

The Bold and the Beautiful, Biblical Style

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Scripture: Judges 4:4-24 ESV

Society has been trying to depict the ideal woman for centuries. In the '50s, she was a homemaker, in the '70s she was free-spirited, in the '90s and early '00s, she was glamorous, and in today's world, she's empowered and independent. Although none of these labels are inherently bad, they don't accurately or fully portray God's vision of an ideal woman. But Deborah, the prophetess and judge, does.



Deborah wasn't perfect, but she was God-confident and bold in her obedience and allegiance to God. She trusted him wholeheartedly, so her faith didn't waiver when God told her Jabin and Sisera would be defeated.

When she heard the word of the Lord, she didn't hesitate like Barak. She boldly and confidently said, "I will surely go with you." She didn't hesitate to tell Barak the truth, either. "Nevertheless," she continued, "the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Right after Deborah spoke those words, "she arose and went with Barak to Kedesh." (Judges 4:9).

God wants his daughters to hear Him and follow Him. He also wants us to remember His promises and confidently speak His truth. That's exactly what Deborah did.

When the battle heated up and Sisera called out to his 900 chariots of iron and all the men that were fighting with him, Deborah remained confident in what God told her. "Up," she told Barak, "for this is the day in which the Lord has given Sisera into your hand. Does not the Lord go out before you?"

We can learn a lot from this simple but powerful response.

First, we need to cling to what God has told us. And sometimes, we need to say those words out loud.

Secondly, we should encourage those around us. Deborah didn't let Barak fall apart in despair. She told him to get up and reminded him of God's promise.

Perhaps most importantly, we need to remember that God goes before us.

When we apply these principles to our lives, we can be like the woman described in Proverbs 31:25 who is "clothed with strength and dignity" and who "can laugh at the days to come."

God may never call us to engage in a physical military battle like Deborah experienced, but whatever He calls us to do, He expects us to be confident in Him and His plan.

- If we're mothering, we can be confident that God will give us wisdom when we ask. (James 1:5)
- When we're working, we can trust that God will equip us for what He's called us to do. (Hebrews 13:21)
- When the doctor's report isn't good, we can trust that God heals. (Mark 5:34)
- When God moves us out of our comfort zone, we can be sure that He is with us. (Matthew 28:20)
- When we're tempted to shrink back, we know that He who started a good work in us is faithful to complete it. (Philippians 1:6)
- When we're grappling with emotional and psychological battles, we can remember that greater is He that is in us than he that's in the world. (1 John 4:4)
- When our marriage feels impossible to fix, we can trust that God makes the impossible possible. (Luke 18:27)
- When the money just isn't there, we can trust God will supply what we need (Philippians 4:19)
- When sadness, death, and injustice seem to rule and reign, we can be confident that there's a day coming when there will be no more tears (Revelation 21)

Whatever it is we're facing we can be bold, not because we have it together, but because God is in complete control.

The Bible doesn't tell us what Deborah looked like, but it does tell us she boldly followed God's instructions.

But I know she was beautiful because she:

- Heard God.
- Obeyed God.
- Encouraged others.
- Spoke with wisdom and judged righteously.
- Took care of home.
- Worked as if unto the Lord.
- Praised God.

That's what makes us beautiful, too. As we settle into the first quarter of the new year, I pray that we won't fall prey to society's unbiblical expectations of women.

To be beautiful is to boldly follow God, and to be successful is to walk with Him and obey His commands.

Reflect:

1. Recall a time when you hesitated to follow God's direction. What held you back, and how can Deborah's bold obedience encourage you to move forward next time?
2. What challenges are you currently facing where you need to remember that God goes before you? How can Deborah's story help you trust that God is in control, even when circumstances seem overwhelming?

Dig Deeper:

Father, thank you for adopting me and calling me Your own. You are kind, compassionate, forgiving, faithful, sovereign, trustworthy, and slow to anger. Help me confidently believe everything You are. Strengthen me as I walk with You. Help me boldly obey Your commands. And when my faith wavers, remind me to be like Deborah and say, up, the Lord my God goes before me." In Jesus' Name, Amen.

To learn more about other bold and beautiful women in the Bible, read about:

- Jael, who bravely and wisely defeated Sisera, the commander of the Canaanite army. (Judges 4 and 5)
- Jehosheba, who saved her nephew from death and preserved the line of David. (2 Kings 11 and 2 Chronicles 22-23)
- Zipporah, who didn't hesitate to follow God's command for circumcision, which in turn, saved her husband's life. (Exodus 4:18-31)
- Leah, who traced her emotional journey through the names of her sons.
- Miriam, who bravely jumped into action to save her brother's life. (Exodus 2 and Exodus 15:20)
- Huldah, who confidently gave the king Josiah and his men a message from God (2 Chronicles 34:22-33)

References:

English Standard Version Bible (2008) Crossway Bibles