

Is Giving Someone the 'Silent Treatment' Really Like Witchcraft?

Spiritual witchcraft is real and I've written plenty about it in recent weeks because the spiritual climate tightens in the midst of demonic fall celebrations like Halloween. But there's another type of witchcraft that is ugly in its own right. It's not altogether demonic—but it's certainly carnal—and it still wreaks havoc on the lives of Christians who receive it.

I offered up this post on my Facebook page last week after noticing how much carnal witchcraft is in the church:

“Did you know the silent treatment (which is the stubborn refusal to talk to someone, especially after a recent argument or disagreement) is a form of witchcraft? Witchcraft is sometimes a spiritual force, but it's also a work of the flesh listed in Galatians. Intimidation is a form of fleshly witchcraft. Purposely ignoring people to 'teach them a lesson' can be a form of fleshly witchcraft. Manipulation tactics, like pouting and crying to get people to do what you want or make them feel guilty, are forms of fleshly witchcraft. I can tell you this, folks won't get far with Spirit-led Christians playing those sorts of flesh-driven games. We'll pray for you but we won't bow to manipulation. 1 Samuel 15:23 ... Rebellion to God's Word is as the sin of witchcraft. Trying to punish people with manipulation is rebellion. Can somebody say amen?”

All About the Motive

Thousands upon thousands of people responded to the post. Most people agreed wholeheartedly with a big “amen.” Others had never considered the dynamics of witchcraft as a work of the flesh. Still others didn't quite catch what I meant and asked

for clarification. Others still quoted verses from Ecclesiastes about how there is a time to speak and a time to stay silent. And at least one person cursed me. Go figure.

Yes, Ecclesiastes 3:7 says there's a time to keep silent and a time to speak. We're to be led by the Holy Spirit, though, not our flesh. It's about motive. Often wisdom dictates staying silent, but the wisdom that is from above is not going to try to use a stubborn silence to pay someone back or teach them a lesson over a petty disagreement. Make sense? Yes, at times Jesus remained silent (see Matt. 26:63) but He was led by the Holy Spirit. He wasn't keeping his lips zipped to punish someone.

I've written in the past about "When Spiritual Warfare Makes You Bite Your Tongue." In it, I talk about the nasty attacks that can come our way and how the Holy Spirit showed me the 24-hour rule based on Prov. 6:2; Prov. 12:14; Prov. 13:3; Prov. 15:23; Prov. 15:28; Prov. 16:23; and Prov. 18:16. The general idea is that there are times when a response to friends, family and coworkers who are moving in the wrong spirit is necessary—but that doesn't mean it's necessarily immediately.

"You can wait until you get over the stunned feeling that hit you when you received the message and get your heart in line with God's before you answer," I wrote in that article. "Waiting also gives the person who delivered the questionable message time to cool down or reconsider their stance. Instead of adding fleshly fuel to the fire and letting a poisonous tongue bring division by answering in the same spirit, you can wait until you have peace in your heart and respond out of that peace. You can be a peacemaker who pleases God."

It's all about the motive. If you are letting things cool off, fine. But if you are seeking to punish someone or teach them a lesson with your silence, you're not operating from a godly motive. With that in mind, let's explore what Paul the apostle

had to say about works of the flesh.

Wicked Works of the Flesh

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19-21, KJV).

So witchcraft in this instance of manipulating and punishing people is a work of the flesh because it's disobedient to the Word of God. God doesn't tell us to put a guilt trip on people, manipulate people, try to control people or the like. We're supposed to walk in love, prefer one another, honor one another, submit ourselves one to another and forgive one another.

After Saul disobeyed God's word, the prophet Samuel told him, “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry” (1 Sam. 15:23). Regarding this verse, *Matthew Henry's Commentary* says, “It is as bad to set up other gods as to live in disobedience to the true God. Those that are governed by their own corrupt inclinations, in opposition to the command of God, do, in effect, consult the *teraphim* (as the word here is for idolatry) or the diviners. It was disobedience that made us all sinners (Rom. 5:19) and this is the malignity of sin, that it is the *transgression of the law*, and consequently it is *enmity to God*, Rom. 8:7.”

When we try to punish others with the silent treatment; when we work to manipulate people with tears and pouting so they will feel guilty; when we intimidate people we are essentially practicing a form of witchcraft and idolatry.

We're idolizing ourself and our own wills and our own feelings and James says, "This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic" (James 3:15, NKJV). We're not operating in "the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

Nor are we operating in the fruit of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another" (Gal. 5:22-26).

So, now, you tell me. Does the silent treatment, intimidation and manipulation sound more to you like something the Holy Spirit would have you do or fleshly witchcraft? Does it sound like God's wisdom or demonic wisdom? Do we obey God's Word even when we're hurt or mistreated or do we follow the lusts of our flesh unto witchcraft? Selah.

Click here to download a free chapter of Jennifer's new book, Satan's Deadly Trio: Defeating the Deceptions of Jezebel, Religion and Witchcraft.

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