



SHE
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A DEVOTIONAL SERIES FOR GIRLS

VILLAINS OF THE BIBLE

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LESSON ONE

JEZEBEL:

GREED & JEALOUSY

- If you had to describe Queen Jezebel in three words, what three words would you choose?
- Can you remember a time that your words or actions hurt someone else?
- Has jealousy or selfishness ever made you do or say something you regret?



When it comes to the villains of the Bible, Jezebel might have been the actual worst. If I had to pick three words to describe Queen Jezebel it would be ruthless, heartless, and wicked. She was the Queen of Hearts of the Old Testament. Even today people use her name to refer to someone that they REALLY don't like. So what did she do that left her with this notorious reputation? Well, I'm glad you asked! Let's dive into 1st and 2nd Kings and learn a little more about her story.

Jezebel's story begins in 1 Kings 16:31 when she married the King of Israel, Ahab. But it's important to understand where Jezebel came from.


She was the daughter of King Ethbaal, who ruled over the Zidonians, and the Zidonians were idolatrous people. Jezebel brought the idols that her people worshipped with her to Israel, as well as over 800 prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:19). Queen Jezebel killed prophets of God and threatened to kill the prophet Elijah. But one story about Jezebel that sticks out to me is the story of Naboth's vineyard.

Naboth was a Jezreelite that owned a vineyard next to King Ahab's palace. Ahab wanted to buy Naboth's vineyard so he could build a garden of herbs. But Naboth wouldn't sell his vineyard because the land was his inheritance and the Lord forbid him from selling it. When King Ahab found out he couldn't have the vineyard, he threw a literal temper tantrum and crawled in his bed and wouldn't eat. Jezebel asked Ahab why he was so upset and he told her all about Naboth's refusal to sell his vineyard. Jezebel then took the situation into her own hands and sent out letters to all the elders and nobles in Naboth's city. She told them to proclaim a fast and give Naboth a place of honor so that everyone can see him. Once Naboth was in a prominent place, Jezebel had two men accuse him of blasphemy and he was stoned to death.

This story powerfully displays how greed and jealousy controlled Jezebel's life. If there was something that she wanted, she didn't care what she had to do to get it.

In the story with Naboth's vineyard, she devised a whole plan of lies and gimmicks and then killed him just to fulfill her greedy heart. Nowadays we aren't going around killing each other for vineyards, but we still fight against our flesh and deal with greed and jealousy.

The lesson we can learn from Jezebel is to not let jealousy, greed, or selfishness control our lives and how we treat others. You may not order someone to be stoned to death but you may be using your words to tear someone else down. Perhaps you are jealous of what someone else has or the life they live and you allow sin to creep into your heart and change the way you treat others. No, I'm not saying that if you ever get jealous of what someone else has that you are Jezebel. We just have to make sure that in these situations, we repent and protect our hearts. Jezebel's biggest mistake was that she was too prideful and selfish to turn to repentance.



My prayer for you is that if you find yourself in a situation where you want what someone else has, don't act out in jealousy or greed. Learn from the mistakes of Jezebel. Repent and protect your heart.



Discussion questions:

- In your opinion, what was Jezebel's biggest mistake?
- How can her life teach us to not fall into the trap of jealousy?
- How can you protect your heart from jealousy or greed?



about the writer: Abigail Haworth

Abigail Haworth is a recent graduate of Indiana Bible College and a current student of the University of Florida (Go Gators!). She also serves as the vocal director at Cornerstone Church in Ocala. When she isn't studying or at the church, you could probably find her at her favorite place in the world: the beach!

LESSON TWO

DELILAH:

SELFISH MANIPULATOR

- How would you define manipulation?
- Have you ever used the emotional dependency of another to get your own way?
- How is selfishness at the root of manipulation?



Read Judges Chapter 16

Although I am sure most of us would like to focus on Samson's poor judgment in hitching his wagon to the likes of Little Miss Delilah, and how he chose a woman outside of the plan of God, we'll turn our attention to Delilah. After all, scripture does portray Samson as the more honorable party in their dishonorable union in that, "he loved her."


The readers of Judges Chapter 16 have conjured up an image of a beautiful, voluptuous woman who seduces her way into the affections of God's chosen. She is the fruit of the forbidden tree, the woman that young men are warned about in the book of Proverbs. If our imaginations are correct, there is no question then as to what drew Samson to Delilah, but what was it that drew her attention toward him? Was it his exceptional physique or maybe his renown? Scripture leaves us only to speculate, but whatever it was, her devotion to him was strictly self-serving.

At the root of Delilah's villainous character was selfishness. I am sure she never foresaw the total devastation of her selfish behaviors, and perhaps, in the end, may have felt a bit of remorse, but as is the case with selfishness, "ME" was at the center of her actions. Delilah was promised 1,100 pieces of silver (approximately \$15 million today!) to betray the man who had pledged his love to her. So, she began to exploit his devotion, manipulating him into revealing the source of his strength as proof of his love for her, i.e. "if you love me you will tell me." Each time Delilah realized that Samson had withheld the truth from her, her manipulation became more pointed, more oppressive.

In the end, once Samson, in his desperation to please the woman he loves, revealed the truth, he was overtaken. Selfish ambition had brought down the mighty Judge of Israel.

Proverbs 7:24-26 "Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say. Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths. Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng"

There is a common phrase that is tossed around these days that doesn't sit well with me. "Happy wife, happy life". For me, this statement is dripping with selfishness. As long as she has everything she wants, no matter what it takes, life is good. I'm not sure about you, but I don't want this phrase to ever be applied to me. I'd rather be referred to as Paul writes; that I am without covetousness and content with such things that I have. As women of God, we must be always mindful of the motives behind our ambitions, whether they be monetary, professional, or relational.



Our world today is driven by the spirit of selfishness telling us at every turn how we deserve to have every tangible desire of our hearts. But as with everything else of this world, that concept is contrary to the Word of God and His plan for our lives.

Although scripture says no more of Delilah once Samson is carted away from her tent, I imagine she was among the multitudes that were killed when Samson's last act of supernatural strength pulled down the pillars of the palace. Selfishness is a seductress that if allowed to enter into our hearts, will destroy not only our own lives but the lives of those around us.

"Let no one seek his own, but each on the other's well-being." I Corinthians 10:24

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." Philippians 2:3-4

Discussion questions:



- Can you identify areas of selfishness in your life?
- How can you align your ambitions with the will of God in your life?
- If manipulation has become a pattern in your life, make time to repent and ask the Lord to reveal His goodness. All we have need of will be found only in Him.



about the writer: Annie Drummond

Annie Drummond has been married to Tommy Drummond, who Pastors the church in Lutz, Florida for 37 years. She is blessed with four wonderful children and five grandchildren who she adores. The Church is her passion. She loves traveling with her husband, cooking big meals for family and friends, and hanging out with her grandchildren.

LESSON THREE

LOT'S WIFE: FEARFUL CHOICES

- What would you say you are most known for? What's your defining trait?
- Can you describe a time you didn't follow directions and what happened because of it?
- Describe a time you had a hard time trusting God.



What seems like a trivial part of God's instruction still has great significance.

Upon reading the passage describing the angel's directions to Lot's family, I noticed "look not behind thee," and it seems to be placed right in there as a small part of the larger point of instruction. Not to give Lot's wife an excuse, but I can see how easily this small part would be forgotten in the moment of hastily running for your life. However, the details are so important. Whatever instructions are given to you by those watching out for your soul and safety, be sure to heed the instruction. She followed the instructions on all points except that one. He is an intentional and detail-oriented God. Don't discount the importance of command simply because it doesn't seem to make sense. We can't pick and choose what we think is beneficial and what isn't. We trust God, follow His guidance, study to show ourselves approved, and obey the commands He lays out in scripture.

2 Timothy 3:16 states, "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

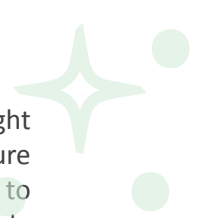
We are known by the sum of our choices.

Lot's wife, poor girl. We don't even get her name mentioned in scripture. She's known only as Lot's wife and is undoubtedly the brunt of all the "salty" jokes these days. Even though we don't know much about her, we can learn from her famous mistake. Whether we like it or not, we are known by our choices, actions, and words. What we post, send in group messages, private messages—they all speak louder about our character than we realize. Don't let the mistakes of your past be what you are known for. There's still time to find grace and redemption in Jesus Christ. Unlike Lot's wife, you have the chance to turn over a new leaf and start completely new. Surrender your life, mistakes and all, to Him. Repent and turn away from your past, fix your eyes on Him and allow Him to renew you by His spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

How we react to our fear can greatly impact our lives.

It's not explicitly written in scripture, but we can use our reading skills to infer that Lot's wife might have been frightened during the sequence of events that ensued around her family's departure from Sodom. Who knows, maybe she looked back over her shoulder just as a knee-jerk reaction to hearing the calamity from destruction. After all, fire was falling from the sky! However, that simple choice altered her life and her family's forever. Lot had to go on without his wife, and her children had to grow up without the nurturing of their mother. She reacted out of fear and distrust of God's provision and protection for her family. How we react to the fearful situations we find ourselves in is a determining factor of the future we are pursuing. We must trust God to lead us through the trouble without fearfully doubting His plan at every sound of destruction. He is more than able to



deliver us from every frightening circumstance we find ourselves in, even if we are the ones who got ourselves there in the first place. Looking back to where He brought you from can be just as destructive as staying where you were. Trust God, keep your eyes on Him, and follow Him through every victory and trial.

Luke 14:27 “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Discussion questions:



- How can you follow God’s instructions more closely in your personal life? What have you possibly overlooked?
- In what ways do you struggle to trust God? What parts of your life have you not yet yielded to Him?
- How can you release your fears to Him?



about the writer: Sarah Hudspeth

Sarah is married to her best friend, Jordan, and mama to her greatest blessings, Amelia and Gentry. She serves wherever she can at The Life Church in Saint Petersburg, and she can often be seen with coffee in hand.

LESSON FOUR

EVE:

CURIOSITY & PRIDE

- Who would you choose for best Disney villain? Why?
- Do villains think of themselves as villains? If not, how do they see themselves?
- If you were a villain, what would be your superpower?



Read Genesis 3: 1 – 19 (NIV).

Of all the “villains” we’ll learn about in this series, Eve is probably the most surprising. Her circumstances could be considered ideal from any metric. She was created in a utopian environment. Everything she needed was provided for her. Shelter. Food. Companionship. God literally created the earth for her and Adam, giving them dominion over everything they could ask for.

Read Genesis 3: 1 – 5

So... what went wrong? In the moment of decision, why did Eve make the wrong choice? What made her so vulnerable to temptation?

Like, girl! You’ve got it so good! Don’t mess it up for a piece of fruit. That’s what I’ve wanted to say to Eve many times. It’s hard to know what Eve was thinking because Genesis doesn’t give a view into her mindset, except through her actions. Too bad she didn’t leave a diary for us to help us understand her.


However, we can deduce a few things about Eve’s encounter with the serpent. It’s not a coincidence Lucifer chose to inhabit a creature that was “more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord had made” (Gen. 3:1). Eve was, for all intents and purposes, a church girl. She had a relationship with God. Genesis tells us she and Adam walked with God in the “cool of the day.” If Satan had come to her as a roaring lion or growling grizzly, she would have instantly been on her guard. Instead, her enemy’s vehicle was subtlety. He understood a full-frontal attack would be quickly rebuffed. But he also understood the power of curiosity and pride. Because when someone sees a fence, it’s human nature to wonder what’s on the other side. Curiosity is a natural condition and can lead to some awesome discoveries and adventures. However, it can also be dangerous when not tempered with wisdom and accountability.

Read Proverbs 1:5 - Why didn’t Eve immediately go to her husband when confronted by doubts? How might the world be different now if Eve had sought counsel?

God created us to rely on each other. In Hebrews, Paul tells the church to

“...think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near” (Hebrews 10:24-25 NLV).

He understood that the world is relentless in its attempts to cram its culture and system in ways that are obvious and in ways that are subtle. This is why it’s so important to be plugged into the things of God and to gather a good support system around us. We need wise friends and



counselors whom we can trust to guide us when we're confronted with something that makes us question ourselves. Our enemy works best in isolation. Find people who are trustworthy, wise, and solid in their relationship with God. And, when you're faced with temptation go to one of those trusted advisors. Seek counsel. Ask for prayer. And listen. Be willing to hear the counsel given.

Read Genesis 3:6-7 – How did Eve's perception of the forbidden fruit change after her conversation with the serpent? Why did Adam follow Eve's example?

We all know the results of Eve's actions. We're living it. In the moment of temptation Eve could not have conceived how the consequences of her choice would ripple throughout history. Even though they'd been warned of what would happen, both Adam and Eve had grown complacent. The safety of their environment, the comfort of a garden that provided their every need had dulled the warning. In the life of a child of God, this is a very real danger. We experience God's presence and His provision. We gather together and worship Him in freedom and safety. It's so easy to take for granted God's love and grace in the midst of everyday life. It's in the lull of that complacency that our enemy strikes. Subtle and crafty, he presents us with a question that causes us to view God's protective hedge in a way we may not have before. Did God really mean...? How bad would it really be if...? Why am I not allowed to...? Fill in the blank. If he can sow seeds of doubt, he can return to water them with pride and resentment. Over time we find ourselves considering things that would previously have been out of the question.

Discussion questions:

Read Proverbs 4:23 & Philippians 4:7

- Think inwardly for a moment. Are there signs in your life, thoughts, habits that indicate you may have become complacent?
- What concrete actions can you take to guard your heart?

The fate of the world may not lie in your choices. But the fate of your soul and those you impact do. Be on your guard. Seek counsel. Trust God's Word in your life. Don't give room for the enemy to sow seeds of doubt in your heart.



about the writer: Cristina Sierra

Cristina Sierra has been writing and teaching Bible studies to young people for over 20 years. She is the wife of Pastor Eric Sierra at The Sanctuary, mom to two wonderful kids, and a social studies teacher for more than 10 years. Besides teaching, her passions are building furniture, reading, and most of all, spending time with her family.