



3



Yes & No

1. I am more courageous than most of my friends.
2. Being home, alone in the dark, makes me feel a bit nervous.
3. The best way to deal with bullies is to give them a taste of their own medicine.
4. I feel more spiritually confident when I'm surrounded by my church community friends.
5. God prefers to work through men but, when He has no other choice, will resort to utilizing a woman.

Dive Deeper:

† In your personal religious experience, what causes you to be afraid, and literally be insecure about sharing your faith? Does anything bring you courage to address this?

» **READ Judges 4** (see text on the screen)

‡ THE CAST OF CHARACTERS:

† **Sisera** (A non-Canaanite mercenary general) - Jewish legend describes him: At age 30, he had conquered the whole world. At the sound of his voice the strongest of walls fell in a heap, and the wild animals in the woods were chained to the spot by fear. The proportions of his body were vast beyond description. If he took a bath in the river, and dived beneath the surface, enough fish were caught in his beard to feed a multitude, and it required no less than nine hundred horses to draw the chariot in which he rode. (Ginzberg: 35)

† **Deborah** (Name means "honeybee") This name has occurred once before, in Gen 35:8, where it identifies Rachel's nurse. Another "Deborah's Tree." Her husband's name, Lappidoth, means "flashes or torches."

Δ **A Prophet** - Such as Miriam (Exod. 15:20) and Huldah (2 Kings 22:14).

Δ **A Judge** - [šōpēṭâ] By stationing herself near Bethel, Deborah represents an alternative to the priesthood which had lost its effectiveness as mediator of divine revelation, and her pronouncements function as a substitute for the Urim and Thummim.

† **Barak** (Name means "lightning," which will appear fitting in the coming story.)

Δ **4:1 (NLT)** "After Ehud's death, the Israelites again did evil in the Lord's sight." the expression wayyōsipû ... la'āsôt, literally "and they added ... to do," in context means "and they relapsed into a pattern of behavior."

‡ **4:6-8:** Deborah calls for Barak with a message from God to gather 10,000 warriors. God was going to relieve them of 20 years of oppressive persecution. Barak says he'll only go to war if Deborah comes with him. What is he expressing here?

NOTES...

‡ 4:9: **“Very well,” she replied, “I will go with you. But you will receive no honor in this venture, for the Lord’s victory over Sisera will be at the hands of a woman.”**

» What do you think she meant by this?

‡ 4:14,15: **“Then Deborah said to Barak, “Get ready! This is the day the Lord will give you victory over Sisera, for the Lord is marching ahead of you.” So Barak led his 10,000 warriors down the slopes of Mount Tabor into battle. 15 When Barak attacked, the Lord threw Sisera and all his chariots and warriors into a panic. Sisera leaped down from his chariot and escaped on foot.”**

» Deborah tries encouraging Barak with bold words and concludes that “the Lord is marching ahead of you.” The text says that it was when Barak attacked that the Lord began to act.

« What does it say about the character of God that He would wait until the people acted before He launched His action? Does God typically make us show something before He does?

† **Jael** (The “other woman” of the story. Her name means “mountain goat.”) The offering and acceptance of hospitality in a nomad’s tent was, traditionally, a guarantee of protection. Moreover, any pursuer would hardly think to look in a woman’s tent for any man, let alone a weary fugitive, for this would be a breach of etiquette.

» Man’s work, Woman’s work & God’s work -

† In our spiritual battles, why is it so difficult to have the courage to do what God calls us to do? What does God’s consistent character show us?

My Prayers This Week...

1. How much spiritual courage do I currently possess?
2. What do I need to do to see God’s victorious character more in my life?
3. How does this section of Scripture help me see more of God’s character?