

FORWARD BY JOHN BEVERE

ANNIHILATING
— THE —
SPIRIT OF
COMPROMISE

25TH ANNIVERSARY
EDITION

KEVIN CORTEZ

Annihilating the Spirit of Compromise takes you on an incredible journey through the ancient account of Moses, who, against all odds, faced down an Egyptian king and led an entire nation to freedom... Learn how this can apply to our lives.

**Annihilating the Spirit of Compromise:
25th Anniversary Edition**

By Kevin Cortez

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Second Edition

What Others Have Said

“This timely book by Kevin Cortez is a must-read for those who desire to enter this end-time move of God. Packed with Biblical truth and seasoned with personal experience, *Annihilating the Spirit of Compromise* will stir any reader to attain their full inheritance in Christ.”

Michael Pitts, Founding Pastor of Cornerstone Church in Toledo, Ohio, and the overseer of the Cornerstone Global Network of churches and leaders.

“...What God reveals to Kevin Cortez, he lives with all his heart, soul, body, and strength. He fits the order of ‘peacemaker.’ The message he has penned on these pages is not a studied-out message but rather one that has been burned in his soul by what he has lived. I believe you will be strengthened in your walk and ministry as you heed the truth that is proclaimed within this book.”

John Bevere, co-founder of Messenger International, is an international best-selling author and popular conference speaker.

“Kevin Cortez’s book, *Annihilating the Spirit of Compromise*, is a tremendous ‘word’ for the Body of Christ today. This book is filled with ‘eye-opening’ revelation to expose and remove the subtle areas where the enemy preys upon our weaknesses to keep us from the fullness of God’s intended purpose.”

Richard Parinchief, Founding Pastor, NOW Church, Ocala, FL

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Foreword by John Bevere

Jesus never said, “Blessed are the peace-keepers,” rather He said, “Blessed are the peace-makers (Matthew 5:9). There is a huge difference! A peacekeeper will compromise truth in order to maintain a false sense of peace. Thereby leaving the root of the problem untouched. A peacemaker, on the other hand, is one who will confront, if need be, to obtain true peace.

John the Baptist was a peacemaker. He took the kingdom by force. He is the one who proclaims, “...even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees” (Matthew 3:10). There was no politics, reasoning, or fear of man involved in his ministry. His fear of God freed him from the fear of man. His mission was simple—proclaim what God says, not what man desires. This was the only way he knew to live.

A man’s message is no greater than what he lives. There are many who proclaim or teach messages that are well thought out or studied, yet their lives are estranged from it. Their message, at best, will bring information. Those who preach from what they live bring transformation.

I have known Kevin Cortez since 1983, when we served together at the same ministry for over four years. We have been friends since. I have never known him to compromise in order to protect himself or seek the praise of men. What God reveals to him he lives with all his heart, soul, body, and strength. He fits the order of a peacemaker. The message he has penned on these pages is not a studied-out message, rather one that has been burned in his soul by what he has lived.

Annihilating the Spirit of Compromise

I believe you will be strengthened in your walk and ministry as you heed the truth proclaimed in this book. I pray that God raises you up in these final days as a warrior among many in His kingdom who will not compromise truth for personal gain.

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen. (Jude 24-25 NKJV)

— John Bevere

Read This First

I wrote this book in 1999 because I needed this book. I updated and republished it because I need its message now more than ever! It not only details how I approached a particular time in my life, but these truths have also gotten me through several challenging seasons since then. I am greatly honored that you have taken the time to read it.

When I first released this book, I didn't know how out-of-the-ordinary it was until I spoke with the Vice President of one of the largest Christian publishing companies. He wanted to order several copies to distribute. When I asked “*why?*” he responded that he had “*become fascinated with how a beer-distributing pastor—with some popular Christian authors as close friends—was making such a kingdom impact.*”

Confession: Although the truths I proclaimed when I first wrote this book are powerful and true, I'm embarrassed to say I attached some of my frustrations to what I communicated. I was in the midst of intense spiritual warfare and had become battle-weary. Some of what I wrote was reactionary and NOT Spirit-led.

In light of this, the original version is probably not a good book to read. Not too long ago, I even told a friend, who said he found it on the internet, “*I will buy it from you so you won't read it.*” This led me to see if it was still on Amazon. When I located it, I was a bit surprised to read the following review:

Annihilating the Spirit of Compromise

This is by far one of the best books I have read on Christian integrity and our walk as believers. I read this maybe in 2003, tracked down the church, and ordered 10 for the evangelism ministry I was leading to make sure everyone had a copy.

I just tracked down these copies and will buy every one I can find. Pastor Cortez needs to reprint this, as it is definitely relevant today.¹

Whoa.

These comments got me thinking. I realized it had been 25 years since I wrote it... After rereading it, I thought I might revisit this message and update it with a few important things I have learned since its original writing.

My thesis in this study is simple. A spiritual force of wickedness influences the earth and pressures us to go through life, accepting compromise as a necessary component. This *spirit of compromise* constantly tells us that we will never actually obtain God's best for our lives, so we might as well just go along to get along.

It saddens me to say that I have watched this spirit gain momentum over the years, even causing many Christians to walk away from the faith altogether. I believe we are witnessing the beginning of what the Apostle Paul warned us would happen in the "last days:"

Let no one in any way deceive or entrap you, for that day will not come unless the apostasy comes first [that is, the great rebellion, *the abandonment of the faith by professed Christians*]. (2 Thessalonians 2:3 AMP)

The *spirit of compromise* wants us to accept the things that blatantly contradict God's will as unchangeable and normal. We are called to confront this spirit and overcome it through the Holy Spirit's leading and the power of God.

Some of the concepts in the following pages may be unsettling to some. Confronting evil spirits is not something most Christians welcome, but it is part of the Christian experience. Even if you have never actually started a spiritual fight, the fact remains that God's enemy, the devil, has initiated a battle against you.

In the midst of this battle, let us never forget that everything we do in life, including spiritual warfare, should have one overarching objective: **to know our Heavenly Father better.**

Since God wants to form the character of Christ in our hearts, He allows us to engage in spiritual battles because it facilitates the coming forth of Jesus in our lives. He is far more concerned with us appropriating our Lord's virtue than He is with us defeating principalities and powers—He has already done that.

My goal in writing this book is simple: to lift up the message of Jesus Christ in a way that helps you encounter the God of the Bible.

In my clumsy attempt to do this, my continual prayer has been for the Lord to help me extend grace in my words and express my thoughts in humility.

When I stop and think about it, being put in a position to try and explain what God says about stuff is one of the weirdest things in the world—it strikes me as VERY STRANGE.

Yet, here we are.

Regardless of the accuracy of my take on the subject or whether you agree with my sometimes-different approach to communicating, the facts are:

1. God has a place where He has called us to arrive at.
2. There are spiritual forces at work trying to hinder us from fulfilling God's purposes during that journey.
3. We must not compromise in our walk with Jesus.

Annihilating the Spirit of Compromise

I hope and pray that by the time you complete this Bible study, you will have the courage and clarity to pursue a life of no compromise (if you haven't already). Victory in this battle is available because, truthfully, the war has already been won. You can even learn to walk in *joy* during the process...

Hot tip: Notice that I did not say, “*You can learn to be happy during the process.*” Joy is different from happiness! Happiness is based on what is “happening”... and what is happening can totally suck. Joy is a gift from God—and the “joy of the Lord” is our strength (see Nehemiah 8:10).

Our Heavenly Father has provided a means of dealing with the *spirit of compromise*, but it does not involve a give-and-take relationship. God has NOT called you to negotiate with the “spirit of the age.” He has commanded you to *annihilate it!*

One final thought before we start: what you read in this book describes my observations about the *spirit of compromise*. Please remember that my commentary will NEVER be as meaningful, consequential, or representative of God's heart as what His Word, the Bible, says on its own.

So please do not gloss over the multitude of Scriptures I include in these pages. **Slow down and read them carefully.** Those words contain the very power of God—mine don't.

Now grab your Bible, and let's get after it...

—1—

PART 1: The Answer Is “No”

Moses and Aaron went and spoke to Pharaoh. They told him, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Let my people go...”

“Is that so?” retorted Pharaoh. “And who is the Lord? Why should I listen to him and let Israel go? I don’t know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go.”

— Exodus 5:1-2

After about five years of pastoring a small church in the isolated community of Bishop, CA, our congregation became the topic of much discussion. Not only did I grow up in Bishop, but my family also went back five generations. The scenario was even more interesting because I also ran the family’s beverage distribution company (which sold beer, wine, and liquor) while I pastored.

Can we agree that this was a bit unusual?

It had become almost impossible to ignore our church. The owner of the most popular radio station was airing my teaching messages every Sunday morning (for free). Plus, we had the largest church ad in the local newspaper, and our church broadcasted nonstop TV commercials.

Annihilating the Spirit of Compromise

It wasn't that difficult for me to make sure there was no escaping our message because this was in the 1990s when the only media available was radio, print, billboards, and cable TV.

Since I had learned the ins and outs of TV media buying while working for the second-largest media ministry in the world, I understood how to purchase enough commercials to become the number one advertiser each month.

This resulted in us tapping into the most available bonus airings, translating into over 20,000 commercials each year filling the airwaves. Whether at home, in a hotel room, hospital, or bar, you would see and hear a gospel message.

NOTE: I should point out that our TV commercials weren't dorky. They were very high quality. A media company spent over \$35,000 producing each ad. Their business model was to sell the exclusive distribution rights to air them in a specific local TV market at a fraction of the cost. When we purchased their professionally done commercials, they would tag our church's information at the end so it looked seamless.

I heard some positive things about our church's approach to reaching our community with the message of Christ. There were some amazing testimonials of what happened with some local residents when they attended one of our services, listened to our radio program, or saw one of our TV commercials.

Naturally, it goes without saying that some people were NOT thrilled about what we were doing.

Actually, that's an understatement!

I got a call one day from a church member notifying me that the City Council had called an emergency meeting that would be held in two days. I can't remember how this person heard this news, but I remember that

the meeting was supposed to occur without me finding out about it. Apparently, the public's input was not welcomed.

This group of lawmakers had found out that we were considering buying a building for our church in the middle of our small town. This upset some concerned constituents and business leaders. An emergency meeting was called so the Council could go through the backdoor and put forth an "Urgency Ordinance" to block our church from purchasing a building at the town's main intersection.

I don't think the City Council had anticipated what they had unleashed...

Our church members got on the phone (pre-internet days) and told each other what was about to happen. So the Council members were shocked when they showed up for their "secret" meeting.

Nobody was supposed to be aware of the meeting, but the room was overflowing with people standing everywhere. Many attendees even stood in the hall, just outside the Chamber room door.

During the meeting, each of the five Council members gave their opinion on the topic. I became amused as some on the Council I knew were against us started backpedaling.

It was wild.

Then, the Mayor opened the meeting for discussion and allowed audience members to comment. I watched as several people approached the podium at the front of the room, stated their names for the record, and shared their opinions with the Council about whether or not they should allow a church to relocate to the center of the city.

The building's owner drove in from San Francisco, 300 miles away, to see what would happen (but he didn't say a word).

I waited until it looked like everyone had "said their peace" and then stepped up to the microphone. You could have heard a pin drop.

I was definitely nervous, but I was also not going to be intimidated by the situation.

I respectfully confronted the Council members, and the situation got rather intense. The news outlets covered the event extensively, even being featured with a large photo on the front page of the local newspaper (above the fold). Some of what the press reported was as follows:

City Hall was packed Monday night. People lined the walls and peered in from the hallway to hear the discussion over potential parking problems... With every seat filled, the council heard comments from members of the church and local business interests...

Kevin Cortez, pastor of Bishop Christian Center (and President of a local wholesale company in the downtown parking corridor), told the council that “parking is really not the issue here.” Cortez told the council that, “The bottom line is that we are seeing some individuals who do not want to see Bishop Christian Center on Main Street.”

Cortez said that he didn’t want to go down the road of “discrimination” because “I’m sure no one in this room wants to be painted in that light.” However, Cortez added, “If forced, I will go down that road.”

Cortez said that his main contention with the ordinance is “the way and manner it was hurried and hastily brought forth.”¹

The mayor thanked me for sharing my thoughts and then called for a vote. Incredibly, the new ordinance failed. The main headline in the local newspaper read, “Urgent Parking Proposal Nixed.”

Although we won the vote, many people in my community totally freaked out.

I don't think they had ever seen a Christian pastor display that type of authority.

The newspaper reported that the main person responsible for pushing the Ordinance was “*disappointed in the polarized tone of the comments at the meeting.*” When this guy jumped the fence and came after our church swinging a hammer, he didn't expect to be punched back in the mouth, let alone punched so hard.

Our church members seemed to find the freak-outs funny because they were used to seeing me exhibit this kind of authority every Sunday morning. Several people commented that they could feel the *power of God* in that Council Chamber.

Can you guess what happened next?

The building owner became so nervous about all the attention we had brought him that he no longer wanted to sell the building to us. The answer to my wanting to move our church to the center of town was not just “no,” it was a HARD NO!

Looking back, it's evident that the entire incident wasn't about our church or me. I believe it was about God showing a community that He was real and that some people were not ashamed or afraid to hold their ground when being pushed by the *spirit of intimidation*:

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:7).

Christians need to understand how to deal with fear and intimidation. As my friend and author John Bevere wrote in his book *Breaking Intimidation: How to Overcome Fear and Release the Gifts of God in Your Life*:

Since intimidation is a spirit, it cannot be fought on the level of our intellect or will. Having a positive mental attitude will not overcome intimidation. Spiritual

resistance requires spiritual assistance. It must be addressed in the realm of the spirit.”²

Countless Christians have become intimidated by this in-your-face culture that is pushing us around. They have become confused, discouraged, hopeless, and afraid. And as Proverbs says, “Fearing people is a dangerous trap” (Proverbs 29:25).

Here’s the thing: The source of many of our problems is spiritual. Which means the answer must also be spiritual. Christian counseling has its place, but therapy and some pills will not overcome the *spirit of compromise* trying to control and intimidate us. We must confront it with supernatural power, love, and a sound mind.

Identifying the Problem

If you have been a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ for any length of time, you have no doubt felt the personal effects of spiritual warfare. Since this is the case, we should better educate ourselves on how our enemy maneuvers.

God says, “My people have gone into captivity because they have no knowledge” (Isaiah 5:13 NKJV). We have also been told not to be ignorant concerning Satan’s ways of doing things (see 2 Corinthians 2:11).

If we are oblivious to how our adversary thinks and operates, we will unwittingly give him an opportunity to take advantage of us.

The evil one’s warfare strategy is not that complicated. He wants to keep those people who are not in correct relationship with God under his control and render ineffective those who are following Christ.

What do you think is the devil and his demon’s end game?

Their agenda primarily involves casting doubt on God's goodness and undermining His authority in our lives.

Even though Satan has many different schemes to draw on, there is one passage in the Bible that depicts the method of assault that I want to focus on throughout this study.

It is found in Exodus, the second book of Moses. It exemplifies how the enemy tries to get us to compromise in our walk with God. This portion of Scripture, which runs from Exodus 5 through Exodus 14, details how Satan manifests his plan of compromise.

If there were ever an individual who personified the *spirit of compromise*, it would have to be the Egyptian Pharaoh of the Exodus. Before looking at how Moses defeated this spirit, we must see how a previous Egyptian king dealt with God’s chosen nation. This king is known as the Pharaoh of the Oppression.

Four hundred years earlier, Israel’s son Joseph paved the way for God’s people to come to Egypt to find food during a severe famine in their own country of Canaan (modern-day Israel).

One Pharaoh after another came and went while what started as seventy members of Israel’s family became an infant nation. In time, a pharaoh arose who became overly concerned about what the Israelites could do to his kingdom if a fight broke out between them. He instituted a plan to neutralize the ever-increasing threat they posed:

He said to his people, “Look, the people of Israel now outnumber us and are stronger than we are. We must make a plan to keep them from growing even more.

If we don’t, and if war breaks out, they will join our enemies and fight against us. Then they will escape from the country.”

So the Egyptians made the Israelites their slaves. They appointed brutal slave drivers over them, hoping to wear them down with crushing labor. (Exodus 1:9-11)

Annihilating the Spirit of Compromise

This Pharaoh forced God's people to serve his agenda. Even though they were numerous and far from helpless, the king was able to wear them down under heavy burdens.

This is precisely what the devil tries to do with Christians. If he can convince them that they are powerless to break free from his affliction and oppression, he can hold them hostage.

When this happens, God's children become deceived into going along with the world's program (which the devil controls and manipulates).

How does he accomplish this? Through deception:

Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Before we move on, I want to stress that our enemy still primarily preys on people who are not developed in their relationship with God. He knows they are easier to deceive, manipulate, and control when they are spiritually young and/or immature.

The strategy of the Pharaoh of the Oppression worked in many respects, but he couldn't keep the nation of Israel from growing. The more the brutal slave drivers afflicted them and made their lives horrible, the more they multiplied and increased.

This so unnerved Pharaoh that he came up with another ruthless plan to defuse their strength: he ordered the Hebrew midwives to kill all of the male babies as they were born. Fortunately, the midwives feared God more than the king's edict and didn't cooperate with this scheme.

Next, Pharaoh commanded that all of the sons that were born to the Hebrews be drowned in the Nile River. However, what Pharaoh meant for destruction was the very thing God used to set the stage for a great victory.

A Hebrew baby named Moses was put in a waterproof basket by his mother and placed among the reeds along the bank of the Nile, where

other babies were being drowned. Pharaoh’s daughter found the child and was moved with compassion. She adopted him and raised him in the Egyptian royal court. Moses became the grandson of the very man who had demanded his death.

Spoiler alert: Even though Moses was raised in the house of Pharaoh, he eventually became the man who led the Israelites out of their captivity in Egypt. What the enemy of God’s children meant for evil, God turned around to serve His purposes (see Romans 8:28).

You may be reading this and thinking you are not eligible to receive anything from God. I want to stop here and tell you that you have NOT been disqualified because of your past mistakes. The things you fear have counted you out are the same things God can use. In Him, you can go forth and inherit your “land of promise.”

Enough Is Enough

Years passed, and this Pharaoh of the Oppression died. Finally, the Israelites became miserable enough to call out to God for help. Then “God looked upon the children of Israel, and acknowledged them” (Exodus 2:25 NKJV).

When we turn to God for help and say, “*Enough is enough!*” God will fix His eyes upon us and take notice of our complaints. Are you sick and tired of being sick and tired? Here’s some advice—Get serious with your Heavenly Father. Turn everything over to Him, and He will set your deliverance in motion.

The Hebrews had been deceived into enslavement. Nothing would change until they turned to God and acknowledged that He could set them free. Once they did, God began orchestrating the events that would bring about their deliverance.

Moses had fled from Egypt forty years earlier after killing an Egyptian and was living on the back side of the desert, minding his own business. That's when the "Word of the Lord" came to him...

God said that the time had come for him to be sent to Pharaoh to deliver the children of Israel out of Egyptian oppression:

Look! The cry of the people of Israel has reached me, and I have seen how harshly the Egyptians abuse them. Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt. (Exodus 3:9-10)

Moses reluctantly obeyed the Lord and returned to Egypt. On the way, he met his brother Aaron. When they arrived, they brought together all the Israelite leaders and told them everything the Lord had said. The elders believed what they were told, bowed their heads, and began to worship God.

Moses and Aaron then went to the pharaoh and said, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Let my people go so they may hold a festival in my honor in the wilderness" (Exodus 5:1).

Pharaoh didn't even have to think about how he would respond to the demand—**his immediate answer was "NO!"**

When Moses and Aaron announced their deliverance to Pharaoh, the response they received from the king was the same response we get from our enemy, the devil, when we declare that our God is going to deliver us.

"Is that so?" retorted Pharaoh. "And who is the Lord? Why should I listen to him and let Israel go? I don't know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go." (Exodus 5:2)

Pharaoh did not acknowledge the supremacy of God in their lives. This "pharaoh spirit" will do the same thing in the Christian's life when the proclamation of deliverance is made.

We approach a problem “in the name of Jesus,” and the problem looks back at us and says, “*Jesus who?*”

Have you ever told the heinous *spirit of compromise* that is holding you in bondage in some area of your life to let you go, and it says, “***Absolutely no way***”?

You declare God’s will over your life and feel an instant slap-in-the-face response of “***NOPE!***”

The *pharaoh spirit* does not immediately recognize God’s authority in a Christian’s life because it does not want to lose control. It will fight to remain in power. Opposition will always come against us when we make a profession of faith that we are going to obey God.

When our church stood up to this spirit, that’s when pandemonium erupted, and things got really interesting...

Chapter Reflections

What are your thoughts?

1. Have you ever thought of the Pharaoh of the Exodus as a personification of the *spirit of compromise*?
2. Have you identified areas of your life where you are compromising?
3. Could you relate to trying to move forward in your relationship with the Lord and feeling an instant slap-in-the-face response of “NO”?

I would love for you to share some of your answers to these questions on any of my social media platforms. You can go to “KevinCortez.com” and link to them from there.



Scan the QR code for bonus content.
Or visit KevinCortezBook.com/chapter-one

Understanding “Spiritual Backlash”

That same day Pharaoh sent this order to the Egyptian slave drivers and the Israelite foremen: “Do not supply any more straw for making bricks. Make the people get it themselves! But still require them to make the same number of bricks as before ... *Load them down with more work. Make them sweat!*”

— Exodus 5:6-9

After the confrontation I had with the City Council, the Mayor, and some local business leaders, needless to say, the heat of persecution and slander got turned up in our community towards me and our church.

I got an earful:

Who does Kevin think he is? He’s too militant.

Pastor Cortez doesn’t walk in love. He’s mean and judgmental.

He’s a little dictator trying to control people.

This guy’s arrogant. He doesn’t have a pastor’s heart.

These are just a few things that I can repeat without using cuss words. I even heard rumblings that I was a “cult leader.”

Ouch! I love my small hometown full of hicks and sticks. My family goes back five generations. I was just trying to advance God's kingdom in our little community.

Now I was beginning to see why a pastor's average length of time in this area was only two and a half years. They would get chewed up and spit out whenever they tried to do anything for God.

Increased Bondage

Pharaoh told Moses that he wouldn't let them obey God, but Moses did not take Pharaoh's "no" as an answer. Moses knew that God was not asking for Pharaoh's permission when He had him tell the king what to do.

The Israelites did not anticipate—or welcome—the backlash that came because Moses stood firm on the uncompromising Word of God. Pharaoh increased their bondage to strengthen his hold on their lives.

That is a long way of saying, "*It got worse!*"

The thought of losing Israel caused Pharaoh to tighten his grip on them and begin to watch them more closely. "'Who do you think you are, distracting the people from their tasks? Get back to Work!' shouted the king" (Exodus 5:4).

He immediately sent orders to the taskmasters to ensure that the Hebrews' workload increased to the point where it was almost impossible for them to hold up under. When the Israelites could not meet the overwhelming demands, the slave drivers beat their foremen without mercy (see Exodus 5:5-14).

Pharaoh's goal was for his captives to shift their focus from God to their struggles and burdens. He wanted the people to conclude that "*this is not worth it.*" If successful, Pharaoh knew that the people would consequently turn against God's deliverer, Moses.

Understanding “Spiritual Backlash”

Satan knows that whatever has our attention or focus is what we move toward. Whatever we move toward determines our direction, and whatever controls our direction controls our life.

If our attention is constantly directed at our problem, that problem guides our lives. God wants us to look to Him in everything we do. If we seek Him with all our hearts, He controls our lives.

Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God. (1 Chronicles 22:19 NKJV)

The Israeli foremen went to Pharaoh to plead with him to ease up, but their efforts were useless. As they exited the palace, Moses and Aaron were waiting for them. The foremen lashed out at the two brothers, contending that all the distress against them was their fault.

They identified God’s messengers as the cause of all their problems. Not only had Moses been mocked by the king, but he had also now lost favor with his brethren.

This single act by the foremen may not seem important, especially to an American Christian, but God thinks otherwise. If the devil can get Christians to be upset with the messenger of deliverance, they will not hear the message God is trying to get across to them.

Tragically, most Christians don’t think twice about speaking against God’s delegated direct or indirect authority. They do not fully understand that they are projecting their anger, disappointment, frustration, etc., toward God onto His servants.

Those who are mad at God’s leaders are really offended with God (although they haven’t a clue that is what they are doing).

If you are upset with one of God’s chosen vessels and are being critical of them, you must realize that God considers this an act directed against Him.

This is not a smart move!

Annihilating the Spirit of Compromise

Believers, especially leaders in the body of Christ, must understand what happens during the initial stages of a spiritual confrontation. Satanic orders will be immediately sent to demonic taskmasters to attack mercilessly.

World forces of wickedness will mock our attempt to bring God's will into the earth. This full-frontal assault usually manifests through people. Some of those who used to pat you on the back with praise will trade their accolades for a knife.

Ask me how I know.

As hard as it is to believe sometimes, people are NOT our problem. I always tell Christians, "*If you can high-five someone, they are not your problem.*" We do not fight against one another in the physical realm; The real battle is in the spiritual realm:

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Eph. 6:12 NKJV)

Never be naïve to the fact that the fight does get down into the actions of others. Consciously or unconsciously, many people are aligned with the unholy spirits of this age.

Unfortunately, when we take a stand against these spirits, some people may turn against us...

Have you ever had the experience of someone placing a halo over your head one day and then trying to slide it down around your neck to hang you with it the next day? This happened to Moses. It has happened to me more times than I can remember (not that I'm comparing myself to Moses). And it happened to our church when we took a stand for Christ in our community.

Does this make sense?

Understanding “Spiritual Backlash”

I like what Moses did when this happened in his life. When he did not understand why God allowed these bad things to happen, he didn’t go around complaining to anyone who would listen.

Moses went straight to God. He got honest with his Lord, even to the point of questioning the calling on his life:

Then Moses went back to the Lord and protested, “Why have you brought all this trouble on your own people, Lord? Why did you send me?”

Ever since I came to Pharaoh as your spokesman, *he has been even more brutal to your people*. And you have done nothing to rescue them!” (Exodus 5:22-23)

While Pharaoh sat smugly on his throne, God was building character and spiritual fortitude into the life of Moses. The Lord strengthened Moses by reassuring him that He still planned to deliver His people out of bondage. He ensured Moses that He had not forgotten His covenant with them. He told Moses how to respond and what to say to the children of Israel...

The first eight verses in Exodus 6 outline the “*Word of the Lord*” that Moses was to deliver to the people. This *present truth* was given to strengthen them, but they wouldn’t listen. (We will further explore what this means in Chapter Four of this study.)

They didn’t listen because they had become too discouraged by the increasing burden of their slavery (see Exodus 6:9). The Israelites missed the opportunity to live by the “*proceeding word*” from God because they were so caught up in their challenges. Regrettably, this is one of the worst mistakes we consistently make as children of God.

Spiritual backlash often solidifies a Christian's position in their heart. They dig deeper if they are plugged into what God is doing. Conversely, they disconnect if they are just “hanging out” around the outer edges and are not allowing themselves to be established in God’s will. They may

still go to church, read their Bible, pray, give in the offering, or attend a Bible Study, but they are just going through the motions.

After the children of Israel would not listen to what God said to them through Moses, the Lord once again told Moses to appear before Pharaoh and insist that he let the Hebrew people go out from his land.

Moses was still discouraged from being rejected by his own people and said: “But Lord! My own people won’t listen to me anymore. How can I expect Pharaoh to listen?” (Exodus 6:12)

God simply ignored the question.

Ugh. Can you relate to God ignoring some of your questions?

The Lord ordered Moses and Aaron to return to the Pharaoh and demand that he let them leave Egypt (see Exodus 6:13). Egypt appears in the Bible as a *type* of earthbound system called “the world,” and God was determined to bring His children out of it!

A Divine Shift

It is fascinating to note the marked change we find in Moses from this point on in his life. In Exodus 7, we no longer see a man who is timid, hesitant, or discouraged.

Moses begins to act like he is God’s ambassador to Pharaoh. A *divine shift* has obviously taken place in Moses’ heart and attitude. He has gone through a refining process and emerged from the fire with some grit and spiritual strength.

This shift results in an all-out open war!

From this point forward, the conflict was not one of words but of actions. The step-by-step battle now unfolds from the unseen, spiritual realm into the seen, physical realm.

Understanding “Spiritual Backlash”

Moses and his spokesman Aaron went into Pharaoh and once again demanded the release of their people. This time, God began showing everybody that His children were connected to a God of power. The nature of this divine power was such that it would overcome anything that opposed it.

As Moses and his brother stood before Pharaoh, Aaron threw down a shepherd’s staff before the king and his servants, and it transformed into a snake, a manifestation of God’s power. Pharaoh’s magicians replicated this extraordinary act with their staffs, but Aaron’s serpent, a symbol of God’s supremacy, devoured all their snakes.

Despite this display of divine power, Pharaoh was not impressed and responded to God’s demand with another unqualified “**NO!**”

The only language our adversary comprehends is that of “greater force” (see Mark 3:17 and Luke 11:21-22). The devil, a relentless foe, will not relinquish any ground unless we demonstrate unwavering faith and determination, drawing on the power of the Holy Spirit to confront him.

Have you ever allowed God’s immense power to rise up in your life, guiding and protecting you in the face of spiritual conflicts?

The devil is a bully. Bullies like to beat up people who don’t take that much effort to fight. Bullies don’t like it when someone puts up a fight and hits back. Even if they win the skirmish, they will tend not to be so anxious to pick on that person who got in a few good licks of their own.

When I was a karate instructor, my students constantly asked me how I would fare in a fight with so-and-so. I always responded, “*All I know is that I stand a better chance now than before I studied the martial arts. Win or lose, they will know that they were in a fight.*”

I have found this same principle to be in effect regarding spiritual conflict. The more of the Word of God I have working in my life, the better my chances are of winning a confrontation with the enemy of our soul.

God had prolonged Israel's deliverance so that He might show forth His power to those who had dealt wickedly towards His children. The time was now right for Moses to confront the *spirit of compromise* controlling the Pharaoh.

God had told Moses that they were not going to be immediately released—Satan never gives up his prey easily—but that in the end, Pharaoh would be glad to see them leave his land. In fact, they would be set free with the wealth of Egypt given to them.

Clearly, the time is now suitable for us to break free from the spiritual oppression that is influencing our lives and take back what the enemy has stolen from us over the years.

But beware!

We can NEVER take authority over something we have submitted ourselves to (see Matthew 12:26 and 2 Corinthians 10:6).

Our Lord wants to show Himself strong on our behalf. But first, we must throw down the staff of our past, let God touch it, and pick it back up to serve our future.

The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.
(2 Chronicles 16:9)

Plagues Begin

Even though the Israelites' bondage increased, Moses did not back down. (Remember that Pharaoh was not moved one bit when Aaron's staff swallowed up the snakes that his soothsayers conjured up.)

So begins the first of the ten plagues against Egypt:

So Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord commanded them. As Pharaoh and all of his officials watched, Aaron

Understanding “Spiritual Backlash”

raised his staff and struck the water of the Nile. Suddenly, the whole river turned to blood!

The fish in the river died, and the water became so foul that the Egyptians couldn't drink it. There was blood everywhere throughout the land of Egypt. (Ex 7:20-21)

Not only did the river turn to blood, but so did the water in streams, ponds, pools, and storage vessels. Pharaoh responded by having his magicians replicate this feat with their “secret arts.” Pharaoh then returned to his palace yet again unimpressed and unmoved.

The Lord sent Moses again to the king with another request and warning:

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go back to Pharaoh and announce to him, ‘This is what the Lord says: Let my people go, so they can worship me. If you refuse to let them go, I will send a plague of frogs across your entire land.’” (Exodus 8:1-2)

Pharaoh refused, and soon, multitudes of frogs covered the land and filled the Egyptian homes. The magicians again succeeded in imitating Moses through enchantments, bringing an untold number of frogs to the land.

Pharaoh finally called for Moses and Aaron and asked them to petition the Lord to remove the plague, and he would let the Israelites go to worship their God. Moses prayed, and the vast hordes of frogs died (I can't imagine what this ended up smelling like).

But when Pharaoh saw that relief had come, he became stubborn. He refused to listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had predicted. (Exodus 8:15)

With no apparent warning, God commanded Moses to tell Aaron to stretch out his staff and hit the dust of the ground. Aaron struck the earth, and the dust became tiny gnats that carried a powerful, painful sting.

Pharaoh's magicians tried to duplicate this third plague, but they could not. They gave witness to the king that this had to be an act of God, but Pharaoh ignored them.

And so the Lord said to Moses:

Get up early in the morning and stand in Pharaoh's way as he goes down to the river. Say to him, "This is what the Lord says: Let my people go, so they can worship me.

If you refuse, then I will send swarms of flies on you, your officials, your people, and all the houses. The Egyptian homes will be filled with flies, and the ground will be covered with them." (Exodus 8:20-21)

This fourth judgment of gnats was a most painful plague, for the swarms of gnats/flies fastened upon everything uncovered. Their bites caused open sores and inflammation.

This must have been absolutely terrible. I get super annoyed when just one fly (that doesn't bite) is buzzing around in my house.

But, just as with the other plagues, Goshen, the land where God's children dwelled, did not experience this plague. God set them apart to demonstrate a clear distinction between those in a covenant relationship with Him and those who are not.

Pharaoh finally acknowledged that the Israelites were connected to a Divine power. He realized that something would inevitably have to change in their relationship. He called for Moses and Aaron and told them they could go and sacrifice to their God, but only in the land of Egypt, not where God had directed them to go.

Entry Level Compromise

It took four plagues before Pharaoh finally realized that increasing the oppression over God’s children was not going to back Moses down. So now he went into compromise mode—he tried to enter into an agreement to settle their differences by mutual concessions.

Pharaoh wanted to strike a deal in which they each gave up some of their demands, hoping to remove the friction in their relationship. He aimed to end the controversy by arranging a happy medium for them to function together and continue to live side-by-side.

This scene is played out daily in many of our lives! When the devil sees we will not abandon our faith altogether, he offers a compromise.

Essentially, he says:

Go ahead and serve God, but just don’t change your lifestyle.

Sacrifice to your God, but just don’t go all in for Him.

Okay, you can add going to church to everything else you're doing, but don’t actually do what God is leading you to do.

*Be a Christian but still listen to the same perverted music... watch the same crap on your TV and phone... read the same trash... hang out with the same fools... play the same manipulative games..., and use the same filthy language... so you will **remain chained to the world’s system.***

What are your thoughts when you read this? I don’t know about you, but I want to be a child of God who obeys Him when He commands me to “come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourself from them” (see 2 Corinthians 6:17).

In addition to believing in God, let's embrace His standards. Let’s not be the type of believer who would rather get along with the world so as not to “ruffle any feathers.”

About the Author

Kevin Cortez is an accomplished entrepreneur, speaker, and author. He has been featured in Voyage Dallas Magazine as one of “*Dallas’s most inspiring entrepreneurs.*”

Prior to starting his media agency in Texas, Kevin had a twenty-year track record of success in ministry and business, including running his family’s wholesale distribution company in California.

During much of this time, Kevin was also the lead pastor of a non-denominational church. While pastoring, Cortez wrote two Christian books that were distributed in over 30 countries.

Before this period in his life, Cortez was a “key” administrator for the second-largest media ministry in the world at that time. This gave him insight into the good, the bad, the ugly, and the unmentionable that goes along with prominent Christian organizations.

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