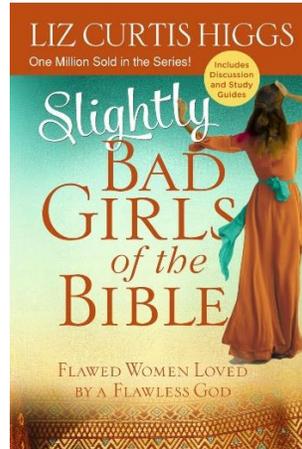


Word by Word with Liz Curtis Higgs on the Faith Radio Network

Bible Study Guide for August 18-19, 2018 | Leah

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



1. Esau and Jacob were defined by their labors: a long-range hunter, a close-to-home shepherd. Yet Leah and Rachel were defined by their appearance: one with gentle eyes, the other with beautiful everything. Are women today still defined by their looks? What makes you say that? Before you began this study, how did you picture Leah—her age, body type, features? What reasons would you suggest for Jacob favoring Rachel over Leah *other* than appearance? Why would he offer twice the usual bride price and then after seven years' labor carelessly not ask for Rachel by name? In what ways does love sometimes blind us?
2. Did Leah indeed show us her Slightly Bad Girl side on the wedding night? Or did Laban leave her no choice since fathers held sway over their families in these ancient societies? What could he have said to Leah to force her into Jacob's tent? In the New Testament we're told, "If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them" (James 4:17). How might that verse apply to Leah's situation? What would you have done in her sandals? This deception scene hearkens back to the earlier tragedy in Isaac's tent. Compare the stories from Genesis 27:5–44 and Genesis 29:15–23, considering the scene of the crime, the players involved, the wardrobe changes, the food and drink served, the conferring of a blessing, the duration of the event, and the outcome. What similarities in style do you see between the true deceivers in these stories: Rebekah and Laban?
3. Who had the ruder awakening: Jacob, discovering he'd married the wrong woman, or Leah, realizing her husband hated, despised, and rejected her? If they spoke at all that first morning, what do you imagine the newlywed couple said to each other? When Jacob cried to Laban, "I served you for Rachel, didn't I?" (Genesis 29:25), did he seem more upset about being deceived or about having Leah for a wife? Think of a time when you were duped. Was it the motive *or* the method *or* the outcome that bothered you most?

4. Matthew Henry noted, “Jacob was paid in his own coin.” Do you agree, or did all three people in this love triangle suffer equally? Make a case for Jacob bearing the greatest burden, trying to please two women. And one for Rachel, sharing the husband she thought would be hers alone. Then one for Leah, married to a man who did not love her. When we’re in a difficult situation, it’s easy to see how we’ve been wronged. Choose a challenging relationship in your own life and consider what the other person has endured and how you might have wronged them. What will it take to mend and strengthen that relationship?

5. The pivotal verse in our story is this one: “When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved...” (Genesis 29:31). Leah is never called barren, yet God did open, or bless, her womb, altering her status from unloved to beloved. What distinction do you find between “the Lord saw” and “the Lord heard”? Why do you suppose Leah looked to Jacob after Levi’s birth rather than to the Lord? What a triumphant note Leah sang out at Judah’s birth: “This time I will praise the Lord” (Genesis 29:35). How was this birth different for Leah? One commentator wrote, “Leah personified for every woman the crucial need to live primarily for God and His glory.” Why might doing so make a difference in our lives? And, practically speaking, how can you put God first as Leah finally did?

6. What’s the most important lesson you learned from Leah, an unloved wife who was very much loved by and blessed by God?