personality disorder. These include a contradictory and inconstant behavior: “A person with this behavior pattern may appear enthusiastic to carry out others’ requests, but purposely performs in a manner that is not useful and sometimes even damaging.” This characterizes Ahab’s entire reign. He accepted the crown and committed to keeping a covenant with the Lord, only to marry a foreign woman who brought foreign gods into the land. He then went on to give her authority that didn’t belong to her, and she used it to kill the prophets of Jehovah and innocent Naboth.

Master Blame-Shifters

Passive-aggressive personality disorder is also characterized by intentional avoidance of responsibility, NYU reports: “Some behaviors that may be used to avoid responsibility include: procrastination—to delay or postpone needlessly and intentionally; deliberate inefficiency—purposefully performing in an incompetent manner; forgetfulness.” Finally, NYU lists several other traits, many of which we can apply directly to Ahab from the Naboth incident alone.

For example, NYU points to “feelings of resentment toward others.” Ahab resented Naboth for not handing over his vineyard. Stubbornness is another passive-aggressive trait. Ahab was stubborn against God’s will. Passive-aggressive people also tend to be argumentative. Ahab argued with Elijah, calling him his “enemy” (1 Kin. 21:20) and one who “troubles

Israel" (1 Kin. 18:17).

Jezebel's Unexpressed Anger

Both Jezebel and Ahab have unexpressed anger or hostility. Ahab never expressed his anger or hostility toward Naboth—he let Jezebel handle it. NYU's list of characteristics of passive-aggressives include being easily offended, being resentful of useful suggestions from others, blaming others, being sulky and being chronically impatient.

Again, keep in mind, please, that not everyone you meet who manifests passive-aggressive traits has an Ahab or Jezebel spirit. You may just be dealing with an immature person who saw that type of behavior modeled on the home front or in the workplace and unconsciously adopted the pattern. But where you find Jezebel and Ahab, you will find these characteristics.

Passive-aggressive traits—arguing, resenting, blaming, sulking and impatience—are essentially works of the flesh but can be fortified by demon spirits if we do not work with the Holy Spirit to grow in the grace of Christ. When we embrace rather than reject the flaws in our souls, the Holy Spirit shows us we are walking on dangerous ground. {eo}

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