

Why Megachurch Pastors Keep Falling Into Sexual Immorality

Another megachurch pastor has stepped down after admitting to a long-term affair with a woman who's not his wife.

David Loveless, former lead pastor of Discovery Church in Orlando, Fla., is the third in the area to resign in the wake of immorality in the past six months. He follows Isaac Hunter, former lead pastor at Summit Church, and Sam Hinn, former pastor of the Gathering Place Worship Center in Sanford, Fla.

If those were the only three pastors to rock their churches with sex scandals, it would be hurtful enough. But sexual immorality and idolatry are growing trends in the church—and I imagine they're more prevalent in the pews than they are in the pulpits. The spirit of Jezebel is often behind this immoral trend, tapping into the lust of the flesh with its seductive agenda.

Sadly, the spirit of Jezebel is picking off pastors one by one as they succumb to the evil desires in their own hearts. Too few recognize the sinister workings of Jezebel's covert seduction. They've bought into what I call the "Jezebel deception" and are either tolerating sexual immorality in the church or merely failing to recognize the true Jezebel in operation because they are on a witch hunt for controlling, manipulative women.

What is the Spirit of Jezebel?

Jezebel is essentially a spirit of seduction that woos people into sexual immorality and idolatry. Jezebel comes to kill, steal and destroy by tempting you and then escorting you, willingly, into immorality and idolatry. Revelation 2:20

clearly reveals what the spirit of Jezebel is and its sinister motives. Jesus said, "Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols." We have a responsibility to resist the devil and he will flee. Jezebel is no exception but many continue falling because they don't see the big picture. Jezebel justifies the sins of immorality and idolary with a false doctrine of grace.

Beyond the three fallen pastors from the area of Orlando, my hometown, let's look at how Jezebel is gaining demonic momentum in the body of Christ. In March, Jack Schaap, former pastor of an Indiana megachurch, was sentenced to 12 years in prison on charges stemming from a sexual relationship he had with a teenage member he was counseling. Bishop Eddie Long was accused of having sex with teenage boys and, after photos leaked and a lawsuit was filed, he reached a settlement with them. Long was later embroiled in other offensive dramas, real estate lawsuits and financial scandals.

The sexual immorality in the Catholic Church continues to make headlines. Michael Fugee resigned in May after sexual abuse allegations. A St. Louis priest was indicted on a child pornography charge in April. A British cardinal apologized for sexual misconduct in March. Of course, everyone is unfortunately familiar with the Catholic pedophilia scandals that the Church is still trying to wade through even as new scandals arise.

A Demonic Idol

Of course, Jezebel isn't only about immorality. It's also about idolatry. I won't go into all the high-profile church financial scandals rooted in greed, which the Bible equates to idolatry (Col. 3:5). You are probably familiar with many of them. But financial improprieties are almost as common, if not nearly as hurtful, as adulterous affairs.

How is Jezebel allowed to continue destroying lives and wreaking havoc in the church? Again, too many mistakenly relegate the Jezebel spirit to control and manipulation. Make no mistake, control and manipulation are merely surface-level traits of this wicked spirit. So while much of the body of Christ wages all-out war against controlling people in the name of Jezebel, the real enemy works behind the scenes—unseen.

Let's face it. Jezebel is a demonic idol in the spiritual warfare world. Many pastors and teachers without a true revelation of this spirit's deeper motives to seduce the saints into immorality and idolatry have picked up on the buzzword in order to draw a crowd—or visitors to their websites. Indeed, incomplete teachings continue to circulate the Internet. Maybe you've seen some of the articles on how to recognize Jezebel, the 10 traits of a Jezebel spirit or even how to defeat Jezebel in 24 hours.

Meanwhile, the real Jezebel spirit is hiding behind this ignorant hype that guards the grander agenda of this ancient evil. Because we're ignorant, we are not effectively waging war against the real Jezebel. We're just whacking at surface-level weeds this spirit throws out as a distraction. The result: Pastors keep falling into sexual immorality and idolatry even while people with strong personalities are falsely labeled Jezebels and ostracized.

Hear me: Pastors and others will keep falling into immorality and idolatry until the church understands the spirit that preys on these sins and refuses to tolerate it any longer. That means refusing to tolerate the lust in your own heart and refusing to tolerate immorality and idolatry in your church. You can't fight an enemy you can't see. That's what Jezebel is counting on. Take some time to understand your enemy. Pray for your pastor, and avoid the snares of Jezebel in your own life. You may not end up making headlines if you fall into sexual immorality or idolatry, but it's just as

devastating to God's heart. Amen.

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