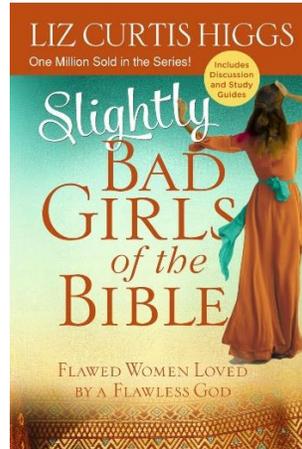


Word by Word with Liz Curtis Higgs on the Faith Radio Network

Bible Study Guide for August 25-26, 2018 | Rachel

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



1. With a handful of words in Genesis 30:1, the ugly picture comes into focus: “Rachel... became jealous of her sister.” The color green is associated with fertility, with life, and also with envy. In Rachel’s case, green was most unbecoming. How does envy affect people—mind, body, and soul—according to Proverbs 14:30 and your own experience? James 3:16 warns us about other things envy produces. In what ways is that fruit evident in Rachel’s life? What does 1 Corinthians 13:4 suggest is the antidote for envy? Consider the wisdom found in Proverbs 19:23 and 1 Timothy 6:6, then note what contentment might look and feel like for you right now.
2. In Genesis 30:1, when Rachel blasted Jacob with “Give me children, or I’ll die!”, the bitterness in her voice was unmistakable. We find similar feelings expressed in Job 7:11. Why do you think Rachel turned to her husband with her heartache rather than to God? What might that tell us about Rachel’s relationship with the Lord? As we see in Genesis 30:2, Jacob’s response to Rachel’s demand was heated but honest. He could not do what God could do; he could not take God’s place. By contrast, Rachel didn’t hesitate to take control of the situation, just as Sarai had two generations earlier. Compare Rachel’s motives and methods in Genesis 30:3-4 to Sarai’s in Genesis 16:2. What do these similar passages demonstrate about human nature?
3. Rachel and Leah’s first conversation in Scripture, recorded in Genesis 30:14–15, shows the sisters at a spiritual low point, with Rachel exchanging a night with Jacob for access to Leah’s fertility plants. Oh, the lengths to which these women went to give Jacob children! Then in Genesis 30:22 we’re told, “God remembered Rachel.” Such a tender phrase. What does that mean to you, to be remembered by God? In what ways does Joel 2:12–13 seem to be a hand-in-glove fit for our humbled Rachel, finally turning toward God instead of trying to be God?

4. After Rachel and Leah listened to a lengthy discourse from Jacob about how Laban had deceived him, the sisters finally spoke, revealing how they felt about their father. According to Genesis 31:14–16, what did they object to most, and why? Were the sisters being greedy or demanding what was rightfully theirs? In the middle of their getaway scene appears a brief but significant fact, recorded in Genesis 31:19. The problem wasn't simply that the household idols were stolen; they defiled anyone who touched them. Read Deuteronomy 29:17–18 and summarize the admonishment you find there. Why do you think Rachel stole her father's household gods?
5. Rachel is surely one of the more memorable characters in the Bible, with *character* being the operative word. Her flaws were many, but so were her strengths. Take a moment to list them both. In your estimation how does she compare to our other Slightly Bad Girls? Who was the “baddest” of the five, and why? Though we cannot change our past, God can and will direct our future. We're told in 2 Corinthians 3:18 and 1 John 3:2 how we are transformed into God's likeness, both now and in that glorious day to come. In the meantime Ephesians 4:22–24 advises us how to “put on the new self.” Describe the new self you long to become, shaped by God's loving hands.
6. What's the most important lesson you learned from Rachel—the sister of Leah, the second wife of Jacob, and the memorable mother of Joseph and Benjamin?