

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

Take Inventory - Bad Girls of the Bible

July 19, 2021

Amy Seiffert, author, speaker, and podcaster, came to share her insights about Jezebel this past Sunday. She said Jezebel was a Phoenician princess, daughter of King Ethball of the Sidonians. Jezebel was likely married off to Ahab, who reigned in Samaria, to form a political alliance so her family could gain more power and wealth.

As I listened to Amy speak, I wondered how Jezebel could have gained so much influence over her new husband? Was it her beauty? Her family power? Wealth? Was she spiritually gifted at winning over people? Whatever it was, her influence caused Ahab to build a temple and an altar to Baal in Samaria. And consequently, her husband did more to anger the God of Israel than any king before him. This influence quickly spread throughout the land.

1 Kings 16:31-34

³¹ And as though it were not enough to follow the sinful example of Jeroboam, he married Jezebel, the daughter of King Ethbaal of the Sidonians, and he began to bow down in worship of Baal. ³² First Ahab built a temple and an altar for Baal in Samaria. ³³ Then he set up an Asherah pole. He did more to provoke the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel, than any of the other kings of Israel before him.

³⁴ It was during his reign that Hiel, a man from Bethel, rebuilt Jericho. When he laid its foundations, it cost him the life of his oldest son, Abiram. And when he completed it and set up its gates, it cost him the life of his youngest son, Segub. This all happened according to the message from the Lord concerning Jericho spoken by Joshua son of Nun.

My heart was convicted as I listened to Amy speak. I've been struggling with what I have versus what others have. I see the new cars, the homes, the luxury RVs, the vacations, the job promotions, and I am admittedly filled with envy! They have all these things; why can't I? After all, think of all the good I could do with it.

Through this weekend's message, I am reminded to take inventory of what has influence over me. Honestly, I have everything that I need, and God has been extremely good to me! My ability to influence others doesn't have to come from what experiences or possessions I can offer them. Instead, my influence and ability to point others to Jesus comes from living from God's spirit.

I hope to be influential with people. I want to win hearts and souls over for Jesus! I would prefer to be well endowed with the fruit of the Spirit over having power, wealth and the things of this world.

Questions:

What influences are in your life? Do you regularly invest in nourishing your body with healthy foods? Are you feeding your soul with teachings from the Bible, podcasts, music, and entertainment that reinforce your beliefs?

Next Steps:

Take an inventory of what things are influencing your life. Write them down on paper and pray about them. Make an action plan if there are things that you want to change. Read [2 Kings 9:30-36](#) to find out how the story of Jezebel ends.

Prayer:

Father in heaven, thank you for the many gifts you bring. Thank you for the influence of the church and Godly fellowship. Thank you for the growing trends toward Christian radio, music, and movies that are available to me. Thank you for my Bible. Father, I pray over our nation today and ask that you lead influential people in places that will win the hearts and minds of those who are lost to the ways of this world. Thank you for the bad girls of the Bible who enable us to learn from their mistakes. In Jesus' name, amen.

This post was written by Julie Estep, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Against the Grain - Bad Girls of the Bible

July 20, 2021

Jezebel is probably the ultimate *Bad Girl of the Bible*. When I think of her, the image that pops up is Cruella de Vil. Both women were powerful, rich, beautiful, and willing to destroy anything that stood in the way of what they wanted. Who thinks making a coat out of puppies is OK? The same type of woman who thinks it's OK to sacrifice a child to a pagan god. The type of woman who has an innocent man killed because her husband is pouting about not getting what he wants.

Contrast this with another woman I have been reading about lately, Corrie ten Boom, the antithesis of Jezebel. She lived a quiet life with her father and older sister in Holland in the 1930s. She worked at her father's watch shop and helped people with developmental disabilities. When WWII broke out, she helped run an underground network to relocate Jewish people fleeing for their lives. She and her entire family were arrested. Eventually, she and her sister, Betsie, were transferred to the lice and flea-infested Ravensbruck concentration camp where they spent their time in a living hell, ministering to the women in the camp. While there, Corrie learned to "[thank God for the fleas.](#)"

Last weekend, our guest speaker, Amy Seiffert, shared that our influences promote worship. Jezebel was influenced by all life could offer. She had everything she wanted, and yet when all was said and done, her eunuchs threw her from her tower for her body to be trampled by horses and eaten by animals ([2 Kings 9:32-37](#)).

Corrie, on the other hand, lived a seemingly insignificant life until she was past middle age. She faithfully served those whom she encountered on a daily basis and stood up for God's people even when those around her bowed to the culture around them. She endured hate and torture yet remained faithful to her God and what he called her to do. She lived to pass on forgiveness to those who tortured her and hope to those ravaged by war. She died peacefully at 91 in her sleep. She is still impacting lives today through the words of her book, *The Hiding Place*.

What are you worshipping?

What influences your daily life right now?

What will your life be like tomorrow based on your influences today?

The world will tell you that you need to fight for your rights, that you deserve to live a good life, and that it doesn't matter who you have to destroy to get there. We live in a culture of self-worship. A world where children are an inconvenience and helping those in need comes only after

we take care of ourselves. Bloggers, social media voices, and media moguls all encourage us to take care of number one.

But that's not what Jesus calls us to do. Jesus calls us to be humble, to put the needs of others before our own.

Matthew 19:28-30

²⁸ *Jesus replied, "I assure you that when the world is made new and the Son of Man sits upon his glorious throne, you who have been my followers will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* ²⁹ *And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or property, for my sake, will receive a hundred times as much in return and will inherit eternal life.* ³⁰ *But many who are the greatest now will be least important then, and those who seem least important now will be the greatest then.*

Questions:

What are the influences in your life today? What voices are you listening to on a daily basis that shape your view of how you should be living? What will your tomorrow look like based on who you are listening to today?

Next Steps:

Make a list of your influences. After you have your list, think through what messages they are sending you and what direction your life will go if you continue to follow them.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for providing examples in the Bible of the good and the bad. Thank you for showing me your truths through the lives of real people so that I can learn from them and change my life to better reflect your promises. Forgive me for blindly following the voices of our culture, and help me to stand up for what is right and true. Give me the courage to shut off the voices leading me away from you and to embrace a counter-cultural lifestyle. Thank you for your strength to persevere through trials, and thank you for promising that my suffering in this life is not in vain. Amen.

This post was written by Julie Mabus, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Distractible Influences - Bad Girls of the Bible

July 21, 2021

Snapchat, friends, Netflix, work, sports, Instagram, activities, to-do lists, Disney+, Facebook, relationships, shopping, celebrities, politicians, professional athletes.

These are just a few of the things that influence us on a daily basis. Not only do they influence us but they might also distract us from the one true God. The voices that we subject ourselves to can often stifle the voice of the One who is above it all.

During the *What Our World Needs Now* series, we were challenged with finding an area in which to be faithful. Because I wanted the main influence in my life to be Jesus, I started setting a timer for prayer. I didn't do this to check a box on my spiritual checklist. Rather, it was an effort to help me avoid distractions and outside influences by devoting a certain amount of my day to focused prayer.

Through this discipline of intentional prayer time, I've realized more and more that there are influences in my life that scream for my time and my attention. And digging deeper, it's easy to see how different things not only influence my prayer and Bible time but also the way I think about certain things, how I spend my time, and how I spend money. For example, I wish I could say that social media ads don't get me, but I have a T-shirt or two that prove otherwise. If those quick glances at a social media ad are able to persuade me to make a purchase (that I don't really need), how much do other things influence me? Social media, friends, work, Netflix, TV programs, even our families have influence over us, both good and bad.

Last weekend, as we learned about Jezebel, we learned that she was an influencer to those around her. Her influence drew people away from God, his standards, and his way.

Perhaps there are influences in our lives that are also pulling us away from God, preventing us from establishing a devoted prayer time or intentionally spending time in God's Word. Maybe you're being influenced away from church attendance or even from the holy habit of rest. The bottom line is, *your life tomorrow is determined by your influences today*. That concept should drive us to consider our influences as well as how we influence others. Matthew 16:24 reminds us that when we choose to follow Jesus, we need to give up our OWN way.

Matthew 16:24

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you want to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me."

Let's give Jesus space to work in us as we follow him and avoid the influences that separate us from him.

Questions:

What are some of the influences that may be causing you to miss hearing from God? What is getting in the way of how you can influence others for God, and toward God?

Next Steps:

Identify a few areas that may be influencing you, your time, and your thoughts. Journal a few ways that you can be intentional with what influences you are taking in and set some goals to create more space for the influences you want and need in your life. Share your plans with a trusted friend.

Prayer:

God, I am surrounded by influences from every angle. Help me to rise above the noise and be still enough to hear YOUR voice. Help me to be intentional with my time, with the people and things I choose to surround myself with, and with my actions. May I hear you and follow you with even more intentionality tomorrow than I did today. In Jesus' name, amen.

This post was written by Kendra Grubinski, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Who's Your Daddy - Bad Girls of the Bible

July 22, 2021

Last weekend, our guest speaker, Amy Seiffert, encouraged us to examine where our opinions and actions come from and whether they reflect our title of “children of God.” She used the life of Jezebel in 1 Kings to unwrap the reality that there are outside influences we embrace in our lives that negatively affect our behavior. We were encouraged to pursue life as Paul described in Ephesians.

Ephesians 5:15-18 AMP

¹⁵ Therefore see that you walk carefully [living life with honor, purpose, and courage; shunning those who tolerate and enable evil], not as the unwise, but as wise [sensible, intelligent, discerning people], ¹⁶ making the very most of your time [on earth, recognizing and taking advantage of each opportunity and using it with wisdom and diligence], because the days are [filled with] evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish and thoughtless, but understand and firmly grasp what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk with wine, for that is wickedness (corruption, stupidity), but be filled with the [Holy] Spirit and constantly guided by Him.

Jezebel's life theme was, “it's all about me, baby.” Her prime motivation was to get what she wanted, when she wanted it and without any concern about how her choices might affect other people.

As Christ followers, I doubt we would describe ourselves as a “Jezebel”, but have you considered the outside influences that motivate your choices? Are they godly?

Ask yourself, is your goal to fit in? To be comfortable? Are you trying to be seen as better than others, like Jezebel? Or, like Jesus, is your goal to be a servant of God? A walking example of the fruit of the Spirit?

Galatians 5:22-25

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. ²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

In 1 Kings, Queen Jezebel is described as exercising sway over her husband, King Ahab, and the affairs of Israel, including the sinful worship of the horrible pagan god Baal. Worship of Baal included the sacrifice of bulls. We see this in 1 Kings 19. Most often, sacrifices were made to Baal

to prevent storms, control the seas and request a good harvest.. In times of crisis though Baal worshipers sacrificed their children to gain personal prosperity. Jezebel discredited, harassed, and killed anyone who got in the way of what she wanted, especially the prophets of God. Together, Jezebel and King Ahab turned God's people to pagan worship and depravity.

How did this happen? Through influence. Their threats and behavior changed the Israelites. Amy suggested that our choices and opinions reflect what we allow to influence us, as individuals, families, and even nations. So, what is truly influencing your words, actions, and beliefs?

Are you subconsciously being swayed by the endless bombardment of social media, academia, politics, materialism, and fashion? How much time do you spend on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, or mindlessly watching dog videos on Tic Toc?

Measure that time against how much time you're spending learning about God and applying what you've learned to how you are actually living your life. Which is the bigger source of influence?

If media influence takes up more time in your life than the Word of God, I encourage you to reverse those numbers and watch as peace and purpose return to your life.

Questions:

Have you strayed from God? If so, why? Do you want to change your current path back to him?

Do you justify behaviors and opinions you know or think are ungodly?

Do you want a more peace- and love-filled, meaningful life?

Are you ready to choose God instead of yourself?

Next Steps:

Admit you have strayed. Ask God to forgive you and bring you back to a deep, personal relationship with him.

Get rid of the news feeds and eliminate Facebook or other social media apps from your phone.

Add a good Bible app to your phone and read one chapter from the Old Testament and the New Testament each day. Then spend time in prayer with your loving, heavenly Father. It should only take about 30 minutes ... less time than checking your Facebook page.

Engage in church and service activities. Take the focus off what you want and place it on what God wants.

Prayer:

Lord, I praise your name. Thank you for loving me in spite of myself. I ask you to please forgive me for my sins. Please replace my endless desire for pleasure, entertainment, free time, and the admiration of others with a deep desire to know you and live out your will for my life. Thank you Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

This post was written by Martha Smith, a regular contributor and editor of the LivingItOut.

God is Good - Bad Girls of the Bible

July 23, 2021

Have you ever been woken up for the hundredth time with anxious thoughts? Are you troubled about opinions and circumstances that you never would have cared about a few years ago?

Currently, that's where I find myself, waking up worried about a bunch of people, places, and things that I would not have previously cared about. It's especially bad when I focus on the fact that

the world doesn't play fair like my justice-oriented mind expects it to. That's when I lose my peace and can become bitter.

This past weekend our guest speaker, Amy Seiffert, said, Jezebel sold her culture of power, position, and prestige. It was intoxicating, and many people bought into it, including King Ahab. When Elijah wins the battle and God shows up so huge, you would expect that King Ahab would come to his senses and the kingdom would be saved. That seems fair, right? But Ahab runs back to his wife, Jezebel.

1 Kings 18:1-3

When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything Elijah had done, including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal. ² So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: "May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed them." ³ Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died."

King Ahab and Jezebel both had a choice. They could have decided to follow God's kingdom, but instead continued to follow Jezebel's Kingdom — a pursuit of power and prestige.

Elijah found himself on the run despite being obedient to God. When I am being obedient and things go badly, I can be tempted to start fighting against the world instead of trusting that what God has for me is going to be good. Elijah's story in 1 Kings 19 shows us that God provides comfort in these times that is better than any treasure the world could provide me. The fresh bread, the whisper in the cave, and the next steps of Elijah's journey are exactly what he needed. He chose

God who is a consuming fire and a good father, and I pray we can have the faith to do the same every day.

Questions:

Are you worried about worldly things that have taken a grip on you?

Are there people or places in your life that are taking away your peace?

Next Steps:

Take inventory of what you are allowing into your eyes and ears. Listen to a new podcast that will encourage you in God's Word. (Susie Larson Live is one of my favorites.)

Read [1 Kings 19](#) and reflect on all of the ways that God provided for Elijah.

Prayer:

Oh Lord, please touch our hearts and speak to us so we as a people may choose your kingdom. Pluck away the influences in our lives that are taking us away from you, and replace them with blessings that satisfy. Give us the wisdom to see what we need to let go of and the courage to trust you to let it go. Amen.

This post was written by April Willer, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.