

If You Think You Can Keep Jezebel 'Under Control,' You're Totally Deceived

Revelation 2:20 introduces the "woman Jezebel." The Lord is using a name from the Old Testament to describe this woman's character. The original Jezebel was introduced in the book of 1 Kings as the wife of King Ahab. She had profound influence and used it for evil. She quickly became the most feared person in Israel. The Bible records several incidents that made her infamous for evil deeds ranging from false accusations to mass murder to assassination to forgery.

The name Jezebel is casually used as a woman who cheats, is immoral or controlling. She derived her power from her sexuality; she got all dolled up for Jehu even though he killed her husband, King Ahab, and used her sexual power to dominate, control, manipulate and murder. From that one sin came all the other evils that plagued Israel during her reign. One result of her seduction was the massacre of the prophets of the Lord. She even struck fear into Elijah's heart, one of the most powerful prophets ever to walk the earth. In response, she incited the full wrath of God for her complete rebellion.

How does this relate to sexual immorality today? Jezebel hasn't changed. Her spirit has the same goal: seduce you, then reduce you. If you are a child of God, she especially hates you and your family. Believe me, she's not your friend.

So you say to yourself, "Hold on a minute, Doug. I'm not that bad. I only looked at a few photos. I am not as bad as other guys." Really? Do you think it matters if you look once or 20 times? Let me ask you a question. Do you know why a heroin dealer gives out free samples to a newcomer? Because he knows

if the person gets just one taste, that person will beg for more. Then he will have a customer for life. Do you want to become a lifelong customer? If you think you can control lust, you are deceived. The opposite is true, and unless you can see this, it will only increase its hold on you.

Back in the book of Revelation, this newer Jezebel was most likely some kind of Sunday school teacher or cell-group leader in the church. It seems as if she was a Christian, not some cultural rock star perverting the people. After all, she was a member of the church and called herself a prophetess. She taught duplicity and compromise, a Jesus-and-immorality gospel. Her doctrine seems to have said that you could be a Christian and sleep around and do whatever you wanted to sexually. She certainly taught that individuals, not God, were in charge of their sexuality and they were free to do as they pleased. It appears, however, as if this Jezebel was still in the early stages of her teaching. Since the Lord knows there is only one end—destruction—to this kind of sin, he offered an olive branch. “I gave her time to repent of her immorality, but she did not repent” (Rev. 2:21).

This verse demonstrates Jesus’ incredible patience. Jesus gave her time to repent. Wow. The truth is, he does the same thing with us. The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin repeatedly in the hopes that we will turn away from it. A sign of the Lord’s mercy in our lives is the allotment of time to make a change. He doesn’t come in with a heavy hand and demand we stop; rather, He comes to us gently and gives us room. This approach doesn’t last forever, of course, but isn’t our God’s generosity a beautiful thing? He is extending that same grace to you today. If you will be honest with yourself, seek help and get clean, God’s blessing will return in a great way to your life.

But in Jezebel’s case, her heart was unwilling to repent. She was saying in her heart, “No thanks. I’ll do what I want.” Here is what I have discovered about unwillingness. If we

refuse to change after repeated conviction of the Holy Spirit, our hearts become hardened. We are now walking in the opposite direction from God. Because he is our Father, He will let us drift for a while before he takes action. By that time, His actions may include temporary pain or humiliation in order to get our attention. In all of this, his real goal is to bring us home so we can be long-term friends.

I am glad God is patient with each of us and walks alongside us, even in the sexual areas of our lives. I am also glad that, as a Father, he is willing to bring us to a place of willingness again so we can repent of our deception. But here is what happens if we don't: "Look! I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds" (Rev. 2:22).

A bed of suffering does not sound so good to me, especially when Jesus is the one making the bed. I tell the men who attend my conferences that the devil has to guess how to hurt us, but God doesn't. He knows exactly what will create pain for us. If we are God's children, he most likely has "spanked" us for wrong behaviors at some point in our lives. For some it was pride, and for others fear or flat-out rebellion. But this bed of suffering is a spanking on steroids! {eoa}

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