

Manipulation
Message 03 in the series, "Help, I'm Out of Control"

A. Mary and Martha

“As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord’s feet, listening to what he taught. But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, ‘Lord, doesn’t it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me.’ But the Lord said to her, ‘My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.’” Luke 10:38-42 (NLT)

1. Martha had expectations for Mary. When Mary didn’t meet them, Martha did what many of us do — she tried to manipulate the situation to get the result she wanted.

“What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don’t they come from the evil desires at war within you? You want what you don’t have, so you scheme and kill to get it...” James 4:1-2 (NLT)

2. Martha wanted control. Jesus offered correction.

“And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.” Matthew 7:3-5 (NLT)

B. Jezebel and Naboth

“Now there was a man named Naboth, from Jezreel, who owned a vineyard in Jezreel beside the palace of King Ahab of Samaria. One day Ahab said to Naboth, ‘Since your vineyard is so convenient to my palace, I would like to buy it to use as a vegetable garden. I will give you a better vineyard in exchange, or if you prefer, I will pay you for it.’ But Naboth replied, ‘The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance that was passed down by my ancestors.’ So Ahab went home angry and sullen because of Naboth’s answer. The king went to bed with his face to the wall and refused to eat! ‘What’s the matter?’ his wife Jezebel asked him. ‘What’s made you so upset that you’re not eating?’ ‘I asked Naboth to sell me his vineyard or trade it, but he refused!’ Ahab told her. ‘Are you the king of Israel or not?’ Jezebel demanded. ‘Get up and eat something, and don’t worry about it. I’ll get you Naboth’s vineyard!’ So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name, sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the elders and other leaders of the town where Naboth lived. In her letters she commanded: ‘Call the citizens together for a time of fasting, and give Naboth a place of honor. And then seat two scoundrels across from him who will accuse him of cursing God and the king. Then take him out and stone him to death.’ So the elders and other town leaders followed the instructions Jezebel had written in the letters. They called for a fast and put Naboth at a prominent place before the people. Then the two scoundrels came and sat down across from him. And they accused Naboth before all the people, saying, ‘He cursed God and the king.’ So he was dragged outside the town and stoned to death. The town leaders then sent word to Jezebel, ‘Naboth has been stoned to death.’ When Jezebel heard the news, she said to Ahab, ‘You know the vineyard Naboth wouldn’t sell you? Well, you can have it now! He’s dead!’ So Ahab immediately went down to the vineyard of Naboth to claim it.”

1 Kings 21:1-16 (NLT)

Three different ways we manipulate people:

1. Gaslighting - a form of psychological manipulation where someone causes another person to question their own perceptions, memory, or sanity.

“‘Are you the king of Israel or not?’ Jezebel demanded. ‘Get up and eat something, and don’t worry about it. I’ll get you Naboth’s vineyard!’” 1 Kings 21:7 (NLT)

Note: You've got to shame them to change them!

2. Triangulation - when a manipulator brings a third party into a two-person conflict to gain leverage, control, or validation.

“So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name, sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the elders and other leaders of the town where Naboth lived. In her letters she commanded: ‘Call the citizens together for a time of fasting, and give Naboth a place of honor. And then seat two scoundrels across from him who will accuse him of cursing God and the king. Then take him out and stone him to death.’ So the elders and other town leaders followed the instructions Jezebel had written in the letters.” 1 Kings 21:8-11 (NLT)

3. Fabricating - the act of inventing something false and presenting it as true.

“Then the two scoundrels came and sat down across from him. And they accused Naboth before all the people, saying, ‘He cursed God and the king.’ So he was dragged outside the town and stoned to death. The town leaders then sent word to Jezebel, ‘Naboth has been stoned to death.’ When Jezebel heard the news, she said to Ahab, ‘You know the vineyard Naboth wouldn’t sell you? Well, you can have it now! He’s dead!’ So Ahab immediately went down to the vineyard of Naboth to claim it.” 1 Kings 21:13-16 (NLT)

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