

How Giving in to Jezebel Can Lead to a Bed of Suffering

For more than two decades, I have counseled men with all types of sexual sins and addictions. I have the rare opportunity to watch God work on both sides of His conviction.

When people repent, grace is given and rarely are there significant consequences in their lives. However, if they refuse, the rebuke often leads to disgrace and sometimes public exposure. The result of refusing is tremendous pain for that person and often those who love him.

When God has to rebuke someone because of his continued hard heart, things can get really ugly. I have heard many creative ways God will expose a man who has secret sin.

In Revelation 2:22, Jesus says in reference to Jezebel, "Look! I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds." Let me list a few examples to give you an idea of what lengths God will go to love a man who is trapped in an unclean lifestyle.

–Terry was looking at pornography and printing it off at work. For "some reason," the printer stopped working but held its file. Then the office printer kicked in a little while later and the pictures started printing where they left off. The IT department was called in to investigate and tracked it to his computer. He was fired, he called his wife and she divorced him. Talk about a bad day.

–Paul was making a phone call to set up his appointment with a prostitute and didn't realize his wife was "somehow" conferenced in on the call. He had a hot welcome when he got home.

–Stan, after having several sexual affairs, started a new one. The woman's husband traveled a lot and so intimacy was rare. The first time Stan had sex with her, she got pregnant. He was blackmailed for years to pay her money until his legal counsel told him to tell his wife. When he did, she divorced him.

–Marc, a top executive, had several affairs. He engaged in one affair for several months with a young employee. She sued him and the company for sexual harassment for several hundred thousand dollars.

–Eric thought he was really cool when he was cheating on his wife while she was out of town. He was having an affair and went to a party with this other woman. He didn't know someone took a picture of them kissing and placed it on a Facebook page. A friend of the wife came across this photo and Eric had to face the music.

–Tim was cruising for a prostitute and picked up a cop instead. He was arrested and the arrest was printed in the paper. Tim was a pastor. His job ended that day.

–Carl, a doctor, was flirting on the internet with a teenage girl he'd never met. Over a period of months, they became sexual in their conversations and Carl set up a time to meet this girl at a local mall. He sat down, started talking to her and was soon surrounded by cops. He is now sitting in jail.

–Juan, a doctor, had several affairs. He had an affair with a patient. As the affair started to go south, as they always do, she contacted his medical board. He will be losing his license for a while, which will impact his family for years.

I think you get the idea. A bed of suffering is not the place any man wants to find himself. It hurts really badly.

If you notice in the second part of that verse, the Lord says he will throw "those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds" (Rev. 2:22). I

love the word *unless*. Even in this letter, God was reaching out to those in adultery, and asking them to repent so He wouldn't have to bring suffering into their lives.

Jesus really prefers our voluntary repentance. During my 30-plus years of counseling, I have never heard from a man or woman who actually committed adultery say they would do it again. From where I sit, the act itself creates so much suffering, guilt, shame and double-mindedness that the adulterer would give everything they possess to take it all back.

I am a Jesus guy. I know He died for all sin and will immediately forgive a repentant heart. However, the stubborn will encounter long-term consequences like STDs, pregnancies outside of wedlock, lawsuits, job loss or removal from ministry for a season. And that's not all. "I will put her children to death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the hearts and minds. I will give to each one of you according to your deeds" (Rev. 2:23).

This is a powerful verse. Jesus is very straightforward here. Children's lives are in the balance. He will visit the sins of the fathers on their children. Jesus' intent is that, if necessary, this discipline would clarify to all the churches that He is Lord of the church and this flagrant disobedience in leading others into disobedience is intolerable. When He says He repays us according to our deeds, He is staying true to His character. This is reminiscent of the parable He told in Matthew 25:32 about the sheep and the goats. He has upped the stakes and now the church leadership in Thyatira is faced with a decision to make:

"Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this teaching, who have not known what some call the 'depths of Satan,' I will put on you no other burden. But hold firmly what you have until I come" (Rev. 2:24-25).

There are men and women in every church who are the real deal. They are sexually pure before marriage and in marriage. There are ministers of the gospel who are also pure and have no sexual issues whatsoever. I am so glad there are men and women like this today.

On the other hand, I have counseled male and female ministry leaders who were fully sexually addicted. They were cheating and lying to their spouse and ministry partners, yet after they repented, they were fully healed. Today they live sexually pure lives.

I have observed firsthand how God can translate sickness into glorious health. If you're struggling today, there is always a team of people here at Heart to Heart Counseling Center ready to help you.

And Jesus won't miss a beat. {eo}

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