


# Priorities. What does this look like to you?

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I Need Prayer and Wisdom (I may be experiencing spiritual/psychological abuse from my pastor regarding his interaction with my wife)

33 points • [72 comments](#) • submitted 3 months ago by [toss2pt0](#) to [r/Christianmarriage](#) 

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It's been a crazy week. I'm not sure where to begin. I've shared this information on Reddit before and the last time I posted someone criticized me for just posting and not taking action. The honest truth is that I've questioned myself A LOT in the last two years. I've entertained the ideas that it was my nerves, that I'm just paranoid, that I was making something out of nothing, that I was just going crazy because I was getting ready to become a dad. In the last six months, I've taken time to discuss this issue with three ministers outside of my current church (a local guy that knows of this pastor but doesn't have degree, my parents' pastor who is 65 years old with 40 years of ministry experience and who has a bible college degree, and my 50 year old former campus minister that has a M. Div.). They all agree that something is wrong here.

You'll have to forgive some of the formatting here. I've copied and pasted where I've sent messages to the people helping me process this and tried my best to edit it to be more succinct. Some of the passages here are borrowed from "day of" messages and might not link well with the next portion. I'm not using the names of anyone involved to keep a modicum of anonymity.

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Up until this point, here has been the situation. My wife (K) came onto staff at our church in the spring of 2017 as the pastor's assistant. Things were fine at first. She really enjoyed the work and I could tell that she felt fulfilled. I was happy for her (if not a little jealous that she was able to work in full time ministry).

Things began to shift. She started working long hours. It crept up over time. It started as 9-5. Then, they'd have a meeting that she'd need to stay and take notes for at 6pm. Then, it became sticking behind after the meetings to send follow-up emails. Then, she started working 11am-8pm. Next, it's 9pm and it's just her and the pastor there. There were even nights that they'd be up there until midnight, just the two of them.

I tried to voice my concerns. I was brushed off. I'd get answers like "It's just a busy season—it won't last forever." I talked to my wife about it. I tried talking to the pastor (JC) about it. The answers always revolved around things just being busy with a growing church and a three person staff. I tried to bring up the fact that the other guy on staff would go home at a reasonable hour and they just made him out to be inflexible and selfish.

In May of 2018, I remember feeling like something was amiss. We went to my sister-in-law's wedding and, during the one slow dance that I managed to pull out of my wife at the reception, she wouldn't look me in the eye. I just couldn't get over the feeling of "disconnect."

Then, there were the social calls. He'd call and FaceTime her at all hours of the day and night. Sometimes, the calls were to tell her something to do for the church. But, 2/3 of the time, it just morphed into a social call where they'd laugh and joke around.

I had my fill of it on the night of Thanksgiving in 2018. We were visiting my wife's family out of state. We had gone with her sisters to check out the Black Friday deals at the local Walmart around 10pm that night. He FaceTimed her while we were out. He was by himself, working out at a gym. I didn't feel comfortable with him Facetiming my wife just to joke around and cut up while he worked out.

The next day, my wife and her sisters went out shopping and I stayed behind with her mom. She took me aside to voice some concerns. She said that she didn't like the hours that K was keeping with the church, that it wasn't conducive with having a family. She shared my concern that K was too attached to JC.

I confronted JC when we got back. He acted offended. He told me that I needed to be careful with those kinds of thoughts because "they could hurt his family." He made me out to be a villain for talking to K's mom. He told me that K would be furious if/when she found out that I had talked to her. By the end of the conversation, I was repenting to HIM for having those kinds of suspicions.

My wife found out about the conversation. The fallout was terrible. I was the villain with everyone.

Skip ahead to January of 2019, my wife finds out that she's pregnant after we've tried to do so for over 2 years (before you go there—the baby looks enough like me that I have peace that he's mine). JC starts to back away from K. JC and I have another confrontation because K tells him about an argument where I told her that I didn't want her working at the church anymore.

She has the baby in September. She struggle with postpartum depression. She's moved out of the position as his assistant to be over the areas of outreach and children's ministry. It seems like a weird move. He takes on a new assistant that's in her late 40s (as opposed to my 30-year-old wife).

In late October, I'm up at the church late doing some video editing for the coming Sunday. I'm by myself at 10:30 at night when I see two vehicles fly onto the parking lot of the church. At first, I think it's a drug deal. Then, I recognize one of the vehicles as JC's truck. I text him and ask if that's him out there. He calls me and explains that he's there with the wife (L) of my friend (JE). She's had a situation come up and she's too embarrassed to come inside until after I leave. Being a sleep deprived new dad, I say "Whatever" and go home. JC calls me later that week to explain that L had someone stalking her and they couldn't get a hold of her husband so JC swooped in to help. Never mind the fact that it was a Friday night and JC's family was out of town...

In January of this year, I started working out with JE. He starts sharing concerns with me. His story sounds a lot like mine—the pastor constantly calls and contacts L, constantly Snapchatting her, is constantly hanging out with her. He tells me about a time that the three of them (JC, JE, and L) were at JC's house and he served L enough alcohol to get her drunk (just like he had done with us).

I thought the mention of Snapchat was odd. To my knowledge, he had deleted that account. So, I looked him up. I searched his first and last name. Nothing came up. I searched his first initial attached to his last name and a profile called "Mark Gunner" came up as part of a group chat with me and my wife. I screenshot it and sent it to JC asking, "Is this you?" He calls me to explain that he it used to be but he deleted his account because he couldn't "have an app that [he] wouldn't allow [his] kids to have." I took his response with a grain of salt.

The next week, I went to mention the whole thing to JE and ask if he was sure that JC was contacting L. When I pulled up the account, it was no longer "Mark Gunner." It was now "J G." That made me realize that he was lying to me because DELETED accounts don't go through name changes like that. Only an ACTIVE account could have that kind of change.

JE and I decided that we would sit on this information (not take it to JC where he could lie further). We planned on watching him closely to see if we could catch him in any sort of substantial misdeed. We didn't feel like we had anything concrete.

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We had our annual Serve Day this past Saturday with the church. I helped with the recap video (as usual). JC was up at the church with me until I finished at 8:10 PM. He stayed at the church after I left to "study."

Around 8:30, the wife (L) of my friend in the similar predicament (JE) up and leaves to “go to a friend’s house.” Around 9, JE goes for a drive. L’s car is not at the friend’s house. He drives by the church—JC’s truck isn’t there. By 9:30, he’s driving by JC’s house and JC’s truck isn’t there.

I went back up to the church because I forgot to upload the video to the cloud. No JC (~10 pm). JE swings by. He drives back by JC’s house at 10:30 as I drive by his house on my way home. Neither JC nor L were at their respective homes. I drove by the house that she was supposed to be at (two blocks down) and didn’t see her car.

I still don’t feel like we have anything concrete but this stuff is getting more and more suspicious. He MIGHT be out doing something innocent and L is not involved. The timing of it all is just suspect. She left home abruptly within 20 minutes of me wrapping up at the church. It just seemed fishy.

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Then, Sunday night, L went out again to “go to CVS.” I told JE to text her and ask her to get him something. She never replied and came back an hour and a half later without it.

He confronted her about it. She said CVS was closed and that she was driving around and talking on the phone with her friend M. That’s where things get interesting for me.

K was apparently the topic of discussion. They were talking about how she acts around JC and how she’s always trying to be around him.

M told L that she and her fiancé were going to be meeting with JC this week. Her fiancé was planning on saying something to JC about how K acts towards him. Z (the fiancé) thinks that JC is innocent in this. Both Z and M think that I’m just a sad, naive man that doesn’t know what his wife is doing. They talked about the issue like it’s a running joke in the church as to how K acts towards JC.

Honestly, that last bit is really damaging to my respect for the people of the church. They’ve been the only reason I’ve continued to go. But there’s apparently been people there that have seen what is going on and haven’t shown me enough love or respect to say something about it. Instead, they’ve ambushed me about petty issues and acted like I’m a villain for not being more involved in church life.

I’ve been gaslighted into thinking that the inappropriate emotional relationship between JC and K is all in my imagination and that I’m just being paranoid. But here it is: other people have seen it and just let it happen.

I talked to Z on the phone for 45 minutes explaining some of the history. He agreed that we need to move. So, things were about to go down. We were likely going to get an overseer in town and call about 5-10 to be in the room when it happened.

But then L called JC Monday afternoon to tell him that Z and M were going to say something to him about K. JE couldn’t explain why she would do that.

I told my wife what the others had said about her chasing JC on Monday night. It wasn’t the best move but she was inexplicably irritable and I suspected that she already knew. I made the decision to test how much she knew. She acted dumbfounded, hurt, and angry about the entire thing. I asked her why she thought that L would be compelled to call JC and give him a heads up and not her. She couldn’t give me a reason. At one point, in the heat of it all, I said, “JC gets what he gets.” She panicked and asked what I meant. I just said, “God is getting ready to move,” and left it at that.

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JC showed up at my house unannounced on Tuesday to confront me (I had a missed call from him but he went ahead and came to my house). It was just the two of us. K sobbingly told him everything that morning. She was concerned that she was going to lose her job because I said that JC would get what was

coming to him.

We talked for 2 hours. I told him that I didn't trust him. I told him that he should have never been meeting L up at the church at 11pm on a Friday night while his family was out of town. I told him that it was wrong for the two of them to wait until I left the church to come inside. I told him that I felt like he was complicit in K's attachment to him.

All he had to say about meeting L at the church at a late hour like that was "I haven't been perfect." He denied up and down about having a Snapchat account. He told me I could check his phone and I wouldn't find the app. Mind you, my friend JE told me that he saw a Snapchat video of JC making goofy faces on L's phone on Friday night.

He began to spin things to where it K was the one in the wrong. He had "wracked his brain" to try to figure out what he could have done to inspire her behavior. He swore that he has more accountability now than ever. He talked about how K has been hostile towards everyone in the office. He said that he's been gracious with her because he "should have fired her 10 times in the last year."

He told me that I shouldn't seek counsel from JE because "two wrongs don't make a right." I'm still wondering what the "two wrongs" are. It's not like JE and I are out gossiping about him. We've been confiding in each other and trying to figure out how to handle the situation.

JC thinks that we've reconciled. But, I'm processing this conversation and it still doesn't feel right. He's done things that any backwoods preacher would know is wrong. But he's painting himself as the victim and the rest of us as divisive. And I'm just trying to figure out how I've been "divisive." I've only talked to one other person within the church (JE) about these issues because he had similar problems. If I were truly divisive, I would have been spreading rumors around the church. Instead, I kept my circle small and decided to watch him to see if he incriminated or exonerated himself.

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I was just informed on Thursday by someone who has known JC for decades that he was run out of North Carolina because he was accused of having an inappropriate relationship with a girl from his youth group. They secretly texted and everything. She was a petite brunette (same look and build as my wife and L).

I don't have any details of the alleged affair. I don't have any substance. I don't have any names. The guy that told me said that he didn't want his name attached to anything because he's honestly afraid of JC.

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I want to go to an overseer (a pastor at a church in another city that has authority over my pastor). My parents have begged me to wait. They say that, with K so tied up in the church, it will only hurt our marriage. And the truth is that she does treat her position in the church like an idol. She draws life and identity from it. If I did anything that could damage the church, I'm not sure if she'd forgive me. I'm spending the next few days in prayer over it all. Beyond that, I'm not sure what to do.

I'm also concerned with the fact he goaded me towards calling an overseer. He said that he "welcomes the accountability." It makes me concerned that going to an overseer won't do anything. It makes me afraid that he has them in his pocket.

My request here is this: please pray for me. Pray that God continues to bring what has been done in the dark to light. Pray that He gives me wisdom.

Also, if you have any wisdom to offer me, I would gladly receive it.

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## Comments

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OsmiumZulu • 15 points • 17 July, 2020 11:25 PM

It looks like a long wall of text that is a waste of time for anyone here to read.

TLDR: Beta Billy's wife is obviously getting plowed by his pastor for years and Billy is too much of a limp faggot to do anything about it because he is naive.

Now go lift.