

Life Lessons from Deborah

Various Scriptures

Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgement.

-Judges 4:4-5

Moving on in our study of life lessons from women in the Bible, our next example is that of Deborah. It has been said, "The essence of great leadership is influence, not authority." Whether we realize it or not, we all have a _____ of influence. In consideration of this, what kind of impact are you having where God has placed you? As we look closer at our own styles of leadership, (home, work, community and church) Deborah shows us exactly what is needed in order to be an effective leader for the glory of God.

Did you know?

*Deborah personal name means "Bee"; by nature bees follow their leader in a swarm. So it was for the Jewish people, they too followed the sages and prophets to _____ them. Bees collect pollen and nectar, not for their own benefit, but for the benefit of others. Likewise, mitzvah or good deeds were done in the Hebrew culture to show kindness to others. Bees are a lowly insect, a reminder that God's children were to remain _____.

*Deborah was the _____ judge in Israel and _____ female judge.

*Deborah was a song writer, judge, prophet, and _____.

*Deborah's story is told in Judges 4-5

Context: Where are we now in the storyline of the Bible?

Last week we saw Joshua leading the people of Israel on a conquest into Jericho and the promised land. However, in order to do that they first needed to defeat and destroy _____ the inhabitants who occupied the region. In the book of Joshua we see God's favor in advancing the Israelites throughout the area but when we come to the end we read their leader, Joshua dies (Joshua 24:29). One by one, each tribe tried to fight but they failed in driving out the Canaanites.

For those who are familiar with this storyline, why do you think they had such a hard time defeating their enemies?

* F _____ *F _____ *Spiritual decline *No _____

After the death of Joshua all power, influence and authority were decentralized in the tribal leaders and the tribes were no longer unified in purpose.

What were some of the problems they had as a result of not having a leader?

- ✓ The people disobeyed God. Judges 2:2
- ✓ God no longer gave them victory over their enemies. Judges 2:3
- ✓ An entire generation grew up without knowing God. Judges 2:10
- ✓ The people did _____ in the Lord's sight. Judges 2:11
- ✓ The abandoned God. Judges 2:12-15
- ✓ Troubling cycle persisted; abandonment vs God's mercy in raising up Judges.
Judges 2:16-19 (Othniel, 40 years Judges 3:7-11; Ehud, 80 years Judges 3:12-30;
Shamgar ? Judges 3:31)

**Who are judges, what did they do, and where is the practice illustrated in the Bible?
Exodus 18:13-16; 21-22**

Deborah's Leadership: Judges 4-5 (40 years)

Once again, we see Israel did evil in the eyes of the Lord and in His anger He turned them over to the Canaanites under the rule of King Jabin. The commander of Jabin's army was Sisera. The Bible says he had _____ iron chariots and they ruthlessly oppressed the Israelites for 20 years. Again the people cried out to the Lord for help and He raises up Deborah.

Why did God use a female judge?

- * Her position was itself judgement upon Israel

- * Israel's men were unfit to judge
- * Shame the men
- * Bring comfort to His people
- * Because God can use _____ He wants to do His will.

Inspired by God Judges 4:6-7

One day the Lord encouraged Deborah to tell Barak, (1 Samuel 12:11) leader and possible commander of the Israelite army to summon the troops for battle against Sisera commander of the Canaanite army.

Notice Barak's response verse 8

I will go, but only if you go with me.

Here is a prime example of the men of Israel lacking _____ to lead.

As you reflect on Barak's response what are your thoughts on why he insisted Deborah accompany him in this battle? As a man or woman do you think this is right? Why or why not?

Incited courage/confidence in God Judges 4:9-10;14

In response Deborah tells Barak "I will go with you, but you will receive no honor in the venture, for the Lord's victory over Sisera will be at the hands of a woman."

The Bible refers to _____ times that Deborah was with Barak. She was with him on the journey as he traveled to Kadesh, she was with him as he called the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali and she was with Barak on the day of the battle

Can you imagine what this must have been like? Here it is, a woman inciting courage in Barak and an army full of men! She was not just encouraging them to go to battle, but more importantly she was encouraging them to have _____ in God!

In light of life's difficult trials and battles, are you willing to step up and incite the importance of having confidence in God to others? What are some ways you can do this in your circle of influence?

Details of the battle: Judges 4:15-23

When Barak and the army of Israel attacked:

- * They threw Sisera into a _____. Verse 15
- * They _____ all of their warriors. Verse 16
- * The Lord gave them victory over Sisera. Verses 17-22
- * The Lord made them stronger and ultimately defeated King Jabin Verse 23

As you look over your life, can you think of a moment(s) when God's Word gave you confidence to trust Him? Has there ever been a time when God gave you the victory over something that was oppressing and discouraging? How did you respond?

Deborah's song: Judges 5

After they defeated King Jabin/Canaanites Deborah and Barak sang to the glory of God for bringing them out of the hands of oppression.

What did they sing about?

How God allowed the leaders to take charge. Verses 1-2

How God is creator and in control. Verses 3-5

How depressed they were when they sinned against God. Verses 6-9

The victory God gave them over their enemies despite not having full support from all the tribes. Verses 10-23

How Jael subdued Sisera Verses 24-27

Ultimate victory over all enemies. Verses 28-30

Finally, we read that there was peace in the land for 40 years.

After considering the victory God has given you through our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, are you singing glory to His name for all the things He's done?

What was the most memorable part of Deborah's testimony that you are willing to share with someone else?

"Leadership is based on inspiration, not domination; on cooperation, not intimidation." -William Arthur Wood