

“The Influence of Jezebel on Individuals!”

By Lanny K. Cook ©

But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.
Revelation 2:20 NASB

There usually aren't too many Sunday morning messages in the church focusing on Jezebel. Her story is contained in the Old Testament books of I & II Kings. It's not a favorable tale, neither for Jezebel nor her husband King Ahab, who was the king of Northern Israel. Jezebel is also mentioned in the Book of Revelation chapter 2 where Jesus shares an extremely strong message to the church. Once again, this reference to Jezebel is not favorable. I believe there is a valid lesson to be learned from the story of Jezebel and King Ahab. It's a message which relates to all of us in this modern day. This lesson applies to everyone today, not only as individuals, but also collectively, as a church. I will get into the specifics of how this relates to the church in another study. But for now, I'll focus on the impact Jezebel has on individuals in our modern culture. There is a strong connection between the story of this wicked queen and modern America. In fact, I believe Jezebel's influence is greater today than it has been during any other time in the history of humanity. Breaking the spell of Jezebel can only occur by obtaining the knowledge necessary to understand the serious nature of this influence. I am convinced, that if we heed this biblical warning we can find deliverance and hope from the influence of this rebellious spirit.

To be honest, I never gave much credence to this story of Jezebel. I rarely gave it much thought one way or another. Even within all the years of ministry, both volunteer and professional, I always tried to avoid any mention or discussion regarding Jezebel. To those who would attempt to bring it up I would do my best to ignore the reference or attempt to quickly change the subject. Sadly, this is a story that merits a full study in and of itself. We need to take the time to understand what the Bible says about Jezebel and pay very close attention to the tactics of the enemy who is intently focused on killing, stealing and destroying all that is good in our lives. You see, the truth of the matter is, there is a dynamic spirit of Jezebel influencing each of us, and there is also a bit of the Ahab spirit inherent within a multitude of our responses to this controlling and manipulative spirit.

The influence of Jezebel is not an evil relegated to just sexual immorality. It is a spirit intent on perverting the very essence of our human relationship with each other, and more importantly, with God. It can turn anything and everything into a form of idolatry. It distracts our attention off of the most important things in life, by completely turning it inward towards self. It blurs our motivation, devotion and righteous intents for being in relationship with God and others, while causing us to focus our attention toward personal gain, through self-absorption and lustful pursuits. It overshadows true contentment with a self-induced cloud of deception based on personal desire and worldly gain. Jezebel's influence secures a foothold through pride, arrogance, ego, self-promotion and self-indulgence. This influence is cloaked in the pride of status, performance, accomplishment, fame, material gain and financial compensation. All of which, are attributes intricately woven into the basic needs contained within the frailty of our human nature. There's nothing wrong with most of these ambitious pursuits as long as they are sought after with moderation. It's when they are taken to the extreme that they become toxic. This is Jezebel's game plan, to get you to take any or all of these human pursuits of caring for yourself to the extreme. She uses her influence to turn healthy desires into toxic pursuits. Her enticement turns even the most modest of ambitions or needs into self-induced proliferation. That's what makes all of this so difficult to not only recognize, but also extremely challenging to address. Once engulfed within Jezebel's influence it's difficult to look beyond yourself to recognize the problem. The evidence of her influence is recognized more readily from an outsider looking in, rather than the insider recognizing her through their own eyes. It's nearly impossible to disconnect yourself from her influence in order to see the big picture of the selfish nature she so deviously induces into her victim's lives.

As mentioned earlier, Jezebel is often misconstrued as someone of extreme sexual immorality. However, the "acts of immorality along with the reference to eating things sacrificed to idols contained from the scripture in Revelation, chapter 2 holds an even deeper meaning. I believe, if you refer to the book of Kings to read more about the Queen Jezebel of Ahab's reign over Israel, you get a better understanding of what Jesus is referring to in this passage from Revelation. You see, the Jezebel of Old Testament times was a woman of untold influence over the life of her husband the king, as well as, over Israel. She convinced her husband to turn away from the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in order to worship the gods Baal and Ashtoroth. Through Jezebel's influence, most of the Israelites in the northern kingdom, turned to the worship

of these false gods. According to the prophet Elijah only 7,000 men in the entire nation were not swayed by her control. From this alone, we can infer that Jezebel's immorality included a multitude of sinful behaviors. Through the study of Jezebel's actions contained within the pages of the Old Testament we can deduce that not only were her intentions evil, but also, they were self-promoting. They were taken to the extreme. She sought complete control, power and influence over all of Israel, including her weakling of a husband, the king!

In an article from albatrus.org regarding "Jezebel in Our Society" this is what is said about Jezebel's spirit:

The Spirit of Jezebel is basically a controlling spirit working through the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. It has, in general, two aims:

- To gain identity, glory, recognition, power, and satisfy the need for the "praises of men." This is a consequence of the desire for love and self-worth focused on SELF.
- Secondly the Jezebel spirit is a man hater and seeks to emasculate all men, and divest them of their authority and power over others. It fosters a distrust and hatred of men in general.¹

I will discuss the second point in this observation in another study. The "man hater" part of this spirit is worthy of an entire study all of its own. The feminist movement embraces this emasculation mindset and provides a profound example to the depravity of an individual devoted to this cause. But for now, let's take a moment to consider the point that states, the spirit of Jezebel aims *to gain identity, glory, recognition, power and the satisfaction associated with the need of praise*. This praise is focused entirely on self. It crosses all gender lines, socio-economic boundaries, political affiliations, and societal demographics. Jezebel's influence is at work nearly everywhere we look, and it is prevalent in all aspects of society. Her influence has no boundaries and the closer we come to the end of this age, the more traction her influence will gain. In fact Paul, in his letter to Timothy shares a prophetic word regarding the influence of Jezebel during the end days. As Paul states during these days, people will pursue *their own desires*. There's no denying that this scripture provides a haunting warning to the societal trends we are witnessing at this current time in society.

For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 NIV

Robert Morris, the senior pastor of Gateway Church in Southlake, Texas shared an interesting message at a conference with pastors regarding Jezebel and Ahab, entitled STOP Tolerating the Jezebel Spirit.ⁱⁱ I happened upon it one day as I was browsing through YouTube videos. One of the profound statements he shared, was his statement that “the spirit of Jezebel cannot exist without a spirit of Ahab.” Suddenly, I realized the spirit of Ahab is the enabler to the continued influence of Jezebel in my life. It was like a light bulb lit up as I finally understood that my resistance to confronting the spirit of this secular world view was actually perpetuating her toxic abuse. I was enabling this spirit both personally and also within my professional life. Sadly, this had been going on for much of my adult life. My reluctance to set boundaries with someone under the influence of Jezebel was exasperating the situation while perpetuating their abusive behaviors toward me. The issue I was trying so hard to avoid was unwittingly being advanced by my lack of a response. I kept thinking that if I ignored it, or avoided acknowledging or addressing certain issues they might just fade away and leave me in peace. I was literally afraid to discuss much of anything with these type of people, because I knew where it would lead. It always turned into a circular conversation, twisting all of the issues back toward myself. It never failed. It was like a lesson in futility with individuals under the Jezebel influence as every discussion regarding any issue was always turned around to be my fault. Blaming others is a glaring indicator of someone using the tactics of Jezebel to manipulate both relationships and situations. Addressing any type of concern or issue would just bring more frustration into my life. However, what I didn’t realize was, my silence was the enabler which perpetuated the problem! Jezebel’s influence was feeding off my lack of response and my passivity.

Fear is actually an indicator associated with being under the influence of a spirit of Jezebel. According to Pastor Morris, if fear rises up inside you when there is a need to try to address an issue with someone, then chances are you are dealing with a spirit of Jezebel. Trying to address an issue with someone like this will always stir up an unexplainable dread. In retrospect, I realize that I have always embraced a form of the spirit of Ahab. I would go to great lengths to avoid confrontation. I considered it a form of grace, by biting my tongue, or not confronting someone over nearly any issue. But it’s a fine line between showing grace and tolerating the influence from a spirit of Jezebel. There’s a difference between showing grace and tolerating abuse. Ignoring a situation that needs to be addressed is actually a means to condone certain behaviors. The influence of the Jezebel spirit can’t be ignored. Silence, or inaction is a form of toleration, it is the enabling

influence that perpetuates the influence of this enemy. And make no mistake about it, it is an enemy. One that comes to kill, steal and destroy the lives of those under its influence.

Fear is a pretty accurate gauge for what you're dealing with any of these situation. Look at the example of Elijah after calling on God to send fire down out of the sky to consume the sacrifice on an altar immersed in water. The Lord's fire consumed everything that was around the altar, including the bull, the wood, the stones and the standing water encircling this sacrificial altar to the Lord God Almighty. Consider Elijah's reaction to Jezebel after killing hundreds of the prophets of Baal through the power of God Almighty. When Jezebel threatened to hunt down Elijah to literally send him back to meet his Maker, the mighty prophet of the One True God ran for his life and hid under a solitary broom tree. There he prayed to the Lord that he might die, (I Kings 19-20). This went beyond ordinary fear to a state of complete and total terror. This is the greatest indicator you are dealing with Jezebel.

Throughout my life I have often been too passive to stand up against this spirit of intimidation and control. I remember a couple of teachers in elementary school who used the tactics of Jezebel to not only control the class, but they also made my life a living hell through the year-long abuse they dished out to me personally. I have experienced this type of abuse in personal relationships, as well as, professional relationships throughout much of my adult life. In the modern world of public education this spirit of intimidation and control is running rampant. I was on the receiving end of this type of toxic abuse through the hands of certain principals and superintendents for much of my 28 year career in education. I've also seen Jezebel in action through numerous pastors and church leaders who use their power and position to control and manipulate people for their own personal gain or agenda. I was often reluctant to confront certain toxic behaviors of abuse associated with this spirit, because I couldn't stand the thought of the backlash I would face by waking this cruel, sleeping giant. For much of my adult life I had tolerated Jezebel both personally and professionally out of fear of rocking the boat, or hurting a perpetrator's feelings. What I finally discovered through personal experience is that individuals who embrace Jezebel's toxic behaviors literally have no feelings. At least, they have no regard for your feelings, your personal well-being, your thoughts or your words. In other words, the disregard and contempt they are able to project upon a victim is a byproduct of their self-proclaimed superiority and dominance over you. They won't allow themselves to take anything you say or do to heart. Other than to hold it against you for their own evil intents and manipulative purposes down the road.

Sadly, the Jezebel spirit is prevalent in all aspects of today's society. She is alive and well, tending to her business of destroying relationships everywhere she wanders. One of her greatest tools is rooted in the application of manipulation and control in order to promote her selfish ambition. It results in an enormous amount of fear or terror. Fear is born through intimidation, which is spawned out of her need for control. This consuming desire for control is nurtured through narcissistic tendencies, which is nothing more than self-absorption. It becomes evident through the victim's profound feeling of dread associated with having to deal with the disdain, the contrary nature, the ungodliness, the threats and the curse of being under the influence of this spirit. It's important to understand that men and women alike can embrace this spirit of Jezebel. Just like either gender can embrace a spirit of Ahab.

As I've mentioned earlier, for much of my life I had embraced a spirit of Ahab! I had stuck my head in the sand in way too many situations, hoping the Jezebel influence would leave me alone and eventually go away on its own. That will never happen, as long as Ahab is enabling Jezebel's influence over your life. My avoidance actually perpetuated the problems caused by this unwanted influence. For many years I was running as fast as I could through the weeds and the yucca plants of the wilderness, trying to shake that influence off of my backside. But it never happened until I finally realized what I had been dealing with and how my inaction enabled this debilitating influence to continue. Finally, once I learned to tactfully and consistently set boundaries within those types of relationships, the Jezebel spirit released its grip and began to slither away in retreat. However, I didn't receive instant relief from the agony of this unwanted influence in my life. Shaking it off was only the first step on the road to recovery. I spent years in therapy licking my wounds, while diligently working through the process leading to a renewed sense of emotional and spiritual healing.

The sad reality of being intimately involved in any type of relationship with someone hell-bent on furthering the cause of the Jezebel spirit is the residual effect it has on both the perpetrator and the perpetrated. Maybe I should refer to the perpetrated as the victim. In these situations there is an abuser and there is a victim. In other words, there is extreme emotional baggage associated with those embracing self-absorbed philosophies and those unfortunate enough to live or work closely with somebody who embodies these misguided perspectives and priorities. Both individuals become victims to this evil influence. However, people who advance the cause of this spirit are nothing more than big, ugly bullies. If you've seen one bully you've seen them all. What

do they have in common? They're advancing the cause of Jezebel. It happens in our homes. It happens in our schools. It happens at work. Sadly, it even happens within the confines of the local church, at least in some churches. It happens wherever people enter into relationship with one another. No matter where it happens, it involves varying degrees of emotional abuse. In essence, to summarize what the Jezebel spirit is all about, it involves tactics intent on belittling someone in order to stroke the abuser's own ego or attempt to control the situation or another individual. It's born through a spirit of self. It's perpetuated through the process of devouring others. Which of course, since this spirit spews forth from the bowels of evil, it could be compared to Satan himself who is described as a "roaring lion seeking those whom he may devour." I Peter 5:8

The Jezebel influence over time will dramatically impact the victim's self-esteem and self-worth. It's a demeaning and a demanding influence which perpetuates through the abuser doing all the taking, while the victim gives of themselves until there's finally nothing left to give. The victim becomes little more than an empty vessel. Unable to do anything more than just survive. Their ability to share thoughts, feelings or emotions are crippled due to their lack of confidence in themselves. This influence impacts a victim emotionally, physically, intellectually and even spiritually. I referred to this state of being as the "Beaten Down Syndrome." After continued abuse from this spirit, one of the few reactions left to find relief or a bit of respite is to withdraw or to hide: To pull back, into yourself; to limit exposure to this influence which was spawned in hell. Like a turtle withdrawing into its shell, the victim retreats to the confines of their inner space. Often times, this retreat provides the only real sense of sanctuary from the abusive influence of Jezebel. But, hiding in your shell never releases you from under the spell of this dreaded nemesis. It will only provide small moments of respite from the sting, and agony of the venomous attack of this spirit.

The indicators of the Jezebel influence on a victim can also include an overwhelming sense of loneliness, isolation, betrayal and hopelessness. They often become extremely pessimistic, cynical, sarcastic, and unhappy as they lose any form of light-heartedness or sense of humor. In reality, they've lost their entire sense of personal identity, resulting in a profound sense of paranoia. This paranoia is manifested through an inability to trust anybody or anything, including themselves. They lack energy, initiative and motivation even if they had been little dynamos throughout their earlier life. In fact, even if they were the most decisive, getter-done type of guy before their exposure to the abuse, the fear of failure and rejection is nearly incapacitating. Even

the smallest of life's decisions become difficult to make due to the fear associated with the influence of the Jezebel spirit. Sadly, within the very context of the Jezebel influence, the Ahab response is not only spawned, but also perpetuates exponentially. The only hope of getting out of the grip of this influence is through complete and total separation. This influence has to be completely cut out of your life.

So, as we close this study, the final thought I need to share concerns your ultimate question: "How do you overcome the influence of a Jezebel spirit?" It's simple, sort of! Be aware of their tactics and agenda. Recognize that this battle is not only a threat to your emotional survival, but it's also a deadly threat to your physical health. Understanding what is happening to you is essential. You may never understand the "why?" But you have to understand the "what." Recognizing the enemy is key. Rally the intestinal fortitude to move forward. This is paramount. Defining your obstacles is the first step in planning your escape from the Jezebel internment camp. Stop enabling abusive behaviors by allowing anyone to treat you with disdain, disregard, or disrespect. Set boundaries for appropriate behavior. Take a stand. Remove yourself from the very shadows of an abusive influence. You don't have to continue being anyone else's punching bag. Stop passively tolerating the Jezebel Spirit. Put the Ahab spirit behind you! Stop being a victim. Speak up when they speak out.

Most importantly, you need to realize this is not merely an emotional battle. This my friend, is a spiritual battle. It is one that comes straight out of the pits of hell. It is a battle between good and evil. It is a conflict where your soul hangs in the balance. The spirit of Jezebel is an agent of Satan. Her influence is focused on destroying your identity, value and self-worth. In other words, she will do everything in her power to destroy you emotionally, as well as, spiritually. From my experience, there is only one way to win this battle. Victory comes only through the grace of God. This is a conflict with eternal significance. Billy Graham shared this thought about finding strength for the conflict.

"How do we find strength for the conflict? How do we stay on course? I have often thought about this, reflecting not only on my own spiritual struggles but those I have seen in the lives of other Christians. How do we gain victory each day in the midst of this spiritual conflict? The answer, I'm convinced, can be stated very simply: *The key to spiritual victory is to stay close to God.* The Bible puts it this way: "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you" James 4:7-8). *Submit... resist... come near*—this is what we must do if we are to gain spiritual victory."ⁱⁱⁱ

Submit to God... Resist the enemy... Come near to God. It sounds pretty simple, but if you're continually facing Goliath every minute of every day, that simple formula for victory is a daunting mountain to climb. It's impossible to battle the enemy through nearly every waking moment of your life by yourself. That's why it might be necessary to remove yourself from that situation and seek help. In his book "Necessary Endings" Dr. Henry Cloud has this to say about the necessity of bringing certain things to an end.

"In the personal realm, we can get stuck in situations or relationships that are hurtful, problematic, or toxic and must be ended. Or sometimes it is not relationships we need to end but behaviors—destructive patterns and practices that hold us back. In many contexts, until we let go of what is not good, we will never find something that is good. The lesson: good cannot begin until the bad ends. In both normal life and life gone wrong, endings are a necessity."^{iv}

Sometimes certain things end in our life through our own choice. Other times, an end comes because of someone else's choosing. This is one of the most difficult challenges in all of life. Determining to end a relationship or a behavior is never easy, at least in the majority of situations. But it is a necessity at times. When dealing with any type of toxic behavior, we often realize that the only way to change the situation is to put an end to the influence. Maybe it is a behavior, or maybe it is a relationship, but there are times in this life where the only answer to a situation is to separate yourself from the problem. If you want freedom from the influence of the Jezebel spirit in your life, you need to make a choice to cut her off. Then pray without ceasing for the Lord to deliver you out of the clutches of her deadly grip. God will answer your prayer.

I feel it's appropriate to share this final thought before bringing this study to a close. As followers of Jesus Christ, neither Satan, Jezebel, nor any other demonic spirit has authority over your life. When you accept God's gift of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, you are a new creation. The old has passed away and the One, Who has all authority holds the key to your eternal destiny. You are no longer condemned to eternal damnation. You have been given new life. Jesus has authority over your life. Your life is now in His hands. You have the promise of eternal communion with the One who created you. No longer are you under the authority of the prince of this world, Lucifer. Death and sin no longer have a death-hold around the throat of your life. However, the point I need to share here is this, even though Satan has no authority over your life, this doesn't mean he and his band of sadistic followers can't try to influence you while you're living here in this world. There's a big difference between having authority over your life and having an influence in your life.

As a follower of Jesus you have the right and the power to separate yourself from the influence of those intent on inflicting harm. Separating yourself from the influence of abuse, is your choice. It's not just a spiritual or emotional battle. It is also one of a physical nature. At least relationally speaking. Don't let anyone ever control your life or allow you to fall under their evil influence. As a believer in the Lord, Jesus Christ you have been set free. It's up to you to choose who is allowed to influence your world, and who must stay out of your world because they perpetuate a negative, destructive influence. The choice is yours. The spirit of Jezebel is alive and well in the world today. But she doesn't have to be alive and well in the corner of your own little, private world. It's up to you! You can find freedom from the influence of Jezebel through the power of the Lord, Jesus Christ. I'm praying for your release from Jezebel's internment camp of fear and intimidation. May God's peace and mercy be upon you!

*“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me,
Because the LORD has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn,
To console those who mourn in Zion,
To give them beauty for ashes,
The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
That they may be called trees of righteousness,
The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.”* Isaiah 61:1-3 NKJV

ⁱ Jezebel, in our society, http://www.albatrus.org/english/church-order/women-matters/jezebel_in_our_society.htm

ⁱⁱ Robert Morris, Stop Tolerating the Jezebel Spirit, <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=stop+tolerating+jezebel+spirit+robert+morris&view=detail&mid=14C876C32F345A6DE68214C876C32F345A6DE682&FORM=VIRE>

ⁱⁱⁱ Billy Graham, The Journey, (W Publishing Group, Nashville, TN 2006)p.100

^{iv} Henry Cloud, Necessary Endings, (Harper Collins, New York, NY 2010) p. 7, 8