



The Jezebel Spirit – Part Two

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Jezebel's war against Spiritual Authority

The spirit of Jezebel will target, and then seek to divide, the relationship between a pastor and the church intercessors. The antidote? Let the senior leader appreciate, communicate and support his intercessors and esteem their contribution, and let the intercessors set their prayer focus to first seek the spiritual fulfillment of the senior pastor's vision.

Pastors are under siege. At every conference where I speak, various pastors approach and tell of terrible experiences with Jezebel-like battles in their churches. But I don't have to travel to be informed, for not a week passes where I do not hear from pastors from many places via phone, letters or emails; each desperate for specific prayer concerning the conflict in their churches. The war is over one thing: satan seeks to neutralize spiritual authority, and no enemy of hell does this more efficiently than the spirit of Jezebel.

When the Jezebel spirit attacks the church leadership-whether it involves temptation, confusion, witchcraft, fear or discouragement-it will always have as its ultimate purpose to disable the spiritual authority of pastoral leadership. Thus, Jesus promised that the church that overcomes Jezebel will be granted "authority over the nations." (See Rev 2:26-28). The Jezebel spirit seeks to divide, diminish and then displace the spiritual authority God has given church leaders.

Without pastors leading in godly authority, a church simply cannot function: confusion, ambition and chaos reign. True spiritual authority is a source of protection; it is a living shelter that covers and nurtures a home or church. Satan seeks to neutralize the leader in that Christian setting, for if he can strike the shepherd, he can scatter the sheep.

One way in which the Jezebel spirit attacks churches is by dividing intercessors from pastoral authority. We need intercessors, for without them we literally would not move forward. However, when an intercessor assumes that their "prophetic witness" is the guiding light of the church, or when they stand apart from the church leader and offer a different vision than what the leadership presents, it is actually Jezebel infiltrating that church to bring division.

The deception deepens for often those who present a vision different than the pastor's are usually presenting something that could seem godly. It is the spirit or attitude through which they communicate their perceptions that opens the door to Jezebel. The unbending demand that a leader conform to both their prophetic witness and the timing of its implementation is where this spirit gains access and causes division.

Pray The Senior Leader's Vision

The best relationship between a pastor and the church intercessors occurs when intercessors simply pray the vision of the senior church leader. His responsibility is to lead; their

responsibility is to intercede. They are not called to try to make their church become like some other church. For to do so becomes a great source of strife and heartache for all.

God has a unique call, or responsibility, that He bestows upon every congregation. That sense of direction and purpose for the local church is usually given to its founding pastor. When he leaves, the vision of the church is passed on to the church elders who, in turn, look for a new pastor who can build upon God's historic call to that congregation.

The senior leader of a church, though he is certainly imperfect, is still appointed by God as the "head of the household" (see Matt 24:45) This senior pastor, working together with his associate leaders, has the responsibility to incorporate into the church structure what the Lord brings to him. This responsibility presents itself through a variety of sources. His "leading" may come personally from the Lord, or it might emerge from counsel with his elders or other peers; it might arise from inspiration from various authors or information gained from conference speakers and other pastors. Not the least of his resources in finding God's heart would be the intercessors in the church. But intercessors must accept that the responsibility to guide the congregational household comes from God to a leader, not to the intercessors. As imperfect as that leader may be, intercessors must learn to not introduce a different vision than that which is currently guiding the congregation through the senior leader.

When one or more intercessors seek to manipulate, pressure or control the church leader with a prophetic witness, beware: the Jezebel spirit is at work. When church members are being disconnected from the senior leader through a whispering campaign and are now following a "prophetic witness," beware: again, the tactic comes from Jezebel. Remember, Jesus said of Jezebel, "She calls herself a prophetess." Beware of self-appointed spiritual authorities in the church that undermine the authority of the senior leader or leadership team.

Instead of following the trail of the discontented prophetic whisperer, pray the vision of the senior pastor. If he does not have a vision, ask him to write one up so you can support his vision and help see it fulfilled. When you have a witness born of prayer, submit it to the senior leader in meekness and let him (or him and his associate ministry team) discern it. But do not be offended if the timing of implementation comes much later or even not at all. Perhaps the word you sensed was not for everyone, but for you.

God Loves Order

One cannot truly know God nor appreciate Him as He is without being awed at the ordered array of His universe. Yes, the Almighty loves life and freedom, but at the substructure of all creation there first had to exist an immutable matrix of order. It was upon this foundation of ordered laws of physics that life emerged. Order is the source of life.

We must remember that the very same eternal mind that created the structured order of the universe, created the church. There is a divine order to the church that begins in being rightly related to Christ and the leadership He gives to the church through people. God is a God of order; order precedes life and freedom. God's mind is ordered; His will is ordered and He gives "orders" to put things in order.

It is important to note that the Lord Himself honors the order He creates. Consider: the Lord appeared to Paul, spoke to him, actually blinded him in His glory, and then said, "rise, and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you must do" (Acts 9:6). Why didn't the Lord just heal Paul? Why didn't He just tell Paul what he had to do? Paul would have to learn that, to reach God, he would have to submit to man. This is God's order and the Lord Himself honored it. Paul had to hear about Jesus from Annaias.

Or consider Cornelius: an angel appeared to this Roman centurion in a dream and told him that a man named Simon Peter would explain to him the way of salvation. Why didn't the angel simply tell Cornelius about Jesus? In the Almighty's universe, God works in an ordered fashion. Before the gentile's could enter the kingdom en masse they would be invited by the Jews, who first accepted Christ. God honored the order He created.

Consider church protocol in the book of Acts. When Philip brought the gospel to Samaria after Pentecost, miracles, conversions and great signs were accomplished. But Philip would not lay his hands upon the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit. Why? Because until this time, the Holy Spirit had only spread through the hands of the first apostles. Again, God required His servant to respect the order and authority of the first apostles.

God has an order in your church. However it is established, and in whatever way it is defined, it is a place in order and it should be respected and honored. It does not matter whether you agree or not with the governmental structure within a church; as long as you attend that fellowship you should honor the order. Most congregations are led by a pastor; some, the authority resides in the elder or deacon board; in still others, the authority comes from a bishop or even a prophetic or apostolic ministry. Whatever the structure, honor it and submit to it without dissension. If you feel you cannot grow in that congregation under its present structure, find a church where you can develop spiritually. However, do not cause strife just because you are not familiar or comfortable with the order.

The issue is not the form of government, but the life within the form. Paul wrote of apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers; John, however, spoke of the church in terms of fathers, young men and children; Peter, on the other hand, taught of elders, shepherds and the flock of God. The issue is not how the order is defined, but to understand that there is an order already established in a church and that order should be honored. It can be changed, but to change a church structure, one must submit to the elders of that church and be in agreement with the senior leader. They will pay the price for change when they are convinced God is leading. But they should not be forced to change just because someone has a problem with a church expression.

When the Jezebel spirit begins to manifest in a church, it immediately seeks to undermine the authority structure. If it cannot directly seduce a leader or cause him to commit immorality (and use that sin to diminish his authority), it will bring strife and division to challenge his authority in the church. Remember, Jezebel was a queen who ruled a king; she assumes a "prophetess" role so she can rule a church. In so doing, she seeks to create a counterfeit authority among groups of individuals in a congregation. The result is that the established order in the church is undermined, true authority is neutralized, leaders are then wearied by endless meetings.

"And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day." (Jude 1:6).

There is a proper abode for each of us in the order of God. Jesus said that, in the Father's house there were "many dwelling places" and that He was going to prepare a place of each of us. The Father's house is not only a place found in heaven; it is revealed here on earth in the body of Christ. Whenever we seek to break the order of our church, we leave our proper place and enter a realm "kept in eternal bonds under darkness."

My friends, stay loyal to the church order where you worship God. If that order does not fit your temperament, find a church that does. If you cannot find a church, perhaps you are called to start one where your vision of Christianity can be fulfilled. But whatever you do, do not open up to false authority; do not dishonor the authority in your local fellowship through gossip or

dissension; rather pray the vision of the senior pastor. For in so doing, you will help bring the church into the destiny of God and serve to fulfill the uniqueness of God's purpose.

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