

12. How to handle false accusations

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While I was involved in the prison ministry in 90s, many of the prison inmates told me that either they were innocent, or the victims of the circumstance that they couldn't help but to commit the crimes even though they didn't want to. Sure, right!

It was so refreshing to meet one inmate who admitted that he killed a victim according to his premeditated plan. He even told me that he was glad that he ended up in prison, because it was there where he met the Lord Jesus.

No one wants to be falsely accused, even the worst criminals, because false accusation becomes very personal, it challenges the person's integrity. In other words, it really can get under one's skin.

You might be surprised how often false accusations appear in the Bible. Remember Joseph? He was sold as a slave by his own jealous brothers to Egyptians where he was falsely accused of rape by his master's wife and ended up in a joint. How about David? While he had no intention to be a king, but king Saul falsely accused him of trying to dethrone him and tried to pin him against the wall with his spear. Of course, you remember Nehemiah who also was falsely accused of rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem in order to become a king. How can we forget Jesus our Savior who was constantly falsely accused by the chief priests, Pharisees, and scribes?

Job, as we've been learning from this Book last 12 weeks, was falsely accused by his so-called friends as they insulted him with verbal onslaught. I believe that our Lord has this important lesson for us to prepare us, so that we may know how to handle ourselves in a godly manner against false accusations we might face or are experiencing right now.

A. THE THEOLOGY FROM THE PIT OF HELL

Job 20:4-5 "Do you not know this of old, Since man was placed on earth, 5 That the triumphing of the wicked is short, And the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment?"

Zophar was next in line to speak, but he had nothing new to say as the other two friends. It was the same old story: God punishes the wicked, so Job had better get right with God.

Zophar made three affirmations to prove that the fate of the wicked is indeed terrible: their life is brief from v4 to v11, their pleasure is temporary from v12 to v19, and their death is painful in the rest of chapter 20.

But if you are familiar with what the Bible says, the most of the people in Scripture had a much different opinion about it. According to them, the evil in the world enjoy long and prosperous life, freedom from trouble, while the righteous suffer much and even die young.

Psalm 73:3-7 For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 4 For there are no pangs in their death, But their strength is firm. 5 They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like other men. 6 Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them like a garment. 7 Their eyes bulge with abundance; They have more than heart could wish.

You may know the following people's names:

Mao Tse-tung died at age 82; Joseph Stalin 74; Nikita Khrushchev 77; Kim Il-Sung 82; Kim Jong-Il 70; Carlo Gambino 74

These people killed hundreds at the minimum. Stalin was responsible for about 60 million people's death through the Russian Communist Revolution. All of them lived very well and long life. In other words, Zophar's theology just went out the window.

In Scripture, God waited 120 years before sending the Flood in Genesis 6 and He also waited 400 years to judge the Amorites in Genesis 15. In His grace, He frequently allows ample time for repentance before destroying the wicked.

Apostle Peter and Paul both tell us that His mercy and lovingkindness toward us cause Him to delay His wrath upon sin. If the Lord was fed up with the American people's sins in 1980s, how many of you would be in hell because you were not saved?

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Romans 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

Our God never promised the faithful an easy, trouble-free life. As a matter of fact, the most godly people in Scripture and Christian history had to endure periods of deep and mind-boggling suffering. Zophar and his cohorts' assumptions and accusation were based on human reasoning, not God's ways of dealing with people.

One of the things that baffles my mind is the people who blindly follow the Word of Faith Movement theology. We have the descendants of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar in Christianity. They are so-called Bible teachers – Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, Creflo Dollar, Paula White, Joyce Meyer, and Joel Osteen who tell their congregation that God wants them to have wealth and health in their Christian life. It is theirs to claim in faith. At the same time, they beg their congregation that they must give their money to their churches as the seed of faith to get prosperity and good health from God.

So their followers get all pumped up, jazzed up, and put their money in the offering plates. Then, they wait, they wait, and wait. No money raining down from sky. Their bills are due and collectors call them day and night. Some continuously get sicker and sicker. Finally, they ask these teachers why they are not getting wealth and health from God. Callously the teachers tell them that it is because they don't have enough faith like them.

I've said this before, and will say it again. The Word of Faith movement, a.k.a. the Prosperity Gospel is one of the most destructive theologies from the pit of hell. There is a French word for that – GARBAGE!

This theology destroys people's lives and faith while these teachers become wealthy beyond what their followers can imagine. Yet, there are millions of people who still follow them and support them, because their scriptural knowledge is shallow and they look for what they can get out of God selfishly rather than glorifying and serving the Lord.

B. THE HIDDEN REASON

Job 20:26-29 Total darkness is reserved for his treasures. An unfanned fire will consume him; It shall go ill with him who is left in his tent. 27 The heavens will reveal his iniquity, And the earth will rise up against him. 28 The increase of his house will depart, And his goods will flow away in the day of His wrath. 29 This is the portion from God for a wicked man, The heritage appointed to him by God."

Zophar implied that suffering is always the result of God's judgment on the wicked. He painted a terrifying picture of the judgment and punishment that the wicked, that is Job will receive. Wow, what a friend!

I get the feeling that Zophar was jealous of Job's riches previously, now that Job was down and poorer than dirt, he was unloading what was in his heart. Envy.

It sounds much like some foreigners' opinion about the United States. They hate America and talk bad about its prosperity and industrial ingenuity. But they'd love to come to live in the US in a heartbeat, why is that? Envy.

I met a foreign exchange student who came from one of those Muslim countries and called America as a spoiled rotten and we are wrong to support Israel gangster – that is the term he used to describe Israel in general. I was wondering if he thought that America is so bad, why did he come here as a foreign exchange student? Envy.

C. JOB'S RESPONSE TO THE FALSE ACCUSATION

Job 21:3-8 Bear with me that I may speak, And after I have spoken, keep mocking. 4 "As for me, is my complaint against man? And if it were, why should I not be impatient? 5 Look at me and be astonished; Put your hand over your mouth. 6 Even when I remember I am terrified, And trembling takes hold of my flesh. 7 Why do the wicked live and become old, Yes, become mighty in power? 8 Their descendants are established with them in their sight, And their offspring before their eyes.

To his credit and unlike many talk show guests of FoxNews who often try to talk over each others, both conservatives and liberals, Job had allowed Zophar to speak his mind, even though he had falsely accused him and gave more emotional hurt. But now, it was Job's turn and he didn't mince words.

Job no longer expected sympathy, but only the opportunity to be heard. He pointed out that his complaint was not against men but against God, but not cursing Him

Please notice v5. Job was asking his friend to have a good long look at him. I am sure that Job's appearance was so horrible that Zophar could barely stand to look at him.

Have you ever notice that the most of false accusers don't like to make their accusations to our faces? They tend to sneak around in the shadows and look for gullible ears to dump half-truths and infect them with their version of verbal bacteria.

John 3:20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

While Christians are promised an abundant life, not a perfect life. We receive far more trials and sufferings than others do because the devil opposes the pursuit of our godly goal. But our hope is in our eternal life with God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ – not in temporal wealth, health, and prosperity on earth.

2 Corinthians 4:18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Rewards for the born-again Christians and judgment for the unbelievers are black and white clear in eternal life. While the Christians enjoy the presence of God in heaven, the unbelievers will suffer individually isolated from God and everyone else in hell eternally and will regret every moment that they refuse to be saved by the Lord Jesus. But in this life, it is not so clear-cut. Most of the world's elite and richest people are not born-again Christians and they stand against the Lord.

We know that we can trust the heart of God to bring good from every situation. Every trial that we endure strengthens and matures us, conforming us to the image of Christ. Unfortunately without suffering, how could we relate to our Savior, who endured the greatest of all suffering on our behalf? We cannot learn it any other way.

D. TONGUE – THE MOST TREACHEROUS TOOL OF ENEMIES

James 3:5-8 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. 7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. 8 But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Those of us who have been falsely accused know that the human tongue can be the most treacherous tool of enemies. Hurtful words can cause more emotional damage and heartache than any other source of trouble. What we say cuts far deeper than any knife or sword.

The Lord despises falsehood, yet liars are still on the loose, even in Christian circles. Actually, in my opinion, it is more vicious. If you were the ones who were at the receiving ends of false accusations, you know what I am talking about – real, undeserved pain. And you've discovered how difficult it is to defend and clear your name. Even if you do, the damage is already done massively. Those who cause the false accusations slither their way out for someone else.

E. 4 GUIDELINES FOR GODLY RESPONSES WHEN YOU ARE FALSELY ACCUSED

1) Stay calm

I don't care if you have the mixed heritage of Irish, Italian, and Mexican. Don't fly off the handle. Listen to what is being said, considering the nature of the critic. Take time to go through what you've heard according to what the Lord says in the Bible.

If the Lord lays in your heart that He will take care of it, you have the best defense attorney you can ever find at no cost. It will take time, but He is the best. Let Him handle it.

2) Speak truth

Make sure that you have proof of the person's hurtful words or action before confronting him or her. Take time to prayerfully consider what your godly response should be.

If the Lord gives you a green light to talk to that person, confront the person in a gracious, loving, and calm manner. Give the person an opportunity to clear, even apologize for the false accusation. **DO NOT GO DOWN TO THEIR LEVEL.**

Romans 12:17a Repay no one evil for evil.

3) Lean hard on the Lord

What if the person who falsely accused you is no longer available for you to confront or simply refuse to make it right with you? Then, put out a contract on that person. No, just kidding.

When you face hurtful false accusation like these, trust the Lord for your defense. Pray for wisdom and strength to deal with the problem and stay rooted in Scripture.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

4) Get tough

Refuse to let the accusations discourage and derail you. Keep your eyes on Jesus. And as much as possible, avoid people and situations that you know could lead to gossip or rumors.

I found this from somewhere and I like it:

"Your ulcers are not due to what you are eatin', but to what's eatin' you."