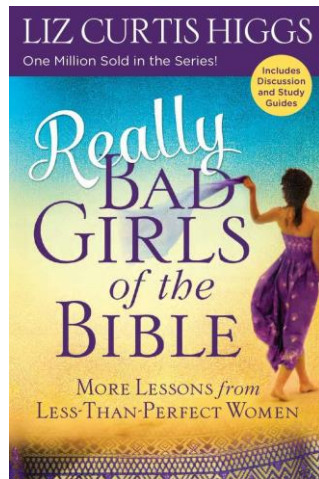


Word by Word with Liz Curtis Higgs on the Faith Radio Network

Bible Study Guide for July 14-15, 2018 | Deborah & Jael

from *Really Bad Girls of the Bible* by Liz Curtis Higgs



1. Suppose we begin our study just before Deborah is introduced so we get the Big Picture. Read Judges 4:1-3. Without a godly leader, what happened to the Israelites? What did God do when his people went bad? How long did the Israelites suffer Sisera's cruel oppression before they realized they needed help? And to whom did they cry out? We see the same pattern all through the Old Testament: Israel did evil in God's eyes, which resulted in bondage, then they repented, which resulted in God rescuing them. What does say Isaiah 46:4 tell us about God's willingness to rescue his people again and again? And how does that truth comfort you today?
2. In Judges 4:4 what three responsibilities are indicated for Deborah? In particular, what duty did leading, or judging, require of her? What does Proverbs 8:15-16 tell us about those whom God chooses to honor with leadership roles? No matter who sits on the earthly throne, who is really in charge, according to Psalm 47:8? Look at Deborah's statements as noted in Judges 4:6; 4:9; and 4:14. In each verse, who gets the glory for any good deeds done? How might Deborah be a role model for you in honoring and serving the Lord?
3. Time to get ready for battle. Read Judges 4:7-8. What does Deborah promise Barak, the commander of the Israeli army, that she will do? Why do you think Barak refused to go into battle without Deborah? In Judges 4:9 Deborah declared, "The Lord will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman." Do you think Deborah meant herself or Jael? Or was she speaking prophetically, not yet understanding how it would be fulfilled? How might Psalm 18:39 and Psalm 33:16-20 aptly fit Deborah as she prepares for battle?

4. Judges 4:14-16 describes the battle itself. Who was the victor, and how did that victory take place? In Judges 4:17-20 we learn of Sisera's escape from the battlefield. What sort of reception was Sisera expecting, and why? In what ways did Jael make Sisera welcome? Why do you think Jael comforted him with the words, "Don't be afraid?" Sisera, meanwhile, just wanted to take a nap. Why do you suppose God allowed Sisera to escape death on the battlefield only to die hours later at the hand of Jael? How might Psalm 75:2 explain the timing?
5. Read Judges 4:21-24. Are Jael's methods cruel or merely efficient? What makes you say that? Does Jael openly confess to killing Sisera? Why might that be the case? Who gets credit for the Israelite victory that day? And what was the ultimate result for the Israelites? How does Psalm 37:28 assure us that God will see justice is done? And how does this story of Deborah's prophecy, which was fulfilled the very same day, build your faith in God's power and might? In what area of your life do you need God to fight on your behalf?
6. What's the most important lesson you learned from the guts-and-glory story of Deborah and Jael?