

RESTORATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Prophetic Insight

12/10/18 “Therefore we must pay much more careful heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away”

Don't Let The Spirit Of Jezebel Ruin Your Christmas!

When our short book, *Growing Relationships Through Confrontation*, was first published a few weeks before Christmas in 1997, we received a frantic call from a man who wanted us to overnight 10 copies to him. He told us his family were all getting together for Christmas but so many of them were plagued by hurt feelings toward each other. He was resolutely determined to not go through another holiday gathering without these folks being reconciled.

Mike: Growing up in a Polish family we had a tradition we all took part in at the Christmas Eve dinner. Beginning with my Dad and Mom down through the family to the youngest person, we each broke off a part of a special wafer as we proclaimed blessings on each other one by one. I always thought it was neat tradition! Some twenty years after I left home, Sue and I and our son, Sean, were living at a retreat center. We invited our siblings and their families along with our uncles and aunts whose children lived elsewhere to a Christmas Eve dinner.

We'd previously purchased a package of wafers from a Polish group that made them. On the back of the package they had included the purpose for the tradition, something I'd never heard or known about: *“Break off a bit of each other's wafer while sharing a brief expression of love. If there is a wrong from the past year between two people, this is the time to mend the rift by asking for forgiveness and reconciliation.”* Both of us were stunned when we realized the deeper significance of the tradition. Like the man who ordered *Growing Relationships Through Confrontation*, we knew we needed reconciliation in our family. The slander and gossip which permeated the conversations especially of our family's women had wounded us deeply.

That Christmas Eve when our family gathered at our home, I read aloud the meaningful purpose of the tradition before we broke the wafers with each other. There were several female relatives I knew I needed to reconcile with; I had allowed resentment to build up in my heart because of their bad-mouthing. When we broke wafers with each other I asked their forgiveness for my wrongful attitude. As I continued to break wafers with different people and ask forgiveness with the appropriate ones, I noticed that no one else was asking forgiveness from anyone. I was the only one who seemed to want that clean slate from our Lord toward others. Our family was like many others we've encountered over the years — the women in particular bad-mouth others behind their backs and see nothing wrong with what they are doing. What is equally painful is that the husbands do nothing to stop them.

A decade or so later my Mom went Home to our Lord and we buried her next to my Dad. Knowing that Sue and I would soon be moving out West to work among Native Americans, I went to each of my family members while we were all standing around the casket and asked their forgiveness for any hurt I had caused them. Again, I was surprised that no one else reciprocated, evidently feeling they'd never said or done anything hurtful against Sue or me or one another.

Unconfronted Bitterness Defiles A Lot Of People! (see Hebrews 12:15)

It would be many years later as the Holy Spirit revealed to us how the schemes of Jezebel operate that we came to understand the *deceived state of mind* this demon keeps people in:

They are incapable of feeling any sorrow for the hurt they cause others. All the Jezebel spirit needs is just a little bit of resentment or bitterness to gain control *and then dominate* their soul.

**The greater the degree of bitterness that holds you captive,
the greater the domination and control the Jezebel spirit exercises in your life.**

In our years of ministry we've recognized two pervasive sources of bitterness in individuals:

- ☑ One source of bitterness that often leads to Jezebellic captivity is an unhealthy or relationally toxic interaction with *family members*. This fertile ground for seeds of bitterness to take root often develops as you are growing up. You perceived that your ideas were always being rejected or disregarded by other family members who thought more about their own personal desires than they did the well-being of the people their decisions would affect. Think about it. If you're going to be affected in some way by a decision that someone else is making and they don't ask for your input or advice, you probably feel like your dignity is being assaulted because no one thinks enough of you to listen to what you have to say. If you're ignored or silenced often enough, you may develop a **root of bitterness** toward the people who've hurt you — even if their actions were unintentional.

When appropriate, wise decision makers *first* seek advice and/or input from the people their decision will affect. The wise rely more on the interrogative “?”s in their sentences than the demands of “!” or the finality of “.” Asking questions is a far more affirming way for someone who's ultimately making a decision to uphold the dignity of others — it shows respect for them.

- ☑ A second source of bitterness which increases your vulnerability to the Jezebel spirit is directed against God. Because something you prayed for didn't happen the way you thought it should, or some form of injustice came your way, you feel like God just doesn't care about you. Your **false expectations** are actually an expression of you making yourself god rather than trusting in His love and sovereignty over everything that's happened in your life. For example, have you ever prayed for a *particular outcome* to take place, like getting a particular house or car or job? Then you already have a pre-ordained conclusion of what you want — and **you want God to give you exactly what you asked for.** But consider this. When you're earnestly seeking for HIS will to be done in your situation, you're responding as the loving child your *Abba* Father intends you to be! Then you're praying the need you have rather than the answer you'd like. This allows Him to answer in the *best* way for you and results in you glorifying Him through your testimony. And be aware that sometimes our heavenly Father answers incrementally, step by step, before the whole prayer is answered.

There are times when people are tempted to be bitter because they believe they were unjustly treated by others.

Mike: I'd like to share an incident that happened 37 years ago in which I could have easily become mired in resentment over a personal injustice done to me. But I was saved from giving way to that temptation by a wise older man who'd been wrongfully maligned himself, yet he refused to entertain bitterness. He was our beloved pastor, and he was also our dear friend. On page 82 of our [*Demolishing Strongholds*](#) workbook we include a poem entitled *Step By Step* by Frank J. Exley. I was given this poem by my pastor one night when I'd been wrongfully fired by the president of the Christian college for which I worked. (I'd uncovered \$400,000 of misappropriated endowment funds and thought the president would want to make things right. That was NOT his reaction to my discovery!)

What a blessing that our Father had Sue and me being pastored by such a man of love and wisdom!

He was born in 1908 just outside the walls of Jerusalem to parents who'd been sent there by the Holy Spirit to pray for the return of the Jewish people to the land. When I told him what had happened at the college he grabbed me by the shoulder and made me kneel down next to him. Looking me in the eye he said firmly, **"If you don't see this event as the hand of God, you will be embittered!"** Then he read *Step By Step* to me as we both knelt and then prayed together. What that man did for me stopped any chance of bitterness taking root in my soul! We've recommended this poem to thousands of people since 1981 when I first heard it. One stanza especially stands out and still rings clear in my spiritual walk:

**One step thou seest — then go forward boldly,
 One step is far enough for faith to see;
 Take that, and thy next duty shall be told thee,
 For step by step thy Lord is leading thee.**

Please, if you're plagued by a **false expectation** of what you think should be your answered prayer, **or** if your dignity has been hurt by someone else's decision, **or** if you've been unjustly treated, then your best defense against bitterness taking root is remembering that your heavenly Father is sovereign. He allows what happens to you for purposes you may never understand — but HE has allowed this to come your way. When you settle in your heart that your experience is within His sovereignty **and** you have the deepest appreciation for the price Jesus paid for your sins, the temptation to be bitter evaporates.

Our heavenly Father's answer to our prayers is often a several-step process in which His Spirit gives His children only one step of guidance at a time. If you're looking for the whole plan to be laid out for you, or you're obsessed with a perceived outcome, **STOP!!!** It will never be given to you — and out of His infinite wisdom He knows you couldn't handle knowing the whole plan at this time anyway! Your frustration that He isn't responding *when* and *how* you want Him to will make you vulnerable to the development of demonic strongholds. One step is far enough for anyone's faith to see. Take that step before you seek the next step.

If you allow yourself to become bitter, you'll defile other people by your bitter attitude or by the slander which they hear coming from you about others. You start a chain of negative attitudes that our heavenly Father will hold you accountable for. When you rob a brother or sister of joy through your bitterness, you have robbed them of one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23) — **JOY**. And as Nehemiah tells us in 8:10, the **JOY** of our Lord is our strength — so don't squash His work of joy in your life or in the lives of others.



The Demonic Power Which Jezebel Instills In The Bitter

During a prayer walk yesterday we received a revelation from the Holy Spirit about the spirit of Jezebel that flooded us. He began with an explanation of why our relatives had found it impossible to ask forgiveness so many years ago at the Christmas Eve dinner or at my parents' gravesite. Then He told us that so many others are in the same demonic captivity because the Jezebel spirit has given them a sense of demonic power to which they've become addicted.

Let us explain.

Just like our experience with our own family, there are so many others who've asked for-giveness only to find out later that someone from whom they asked forgiveness continues to bad-mouth them. And this is the insight the Holy Spirit revealed to us: "When someone persists in besmirching a person who asked forgiveness, the spirit of Jezebel gives them **demonic power** that sustains and perpetuates their bitterness. And those who listen to the slander get seduced into the same Jezebellic captivity. These people are listening to a voice from hell that feeds their own sense of demonic power over people they feel have wronged them, those they haven't forgiven."

The Holy Spirit has us sharing this because the greatest gift of the birth of Jesus is that He came to reconcile mankind with His heavenly Father, and mankind with each other. That reconciliation is exactly the purpose for the wafer tradition on Christmas Eve! Over the years we've had several very kind-hearted friends, but they each had this in common: in their desire to be friendly they frequently listened to slander and gossip others shared with them. So often we'd warn them, "**Please don't listen to anyone's bad-mouthing! There's demonic power in what they're doing to you!**" Those who continued to entertain slander were removed from us by the Holy Spirit. Only now have we realized how they were subtly infused with **demonic power** from the spirit of Jezebel — by sharing or listening to bad-mouthing.

If you've wronged someone, you must ask forgiveness from them. But after you've asked forgiveness, you may find out it was never their intent to forgive you. The **demonic power** that accompanies their bad mouthing is one of the most difficult bondages for them to free themselves from. And those who've listened to their one-sided denunciations are no less guilty.

If you're the one being bad-mouthed, don't let yourself become bitter about what others are saying about you. It's essential that you have compassion on those who are doing this to you because of the demonic captivity they are in. Pray for them!

Below is the **ONLY** path bitter people can take in order to get free and stay free. If you let a bitter attitude develop against people trapped in Jezebel's demonic power, you move yourself to the *left side* of the scale. Compassion and prayer for them are your best ways to protect yourself. The Jezebel spirit is empowering so many bitter people in this nation to bring about hopelessness, rebellion, defiance, and outright selfishness. Don't let yourself be one of them.

Mike & Sue

Turning **Bitterness** to **Blessing**

Comparison of the Hebraic and Nicolaitan Approaches

[From Lesson 31 of *Discussing How to Restore the Early Church*]

Hebraic: The Bible mandates that you forgive from your heart *without exception*; to belong to Jesus *is* to forgive. Forgiveness gets you out of *negative* territory on the chart to '0'. The emotional healing accomplished by Jesus occurs as you enter *positive* territory through prayer for, and good deeds toward, the one who has hurt you. The further a forgiving person goes into positive territory, the less likely that bitterness will return.

| <u>Unforgiveness</u> | | | | | <u>Forgiveness</u> | | | | | <u>Blessing</u> | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| -100 | -90 | -80 | -70 | -60 | -50 | -40 | -30 | -20 | -10 | 0 | +10 | +20 | +30 | +40 | +50 | +60 | +70 | +80 | +90 | +100 |
| seething bitterness, hatred, begrudging, resentment | | | | | | | | | | prayer for, compassion, acts of love and kindness | | | | | | | | | | |

Nicolaitanism: Forgiveness is optional, and bitterness is seldom confronted; past circumstances such as "*abuse*" and "*dysfunctional family*" are cited as grounds for not forgiving. The unforgiving arrogantly believe their offender has to ask forgiveness first. Few even get back to '0'; those who do usually return to negative territory—unforgiveness.