

Quit Tolerating the Jezebel Spirit

Is there someone in your life influencing you in a bad way? Have you tried to break free from their negative influence, but can't? It may be that there is a Jezebel spirit controlling your life.

Jesus mentioned this Jezebel spirit to the church in Thyatira: "But I have a few things against you: You permit that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat food sacrificed to idols" (Rev. 2:20).

This woman Jezebel was clearly a code word for a certain woman in the church that citizens of Thyatira knew. Jesus did not call her by her actual name because she was likely an important citizen of the Roman Empire. If He had used her actual name, then the authorities would have destroyed the book. So instead, Jesus used a wicked queen of ancient Israel to describe the type of woman that was in the church.

Even people in the church can have a Jezebel spirit controlling them. Jezebel spirits are not just found in the world. They can be seen in church. Also, the Jezebel spirit is not related only to women. Any gender can have the Jezebel spirit.

People Influence

You are a product of people influencing you. Everyone in some way or another is influenced by others. People can influence you for good or for bad. Consider Solomon's wise words, "Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man you will not go, lest you learn his ways and get a snare to your soul" (Prov. 22:24-25). You do learn ways from people by closely associating yourself with them. People rub off on you.

If you associate with godly people, then their godly ways will rub off on you, but if you associate with ungodly people, then their ungodly ways will rub off on you.

“He who walks with wise men will be wise, but a companion of fools will be destroyed” (Prov. 13:20). When God wants to bless you He sends you a wise person, but when the devil wants to harm you, he sends you a fool.

Don't become a companion with a fool. God made you to be an eagle not a turkey. Quit hanging around turkeys, otherwise, you will be eaten for Thanksgiving!

Popular Person

Jezebel was a famous queen. Like her, this Jezebel woman at Thyatira was popular as well. She called herself a prophetess. She made herself to be important. Evidently her self-advertisement worked because even God's servants were deceived by listening to her teaching. She did not simply lead people into immorality by example, but she taught it.

What was it that she taught? We get an idea of what she taught: “Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this teaching, who have not known what some call the ‘depths of Satan,’ I will put on you no other burden” (Rev. 2:24). The term “depths of Satan” is a reference to the Gnostics. They were a small minority trying to remove the apostolic teachings handed down directly by the apostles. The apostles were eyewitnesses of Christ and they alone saw Jesus in the flesh. John mentions this in his first letter, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have touched, concerning the Word of life— the life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it” (1 John 1:1-2).

Since the apostles had the distinct privilege of being with Christ in the flesh, they have a preeminent place in the

church. However, this competing sect wanted the preeminence. They believed that the flesh was sinful, and therefore, Jesus could not have become flesh. John criticized these false teachers, "For many deceivers, who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Each one is a deceiver and an antichrist" (2 John 7).

The Gnostics denied that Jesus came in the flesh and said that the apostles only saw Jesus as a spirit being, and that anyone can see Jesus as a spirit being. They claimed that Jesus visited them as a spirit being.

One of the main messages of the Gnostics was this: "Since the flesh is sinful, Jesus could not have become flesh. And since the flesh is sinful, it does not really matter what you do with your body. What matters is what you do with your spirit." From this false concept was born other ideas.

For example, in Thyatira there was an important fertility temple. At the temple, business was conducted. During business, there would be sexual acts performed in the temple as well as eating food sacrificed to idols. Some of the business people were expected to join in these sexual acts and festivals.

This problem caused an important question within the church. Should Christians conduct business in this fertility temple? Obviously the answer was no.

But Gnostics, believing that the body was evil anyway, convinced God's servants to go along with the festival in the fertility temple, saying that it doesn't really matter what you do with your body. They rationalized sinful behavior.

Tolerance Can Be a Sin

Jesus pointed out the main problem with the church of Thyatira: "*You tolerate that woman Jezebel.*" Jesus did not simply criticize the woman, but also the church. It was their

fault that she was misleading God's servants into immorality. The church should have excommunicated her, not give her a platform.

Jesus delivered the message to those being influenced by Jezebel. It may seem harsh to point the finger, not at her, but at her victims. But you see, Jesus believes that every victim has power to put a stop to their own victimization.

This article is not written to try to change Jezebel, but rather to keep Jezebel from changing you. Jesus had no hope for Jezebel changing; He said, "I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, but she did not repent. Look! I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds" (Rev. 2:21-22).

Jesus is patient, but His patience is not everlasting, otherwise, He could never eventually judge the world. He gives up on any voluntary change for Jezebel, and instead, puts her on the bed of affliction with the hope that she would eventually change because of her pain. However, Jesus offers hope for those being influenced by Jezebel. He warns the victims that if they don't repent from Jezebel's ways, then they will also suffer with her.

This message is to you. You are not a victim who can't repent. There are certain "ways" you picked up from Jezebel. You have tolerated those ways in your life. You can't anymore!

The sin of the victims was tolerance. They tolerated Jezebel. Tolerance is a word that usually has positive connotations. While tolerance can be used in a positive way, there is an ungodly usage of the word tolerance. When you tolerate something evil that affects you or others badly, then it is evil tolerance.

To tolerate is not necessarily to propagate something. It is simply letting it happen without doing anything to stop it. As

much as it seems harsh on the victims of Jezebel, they are indeed tolerating that spirit.

Rejecting Authority

Interestingly, there is no example in the Bible about the Old Testament Queen Jezebel being sexually promiscuous. Instead, she is described as a wicked queen who led people into the worship of idols. She had no regard for the rights of individuals. She also usurped authority from her husband.

The greatest manifestation of the Jezebel spirit is a rejection of authority or the abuse of authority. The greatest authority over us is God. Second is God's Word, the Bible. When a person begins to argue against the teachings of the Bible, they are manifesting the spirit of Jezebel.

God also puts leaders in the church to guide people. "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they watch over your souls as those who must give an account" (Heb. 13:17). Spiritual leaders have to make decisions based on the wisdom God provides for them, including, putting other people in charge of various ministries. They must also have the power to discipline; otherwise, they are only figure heads. Often when a person with a Jezebel spirit gets disciplined, then he or she begins to rebel. No one likes discipline, but it is necessary to run the church.

Excommunication

The hardest job I have as a bishop is to excommunicate members. Once I had to excommunicate one of our members when I found out that he had committed adultery with two different women in my church—one of those girls was 17. After confronting him, I discovered that this was a pattern in his life. He had not just committed adultery with these two women, but he had done this numerous times before he ever came to my church.

Excommunication should be the last resort that any church takes. It should only be reserved when the pastor concludes that the danger the offender poses to the church far outweighs any hope for restoration. Pastors cannot put the church at risk. Pastors cannot be overly sympathetic with people in the church who will likely hurt more people. A pastor must not tolerate the Jezebel spirit in his church.

Abusive Relationships

It's true that the Bible says that the head of the wife is the husband, but that headship must be carried out in love. But when a husband abuses his role—through abuse, neglect, adultery, abandonment—he loses the authority God gives him. If he continues, the authority will not be restored.

Sister, if you are married or seeing a man who is abusive or cheating, then you cannot put up with it. You must put a stop, and usually, the way to stop it is by ending the relationship. It is hard to do so. I get it! But you can't continue letting a man abuse his God-given authority to hurt you.

Effects of Jezebel

What are some things that the Jezebel spirit does?

- It brainwashes members of religious groups so they are afraid to act on their own conscience. Church of Scientology is an example.
- It binds a wife to an abusive marriage.
- It endangers a child by keeping him in the home of an abuser.
- It risks taxpayers' money by sheltering political leaders from accountability.
- It encourages demagoguery in a nation so minorities and the politically disenfranchised are destroyed or hurt. Hitler exercised the Jezebel spirit.
- It terrifies workers from standing up to bosses who break the law.

- It turns a blind eye toward police brutality or, conversely, overreacts toward police who are simply doing their duties.

How to Respond

A pastor can't simply tolerate sinfulness in the church without addressing it. A wife can't simply tolerate an abusive or cheating husband without taking action. Citizens can't simply tolerate demagoguery in their nation without attempting to stop it. Brainwashed members can't simply tolerate the cult; they must get out.

The problem with Jezebel is partly the blame of the victims. They let it happen. It's not a sweet and cuddly message to the victims. However, it is the message the victims need. They need to know they have power to end Jezebel's influence over their lives.

I've written this because the Jezebel spirit is still alive and working in the world and even in the church. It is important that you do not tolerate the Jezebel spirit either in your life or the lives of others.

In the end, it is your responsibility to stop others from manipulating you, enticing you to sin or causing you to rebel against true leaders. You must take a stand and refuse to tolerate the Jezebel spirit. {eoa}

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