

When Someone Falsely Accuses You

“So He called them to Him and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan rises up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end.”(Mark 3:23-26, MEV).

The teachers of the law walked about 100 miles from Jerusalem to Galilee with the accusation that Jesus drove out demons by the power of the devil.

How did Jesus respond to their criticism? What can we learn from His example about our own reactions to people who don't like us, misinterpret our actions or motives, or say not-so-nice things about us to other people?

First, Jesus teaches us that if we make a response, it should be direct. The teachers of the Law bad-mouthed Jesus outside His presence, but Jesus did not answer in kind. He called them to Him.

Too many times, even in church circles, criticism is passed on indirectly: “Well, I've heard this about so and so, and I cannot reveal the source but it may very well be true.” Later in His ministry, Jesus taught us to go directly to another person rather than roundabout (Matthew 18:15). Jesus set the example here with the teachers of the Law. He didn't let them get away with criticism not expressed directly.

Second, Jesus dealt with the issue and didn't attack the character of the persons making the charge. Of course, in the last week of His ministry, Jesus did excoriate the Pharisees and scribes (Mark 12:38–40, Matthew 23), but here, rather than blasting their motives, He treated their personhood with

respect by dealing rationally with their accusation. Jesus could have written them off and sent them a message: "You are children of the devil, and I won't even stoop to talk with you."

Instead, He drew them into His presence and courteously engaged them. He extended the opportunity of grace to those who liked Him least. As their rejection of Him later hardened further, He became far more direct and confrontational, but here He threw the seed of reason on the ground. If the ground had become good soil to receive His words, that was well and good. If the soil was hard, then the fault was with the soil and not the seed.

In His kingdom-divided and house-divided analogies, Jesus articulated a universal principle of relationships. A marriage can't stand when two are divided, nor can a home endure when there is division. A split church cannot effectively reach its community for Christ.

Jesus repudiated their charge that His power derived from Satan, but He didn't repudiate the existence of Satan. Jesus clearly held that evil wasn't an impersonal force—it had a face. It was a person. Satan stands behind the controls and forces of all that is wrong and terrible in this world.

How could Satan be casting out Satan when his goal is to cast "in" and not cast out? He wants to possess, not deliver; to inhabit, not vacate; to bind, not set free.

When someone falsely accuses you, can you be as gracious and direct in dealing with them as Jesus was with His critics? Will you make a reasonable response, or will you make an all-out attack on their character?

A Prayer: *Lord Jesus, place Your personality into mine. Fill all the nooks, crannies, and crevices of my life with Your presence, Your thoughts, and Your feelings. Help me deal wisely when I am the object of false accusations. {eo}*

Excerpted from Dr. Wood's book, Fearless: How Jesus Changes Everything, available from Vital Resources.

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