



LIFE LESSONS FROM THE LADIES: Part Two

UNCOOL MOMS: LESSON 13

The last two weeks we looked at some ladies that were good moms, faithful women, and positive role models. This week we are going to look at some interesting women that I've referred to as "uncool moms." But they are more than just bad moms, they are women who are bad to the bone, as the saying goes. I pray that as we read their stories, we learn what "not" to do, who "not" to be and how "not" to live our lives. Sometimes we learn more from bad examples than good, so let's focus on doing that.

I read an article this week called "Meet the Five Worst Moms in History." It was a bit ridiculous, but I guess it was true. I wanted to share one of them with you in case you're feeling like you've been a "bad mom" and continue to beat yourself up over it. Her name was Mary Ann Cotton. She lived in the 19th century and was a nurse, a dressmaker, and a housekeeper. She also had a secret hobby: she poisoned and killed 11 of her 13 children, all four of her husbands, two lovers, plus two other people. All for their insurance money. Arsenic was her murder weapon of choice. The body count was up to 21 before Scotland Yard caught up with her. She was hung on March 24, 1873. This bad mom was more than a bad mom, she was a bad human! So ... what can we learn from her? She's yet another example of how greed can infect a soul. She wanted more and more and more. Guard your hearts, ladies. Be content with what the Lord has given you. And beware if someone starts calling you Mary Ann ☹️

First Day

1. Meet our first lady of the week, Jezebel. Some have called her the "wickedest woman in all the world." Her name has become part of our vocabulary in the way we refer to some women. Before you read about her, what comes to mind when you hear her name?

2. Read 1 Kings 16:29-31. What do we learn about her? Who was her father, her husband, etc.?

Jezebel is already an evil woman before she meets Ahab. She was a Phoenician princess, daughter of the king of the Sidonians. She was a worshipper of Baal and Asherah, gods of her own country who were fertility goddesses of love. Her marriage to Ahab was probably a political alliance between the two nations. Kathy Collard Miller sums it up: "While Israel started as one country during the reign of Saul, David, and Solomon, Solomon's sons split the nation into Judah and Israel. These two countries have been influenced by the false gods worshipped in nearby nations. Ahab doesn't have to marry her, but the marriage brings political benefits. The wickedness of Ahab, an already evil king, worsened by her influence."

Jezebel seemed determined to drive Jehovah God out of Israel and to usher in Baal and Asherah. I read that she filled her palace and surrounding centers with 450 priests and 400 priestesses of her foreign gods. The palace was full of sexual immorality, temple prostitution, and the sacrifice of children. Ugh. Her idolatry spread like a cancer into the Hebrew faith, and she had an amazing amount of power over her husband.

3. Read 1 Kings 18:1-46. What do we find out about Jezebel in verse 4? Who ordered the massacre? We also meet her strongest enemy. Who was it?

4. Why do you think she did this?

5. Elijah challenged Baal's priests and prophets to a fight, so to speak, to show the power of Yahweh. Summarize the story.

6. How did this go over with Jezebel, according to 1 Kings 19:1-2? Describe her response.

Jezebel loved power, right? That much was obvious. She wanted control of the kingdom. Liz Curtis Higgs said, “Potiphar’s wife loved men, Delilah loved money, and Jezebel loved power. Not the kind conferred by God, like Samson’s. This was power she created herself, the hard way, one dead prophet at a time.” She not only killed God’s prophets, she used royal provisions to support the prophets of Baal during the famine in Samaria (1 Kings 18:19). Tomorrow we’ll continue to look deeper into the life of this witchy woman.

Memory Verse of the Week: “For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil dwell with You. The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity.” Psalm 5:4-5

Second Day

Work on your memory verse.

1. Let’s pick up her story in 1 Kings 19:1-18. How does Elijah react to Jezebel’s threat?

2. What do you think about this? The mighty prophet who just experienced the victory at Mt. Carmel runs away with his tail between his legs. Why? What does this tell us about Jezebel?

3. I’m not meaning to gloss over the incredible story of the victory, but I want to focus on Jezebel. Now read 1 Kings 21:1-7. What does Ahab want? What response does he get? How does Ahab react?

4. When Jezebel hears about poor little Ahab’s problem, how does she respond in verse 7?

5. Jezebel cruelly belittles Ahab’s manhood and role as a king. Do you see any similarity in how you have ever spoken to your husband, if you’re married? Have you ever tried to tear away his self-confidence with your words?

6. Read 1 Kings 21:8-16. Does she offer advice or suggestions? Explain how Jezebel acquired the land for her husband. (Read Proverbs 6:16-19. How many of these sins does she commit?)

7. Higgs wrote, "Wicked women are often excessively fond of power. Jezebel took control. That's what jezebels do best." How do you respond when others have a problem? Do you just step in and take control? Would others consider you a domineering woman?

Miller wrote, "From the Jewish perspective, the land of a man's ancestors should remain in the family. God commanded that they not sell their inheritance of land. That's why even an offer from the king would not convince Naboth to sell land that had been in his family's possession for many years. And why didn't Ahab want to keep God's Law? The answer is simple; Ahab was greedy."

8. Elijah the prophet now steps in with a prediction of death. Read 1 Kings 21:17-29. How does he say Ahab and Jezebel will die?

Ahab seemed to repent in 1 Kings 21:27-29, tearing his clothes and putting on sackcloth which was the Jewish way of expressing grief and repentance. God promises to bring calamity to his son's house rather than his. We find the story of Ahab's death in 1 Kings 22:37-40. Some years later, who took over as king? (Read verse 51- like father/mother, like son.) Ahab's grandson, Ahaziah, reigned for two years in Israel. Then his brother, Joram, reigns for 12 years, followed by Jehu. Jehu kills Joram then goes to Jezreel to bring judgement on Jezebel, who was his last formal obstacle to his own kingship. Jehu had to exterminate the royal families of Israel and Judah and wipe out their religious support, the priests of Baal. Then he could secure his hold on the throne. God also had chosen Jehu to be the executor of justice.

9. Read 2 Kings 9:30-37. How did Jezebel die? (Why do you think she put make-up on first?)

Jezebel appeared at her window, challenging Jehu's right to rule. In verse 31, she scornfully calls him "Zimri." (That's kind of odd, right?) I read that calling him Zimri was a huge insult because Zimri was a known traitor who only lived a week after overthrowing his master. It was, by the way, Jezebel's father-in-law who had defeated Zimri and began the dynasty which Jehu was ending.

10. When Elijah predicted Ahab's death in 1 Kings 21:17-29, what does he say about Ahab and Jezebel? Have you ever "stirred someone up" or incited them to do something against God? Are you guilty of using this method to get your way at times?

We're going to talk more about that question tomorrow, but for now, ask the Holy Spirit to begin showing you what you can learn from this woman in regard to being a wife, a mother, and simply a human.

Third Day

What's your memory verse?

1. We know that sin can blind us from its consequences until our hearts become too hard to realize it. Is there some sin in your life that may be blinding you from the effects and consequences you, and others around you, may be experiencing?

2. We all have some type of power, but how are we using it, is the question. Jezebel LOVED power. But, how did she use:
 - a. The power of her bright mind?
 - b. Her strong leadership qualities?
 - c. Her courage?
 - d. Her position?
 - e. Her creativity?

3. If you are a strong leader, are you using the traits in a positive or negative way?

4. Jezebel was a huge influence on her husband. She was a dominant, domineering wife. She corrupted him and her children. Do you ever try to dominate or control others, not just your husband?

5. Jezebel's servants seemed happy to throw her out the window! She must have been a terrible boss! How about you? Would those who work alongside of you be happy to "toss you out" as well? If you're a boss, do you treat your workers with love, grace, and respect? (Colossians 4:1)

Liz Custis Higgs wrote, "The only person who saw Ahab as weak was Jezebel. Her cosmetics couldn't make up for her ugly attitude toward her husband. Some of our men may be viewed as competent and capable in every setting but their own home. It may be our strong-willed nature, and not their weak-willed one, that makes them appear 'less than.' Let's pray for a gentler, more supportive spirit. Even when we are right, does it necessarily make our men wrong?"

6. Write your thoughts on the above quote. How do you make your husband feel at home? And if you're not married, do you seek to encourage others or tend to make them feel "less than"?

Jezebel's evilness lived on after her. Besides the two yucky sons she had, her daughter Athaliah, carried on her miserable legacy. (Many think she was Ahab's daughter with another wife, while most scholars think Jezebel is her mom.) Edith Deen wrote, "She carried on the fatal influence she had inherited from her mother into Judah, southern kingdom of Israel, when she became the wife of another Jehoram. After his death, Athaliah's son, another Ahaziah, came to the throne, and when Jehu also killed him, Athaliah seized the government. She ruled only six years before she was supplanted by Joash and killed. When the horses trampled over her body which lay just inside her palace gates, her fate was not unlike that of her mother, Jezebel." (2 Kings 8:18, 26; 2 Kings 11:1-16; 2 Chronicles 22:10-11; 2 Chronicles 22:2-3)

7. Both mother and daughter tried to control the thrones, using their power to manipulate their sons and call the shots. I know this may be a drastic example, but do you ever try to control situations by manipulating your son or daughter?

8. Jezebel is mentioned one last time in Revelation 2:20. In what context is her name used?

9. Jezebel's name will always be used as a term of reproach, synonymous for wickedness. Random questions What impression are you leaving here on this earth? What will your "name" be known for?

10. What's the biggest lesson you learned from the life of Jezebel?

Fourth and Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory.

1. Meet our next "uncool" mom, Herodias. Read Matthew 14:1-12 and Mark 6:14-29. What do we know about her from these accounts?

2. Why did she hate John the Baptist so much? Why was she so threatened by him?

3. John the Baptist confronted Herod about his affair with his sister-in-law, Herodias. What does this tell you about John?

Herod actually seemed to like John the Baptist, appearing to be fascinated by John's message. The two got together often to talk about God and Herod saw him as a holy man (Mark 6:20). Although he feared the multitudes (Matthew 14:5) he seemed to REALLY fear his wife, Herodias.

Herodias is to the New Testament what Jezebel is to the Old. Herodias was to Herod what Jezebel was to Ahab ... an evil Dynamic Duo. Whereas Elijah was Jezebel's most hated rival, John the Baptist, the New Testament Elijah, was Herodias'. These evil rulers had met their match with their wives. There are a lot of Herods, so let's talk about that for a minute. The name Herodias is the female form of Herod, the royal name for the political rulers during the time of Christ and the apostles. Herod means "heroic" which was anything but true. I'll let Wiersbe explain her heritage better: "Herod Antipas was a son of Herod the Great. His title was 'tetrarch,' which means 'ruler over the fourth part of the kingdom.' He ruled from 4 BC to AD 39, and his rule was deceptive and selfish. He loved luxury and was very ambitious to become a great ruler. All of the Herods had Edomite blood in them, and, like their ancestor, Esau, they were hostile to the Jews (Genesis 25;19-23). They practiced the Jewish religion when it helped fulfill their plans for gaining power and wealth." Herodias' first marriage was to her half-uncle, Herod Philip. She divorced him to marry his half-brother, Herod Antipas, who was the step-brother of her father, Aristobulus. He was Tetrarch in Galilee during Jesus' time and mentioned more frequently in the New Testament than any other Herod. Throughout Scripture he is referred to as Herod, Antipas, or Herod Antipas.

Herodias was the granddaughter of Herod the Great who sought to destroy Jesus (Matthew 2:13). Her daughter is not named in Scripture, but the historian, Josephus, tells us her name is Salome.

4. Her resentment for John the Baptist seemed to grow over the years. How long do you think she may have been plotting John's death?

5. It seems like Herodias NEVER forgot John's rebuke of her marriage, which she obviously took as a personal attack. And John was simply speaking truth. This is a sad example of what unforgiveness can do in someone's heart. Is there something that's been done or said to you that you are struggling to forgive? Is it causing trauma in your heart, as well as affecting your relationship with Christ?

6. What do the following verses say about forgiveness?
 - a. Psalm 130:3-4
 - b. Psalm 103:3
 - c. Ephesians 4:32
 - d. Colossians 3:13
 - e. Matthew 6:12
 - f. Matthew 6:14-15
 - g. Add another verse about forgiveness that convicts, challenges, or encourages you.

7. If you are having trouble "forgetting" an offense, what should you do? What are some practical and spiritual ways to "let it go"?

8. Do you have trouble receiving "truth" when it's spoken into your life by someone? How do you tend to react? How do you receive criticism? How SHOULD we?

9. What do the following verses say about rebuke or receiving rebuke?
- Proverbs 9:8-9
 - Psalm 141:5
 - Proverbs 27:5
 - Ecclesiastes 7:5
 - Revelation 3:19

Herodias used her power to cause Herod AND her daughter to do something evil. They were simply pawns in her evil plan. Edith Deen wrote, "Herodias was the evil influence for both her daughter and her husband and the sole instigator of one of the most horrible crimes ever committed against a just and holy man."

10. Did it seem like Herodias had much power?
11. What could, or should, have Herod said to Salome's request?
12. Name all the sins that Herodias was guilty of.
13. How do you think Salome felt when she was handed John's head?

William Hendriksen wrote, "It can be argued that the way out of his predicament would have been for him to say to Salome, 'I promised to favor you with a gift; I certainly did not promise to commit a crime.' Or, 'I promised you, not your mother, a gift.' Best of all would have been 'I see now that I have sinned when I made this promise; hence I retract it.' But Herod lacked the courage, humility, and perhaps also the sobriety or clarity of mind to consider such an answer."

14. Do you think Herodias told Salome to “dance” in front of him or it was Salome’s idea? Do you think Herodias simply saw an opportunity to get revenge when Herod promised Salome whatever she wanted? Did Herodias know the weakness of her husband or just capitalize on it? Thoughts?

15. Either way, Herodias compromised and used her daughter’s modesty to get what she wanted. (As a mom, this seems even more detestable, doesn’t it?) What “life lesson” was she teaching her daughter at that moment?

16. What “life lessons” are you teaching your daughters, sons, and other children you love? Name some of the most important “life lessons” you should be teaching them. Where should we be getting our “material” from?

17. We meet Herod again in Luke 23:1-12. I wonder if Herodias had learned a lesson and considered speaking up for Jesus? Hmmm, probably not, since she didn’t. Thoughts?

18. What other lessons can we learn from Herodias?

I've included an outline below from William Hendriksen's Commentary called "[The Gospel of Matthew](#)." It's a chart showing the different Herods in the New Testament to help if you desire to study further.

Scripture doesn't tell us any more about Herodias and her evil escapades, but history tells us that her husband was banned into exile by her brother King Agrippa I because he was seeking too much power. Long story short, Herod was stripped of all his powers and condemned to exile in Lyons of Gaul. It is said that Herodias was not forced into exile because of the relationship with her brother, yet she chose to remain with her husband and go into exile with him.

I pray that our study of Jezebel and Herodias challenges you to keep your eyes on Jesus, hold onto the truth, and rely on God's Word. Continue to ask to be filled with the Spirit and wisely choose the path you take. We make choices every day; choices that lead us to Christ or choices that lead us astray. Choose wisely, ladies. Let's not harbor pride and deceit in our hearts; let's not surmise evil and contemplate wickedness; let's not compromise the truth for our own personal desires. Choose wisely, my friends, choose wisely. See you next week!