

Thank you for your interest in the “*Folks Like Us*” Bible studies by Fran Sciacca. Whether you’re using them for your own spiritual growth and journey, or as a resource for your small group, Sunday school, or homeschool program, you’ll soon discover why these studies originally sold over 600,000 copies in their print editions. The recent decision by the publisher to discontinue print editions and to return the publishing rights back to Fran has given him the freedom to make the nearly 70 individual character studies available to you...at no cost.

Before you make copies and use the studies...

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- **[DONATIONS]** – Although there is no charge for the studies, feel free to make a non-deductible donation to help offset the annual cost of web-hosting, etc. at: [paypal.me/handsofthur](https://www.paypal.me/handsofthur)
- **[QUESTIONS/COMMENTS]** – Email them to: information@fransciacca.com

Other great resources on fransciacca.com

Now that you’ve begun to explore the Bible study resources developed by Fran Sciacca, you will almost certainly benefit from the other things that he has made available:

- **“*The Road to Shalom*” podcast** – thought-provoking and thoroughly biblical, Fran explores what the Bible calls “shalom,”—the way things are *supposed* to be in God’s Kingdom, why they’re not, and how to restore them. All three seasons are available on the website.
- ***Biblical literacy courses*** – Three, 13-week Bible courses covering the entire Bible. Includes individual course books, audio, and optional animated slide supplements. Course books and animated slide supplements may be purchased on the web store.
- **“*What’s Wrong With the World?*”** – A 14-part video series exploring the questions, “*What is the gospel, and does it really matter?*” and “*What is a disciple, and what does one look like?*” Each episode includes a small group handout as well as supplemental leader’s notes. You may take the series for a “test drive” and purchase the series.
- **“*Knot or Noose? - Recovering the Mystery of Marriage*”** – A 9-part video series for singles, engaged, or married couples exploring marriage from a radical perspective. Instead of trying to figure out how to get God into marriage, this series will guide you into how to place marriage into the center of the larger redemptive plan of God. This conference has been presented live throughout the U.S. in a multitude of different settings. Each episode includes everything needed for a small group. You may take the series for a “test drive” and order the series.



FOLKS Like Us

JEZEBEL

“The Appetite to Control People.”

Timeless truths from our ancient past,
for a journey with God in the modern era.

Fran Sciacca

“*Folks Like Us*” — an introduction

Over the years I’ve written and published a number of Bible studies that collectively have sold well over a half-million copies. They were forged, most of them, in the furnaces of pain, doubt, and loneliness. Maybe that’s why they were well-used, they touched people where they hurt most.

Recently, my publisher decided that they no longer wanted to handle the books that contained these 60 or so individual studies. So, I’ve decided to make them available to any who might benefit from them. At no cost.

I have always believed that because God thought it best to become human in the Incarnation, that perhaps “incarnational truth” was His preferred method of revealing Himself and His purposes to us. I suppose that’s where the basic genre of these studies originated. I wanted to provide believers with Bible studies rooted in our ancestral past. The lives of men and women, who it turns out, are “folks just like us” in so many ways.

So, please take your time and work slowly through as many of these studies as you care to do... there’s a lot of them! And may God use the combination of the struggles and insights of your *ancient* brothers and sisters, combined with those of mine, your modern brother, to help you in your spiritual journey. That is the goal of this project.

Warmly in The Lamb,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fran Sciacca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fran Sciacca
Birmingham, AL

JEZEBEL

“The Appetite to Control People.”

ABIDING PRINCIPLE – If you insist on controlling those under your authority rather than serving them, you will sacrifice the joy of leadership on the altar of power.

“To command is to serve, nothing more and nothing less.” —André Malraux

Nearly nine centuries before Christ, Ahab, king of Israel, married the daughter of the pagan king of a neighboring country. During the twenty-two years of his reign, the name of his wife became a household word- or more accurately, a household curse!- Jezebel.

Jezebel manipulated everyone she came into contact with, and repeatedly defied the Word of God spoken through the prophet Elijah. Jezebel always got her way, and woe unto those unfortunate enough to get in her way! Her happiness depended on being on top of others. She abides forever within the record of Scripture as an embodiment of a power-hungry and unteachable heart.

KEY SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 21:4-16

STUDY QUESTIONS...

1. Below is a partial list of the people and spheres that were under Jezebel's control (both obvious and covert). Give thought to each passage, and record what you can see about how she went about exercising control. Use short phrases to describe her methods.
 - The prophets of God (1 Kings 18:3-4).
 - The false prophets of Baal and Asherah (1 Kings 18:19).
 - The elders at Jezreel (1 Kings 21:5-14).
 - Her husband, the king (1 Kings 21:7,15-16,25).
 - Elijah, the prophet of God (1 Kings 18:40, 19:1-4).
2. There was a character in the early church named Diotrephes who “loved to be first,” to control other people (3 John 9-10). List some of the ways this man tried to manipulate people around him.

3. Read through the following passages rather quickly. What can you distill from them about our "natural" tendency, when it comes to being in positions of authority and power? (Ephesians 5:22-28, Ephesians 6:1-9, Philippians 2:3-4, Colossians 3:19-21, Colossians 4:1, 1 Peter 5:2-3)

4. Why do you think we are often tempted to take inappropriately aggressive, domineering uses of power?

5. Jesus clearly states God's model of exercising authority and power in Luke 22:24-27. How does it *differ* from Jezebel's?

LEARNING FROM JEZEBEL...

Jezebel could easily have authored the book *The Art of Intimidation*. She enjoyed slamming her hand on the chessboard of life and watching the pieces jump and scatter at her beckon call. It shouldn't surprise us to discover that she was also deeply involved in witchcraft—the ultimate quest for control over others (2 Kings 9:22).

Jezebel's life stands as an extreme warning to us about the temptations constantly facing anyone in a position of authority of any kind. And although few of us will ever find ourselves in a position of authority similar to Jezebel, each of us nevertheless has the same sinful tendency to misuse and abuse power over others.

Jesus has made it abundantly clear through His teaching *and* His actions that godly authority serves rather than subjugates, gives rather than grabs, and is selfless rather than selfish.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS...

6. How do you think a person can maintain proper balance between a position of authority and power, *and* the practice of the duties associated with that position?

7. Below, check the boxes that describe a role in your life right now that has the potential to become a position in which you could *abuse* authority, power, or control.

- parent
- teacher
- supervisor
- fiancée
- spouse
- employer
- friend
- roommate
- manager
- group leader
- church officer
- other _____

8. Select three of the boxes you checked above, and indicate below whose style—Jesus’ or Jezebel’s—best describes the way you are currently behaving in that role.

Relationship 1 _____

My “authority style”: Jezebel Jesus

Relationship 2 _____

My “authority style”: Jezebel Jesus

Relationship 3 _____

My “authority style”: Jezebel Jesus

9. Now pick one of these three relationships and write-out below how you can change your behavior if it resembles Jezebel's style, or how you can strengthen it if it resembles Jesus' style. Be specific.

- What I can *do*:

- How I can make it happen:

10. Perhaps you need to do more than merely change your own behavior. Maybe there's someone you've hurt through your desire to be in control. Talk to that person this week and explain what you've come to learn about yourself and godly leadership. Ask for forgiveness, if necessary.

Perhaps there's someone in a position of power in your life right now who is wounding others by his or her leadership style. Pray for that person each day this week, asking God to show him or her the value of servant leadership. Perhaps talk to that person, if the opportunity is right.

If there is someone in your life whose leadership style is an encouragement to you and others, tell that person so via a short note or phone call.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY (optional)

- A principle of godly leadership - 2 Corinthians 4:5
- The practice of godly leadership - Luke 22:26-27