

What’s the best way not to fall into a trap? Educate yourself about the trap, find out how the trap works, find out where the traps are, and avoid the trap.

In this series, we are declaring that **Together We Stand** (or Divided We Fall!)

There are some traps, or pitfalls that will cause a division among any group of people. So, the best that we can do is educate ourselves, find out what can cause division, and avoid those divisive traps.

Today I want to talk to you about three spirits that oppose unity in a church. These three spirits ARE NOT active in our church today, so this time of peace and unity is a great time to talk about these three spirits, so that we can beware of them and never fall into their trap, because like Psalm 133 teaches us:

Unity is Good and Pleasant

Psalms 133:1-3 In Unity, there is an atmosphere that is good and pleasant.

- In Unity, the anointing of the Holy Spirit flows freely, completely covering God’s people.
- In Unity, there is a refreshing, like dew on a mountain.
- In Unity, the Lord will be able to command a blessing and give life evermore.

Next Life Transformation Step – I will memorize Ephesians 4:3.

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

Three Opposing Spirits

The Spirit of JEZEBEL

1 Kings 21:1-14 tells us the story of King Ahab of Samaria wanting to trade or purchase a vineyard from Naboth the Jezreelite. The vineyard was close to the palace and King Ahab wanted it for his vegetable garden.

- Naboth cannot sell his vineyard, it is the inheritance from his family.

1 Kings 21:4 So Ahab went home, sullen and angry because Naboth the Jezreelite had said, “I will not give you the inheritance of my ancestors.” He lay on his bed sulking and refused to eat.

Ahab’s wife comes in and ask him why he was so sullen, and he tells her what happened.

1 Kings 21:7-16 Jezebel his wife said, “Is this how you act as king over Israel? She’s basically saying, “Are you the King or not?” She panders to his ego and takes control. *Get up and eat! Cheer up. I’ll get you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.”*

- Instead of Ahab acting like the king, he eats and is merry
- Jezebel contradicts herself, and she acts in place of the king

⁸ So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name, placed his seal on them, and sent them to the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth’s city with him. ⁹ In those letters she wrote: “Proclaim a day of fasting and seat Naboth in a prominent place among the people. ¹⁰ But seat two scoundrels opposite him and have them bring charges that he has cursed both God and the king. Then take him out and stone him to death.” ¹¹ So the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth’s city did as Jezebel directed in the letters she had written to them. ¹² They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth in a prominent place among the people. ¹³ Then two scoundrels came and sat opposite him and brought charges against Naboth before the people, saying, “Naboth has cursed both God and the king.” So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death. ¹⁴ Then they sent word to Jezebel: “Naboth has been stoned to death. ¹⁵ As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned to death, she said to Ahab, “Get up and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite that he refused to sell you. He is no longer alive, but dead.”

- The Jezebel spirit wants to be in a place of power behind the scenes.

¹⁶ When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up and went down to take possession of Naboth’s vineyard.

The Judgement of the Lord

1 Kings 21:17-19 Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite: ¹⁸ “Go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who rules in Samaria. He is now in Naboth’s vineyard, where he has gone to take possession of it. ¹⁹ Say to him, ‘This is what the Lord says: Have you not murdered a man and seized his property?’ Then say to him, ‘This is what the Lord says: In the place where dogs licked up Naboth’s blood, dogs will lick up your blood—yes, yours!’”

Traits of a Jezebel Spirit

- The Jezebel Spirit Cares More About **Power** Than **Position**
 - Works behind the scene pulling the strings. (If they get in an official position or fulfill an office, 99% of the time they will fail.)
 - The Jezebel Spirit is not gender specific. In this story it is female.
 - Usually from constituency (not staff)
- Jezebel Must Have an Ahab Enabler
 - Ahab is a weak self-indulgent leader.
 - Jezebel wants to control him.

- Jezebel Has No Self-controlled Limits on Their Activity
 - No (natural) limits and will use any weapon. (Psychopath, Sociopathy) Normal people make the mistake of thinking that a Jezebel will do what normal people will do.
 - Notice this Jezebel uses manipulation, forgery, perjury, conspiracy, and murder.
 - The Jezebel spirit is a murderous spirit — has no limits (they are happy to kill and destroy, even themselves if necessary)
- Jezebel Requires People of Weakness Around Her
 - Village elders- they knew the proclamation was a forgery, they wrote back to Jezebel. (v14). They did what she told them to do
 - Accused him of blasphemy (so he could be stoned to death)
 - Accused him of sedition (so his property could be forfeited to the king)
 - The Jezebel Spirit requires a weak person out front so that it can control behind the scenes.

Applications for today

- We must find empowerment from God to know how to rebuke a brother in love.
 - “The controlling idol of the American Church is ‘friendships’ — caring more about maintaining ‘friendships’ at superficial levels than maintaining ‘friends’ at a spiritual level.”
 - What should the leaders at the village have done? Told the king? Jezebel might have killed them.
 - We have to find the empowerment and liberty to say, “I love you, I care about you, you cannot do or say those things.”
 - Do you love your friend enough to discern that spirit of Jezebel and draw him back from the abyss?
 - Being part of the community of faith is tough business for big people — not for sissies.
- God Sees It All. God Will Deal with It.
 - Nothing we think we do anonymously is hidden from God.
 - Writing the pastor anonymously is cowardly.
 - God knows who is spreading false accusations on the internet.

Recipe for Victory

- Turn the lights on (Go public with it. The spirit of Jezebel loves the darkness)
- Confront triangulation. Triangulation is a manipulation tactic where one person will not communicate directly with another person, instead using a third person to relay communication to the second, thus forming a triangle. (Get them in the room at the same time.)

The Spirit of **ABSALOM**

2 Samuel 15:1-6 In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him. ² He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, “What town are you from?” He would answer, “Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel.” ³ Then Absalom would say to him, “Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you.” ⁴ And Absalom would add, “If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that they receive justice.” ⁵ Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him. ⁶ Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the people of Israel.

Traits of An Absalom Spirit

- The Absalom Spirit Is Out to **Steal** the **Hearts** of The People.
- Vain and Self-exalting
 - Draws attention
- Highlights Contrast With “Powers-that-be” (the leader) With Themselves.
 - Normally does this before a rebellious phase or a hostile takeover attempt.
- Often Driven By a Wound (real or perceived)
 - King David was good in many ways but he didn’t do family well.
- Easily and Frequently Overreacts
- Steals affection and position
 - Jezebel works to **control**, Absalom works for **position**.
- Usually Staff

Recipe for Victory

- Act early and strongly
- Love God and His Kingdom more than you love Absalom

The Spirit of **SIMON**

Acts 8:5-20 Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great,¹⁰ and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, “This man is rightly called the Great Power of God.”¹¹ They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery.¹² But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.¹³ Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

The Church in Jerusalem sent Peter and John to Samaria and the people were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷ Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.¹⁸ When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money¹⁹ and said, “Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.”²⁰ Peter answered: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!

Traits of A Simon Spirit

- The Spirit of Simon Attempts to **Purchase Position**.
 - In Church history the word “Simony” is the attempt to purchase a church office.
- Projects His Own Control Mechanism onto Others
 - He wants something and tries to project it on you. (Well don’t you think...)
- Usually Layman
 - For someone with the Spirit of Simon - Money is prestige.

Recipe for Victory

- Know Your Source. (God is your provider.)
 - *Proverbs 23:1-3 When you sit to dine with a ruler, note well what is before you,² and put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony.³ Do not crave his delicacies, for that food is deceptive.*
- Know Where the Line is for You.
 - If it offends you, don’t do it.
 - Don’t judge others if they do it. EX: Meat offered to idols.

With All Three

- An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure.
- An Empowered Body is Strength. (Confront your friend in the parking lot.)
 - The key to empowerment is teaching. (Talk about it, preach it, and teach it.)

There is hope for saving these people operating with these spirits. They may not even be in our church. We must Speak the Truth in Love. *Ephesians 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.*

Next Life Transformation Step – Today I will begin or keep agreeing with Jesus and start praying for Believers Church and all Believers to be one, just like Father God and Christ Jesus are one.

Life App Group and Family Devotional Application

1. As you have agreed with Jesus this week and prayed for our church to walk together in unity, how has that affected your view and personal desire for unity?
2. What are you personally doing to “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace”?
3. Do you think it’s important for us to understand and be empowered to confront these Three Opposing Spirits?
4. How should we confront these Three Opposing Spirits? (Ephesians 4:15)