



Revive Our Hearts™

DEBORAH

BECOMING A WOMAN
OF INFLUENCE

A Bible study based
on the teaching of

NANCY DEMOSS
WOLGEMUTH



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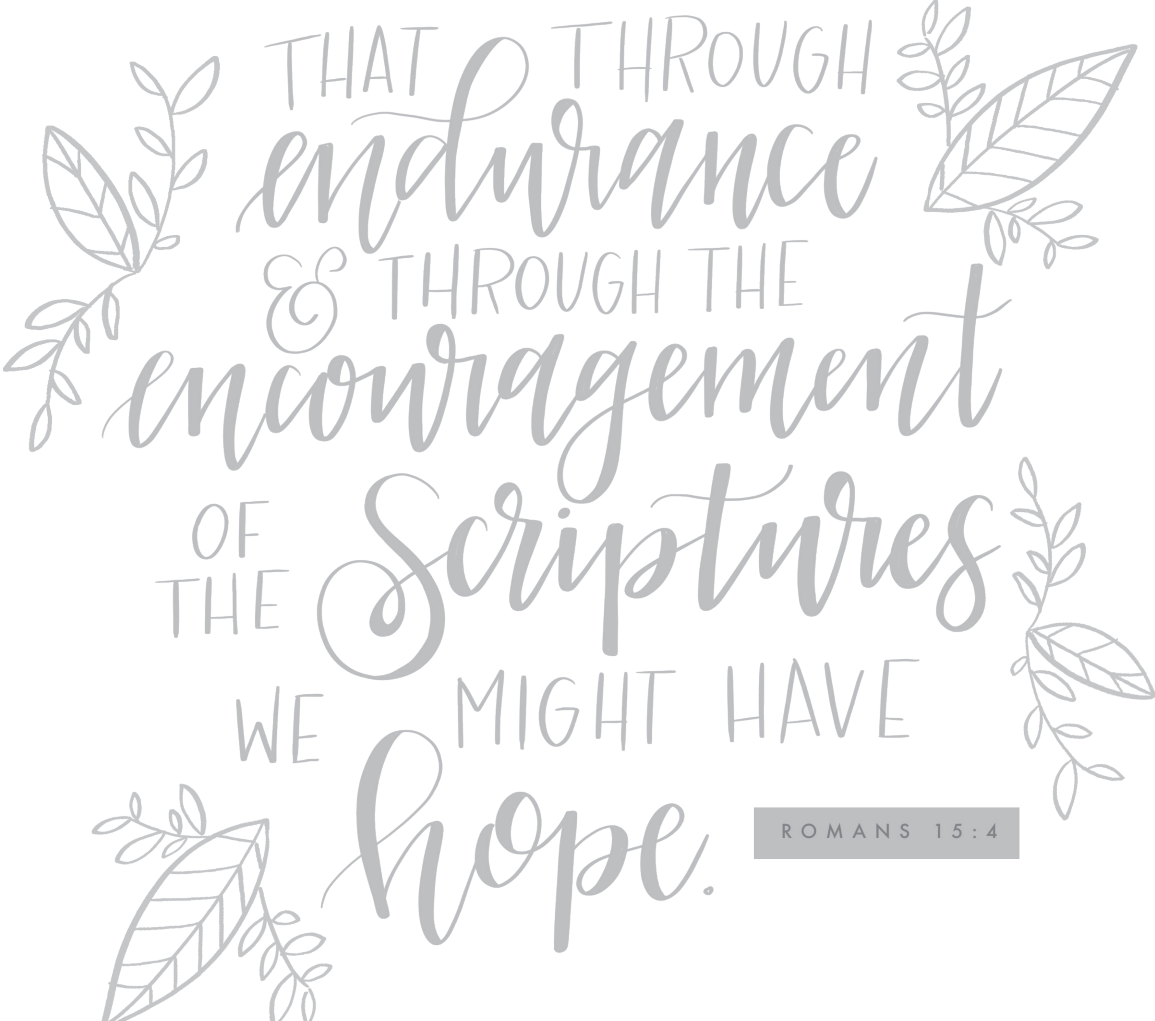
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Adapted from the teaching of Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth by Erin Davis, Micayla Brickner, Laura Elliott, and Mindy Kroesche.

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As you work through this study, use this space to doodle, color, and meditate on God's Word and consider how the story of Deborah gives you true hope.

FOR WHATEVER WAS WRITTEN IN FORMER DAYS
WAS WRITTEN FOR OUR INSTRUCTION

The text is surrounded by several decorative illustrations of leaves and branches. There are three leaves on the left side, one at the top, one in the middle, and one at the bottom. There are also three leaves on the right side, one at the top, one in the middle, and one at the bottom. The leaves are simple line drawings with veins, and the branches are thin lines with small leaves.

THAT THROUGH
endurance
& THROUGH THE
encouragement
OF THE *Scriptures*
WE MIGHT HAVE
hope.

ROMANS 15:4



Deborah's story

AS FOUND IN JUDGES 4

DEBORAH AND BARAK

¹ And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD after Ehud died. ² And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-hagoyim. ³ Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help, for he had 900 chariots of iron and he oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years.

⁴ Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time.

⁵ She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment. ⁶ She sent and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-naphtali and said to him, "Has not the LORD, the God of Israel, commanded you, 'Go, gather your men at Mount Tabor, taking 10,000 from the people of Naphtali and the people of Zebulun.' ⁷ And I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the river Kishon with his chariots and his troops, and I will give him into your hand?" ⁸ Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go." ⁹ And she said, "I will surely go with you. Nevertheless, 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.” Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh.¹⁰ And Barak called out Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh. And 10,000 men went up at his heels, and Deborah went up with him.

¹¹ Now Heber the Kenite had separated from the Kenites, the descendants of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far away as the oak in Zaanannim, which is near Kedesh.

¹² When Sisera was told that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor,

¹³ Sisera called out all his chariots, 900 chariots of iron, and all the men who were with him, from Harosheth-hagoyim to the river Kishon.¹⁴ And Deborah said to Barak, “Up! For this is the day in which the LORD has given Sisera into your hand. Does not the LORD go out before you?” So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men following him.¹⁵ And the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army before Barak by the edge of the sword. And Sisera got down from his chariot and fled away on foot.¹⁶ And Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth-hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.

¹⁷ But Sisera fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, for there was

peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.¹⁸ And Jael came out to meet Sisera and said to him, “Turn aside, my Lord; turn aside to me; do not be afraid.” So he turned aside to her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug.¹⁹ And he said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.” So she opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and covered him.²⁰ And he said to her, “Stand at the opening of the tent, and if any man comes and asks you, ‘Is anyone here?’ say, ‘No.’”²¹ But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand. Then she went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple until it went down into the ground while he was lying fast asleep from weariness. So he died.²² And behold, as Barak was pursuing Sisera, Jael went out to meet him and said to him, “Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking.” So he went in to her tent, and there lay Sisera dead, with the tent peg in his temple.

²³ So on that day God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the people of Israel.²⁴ And the hand of the people of Israel pressed harder and harder against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

Caught up in a detrimental cycle of sin, the Israelites were the epitome of broken people living in a broken world. But God, who longs to see His people live in faith, surrender, and holiness, is willing to fight for the hearts of His people.

Enter: Deborah. She was a woman appointed by God as a judge—a woman used by God in a significant way in her day. As you watch this story unfold, you'll see how it all points to a loving God who faithfully carries out His promises and calls His people back to Himself. He turns weakness into strength and fear into faith for the good of His people, and ultimately, for His glory.

Though an unexpected candidate to be chosen for such a calling, Deborah courageously stepped out in faith as an instrument of God's deliverance. We'll see her life as a picture of how we can embrace God's beautiful design for us as courageous, godly women.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT TO LEARN

Expect these five themes to embed themselves in your heart through this study:

- **Trust the Promises.** Deborah believed the Word of the Lord. We'll learn how to stand on God's promises and trust Him to lead and enable us.
- **Embrace God's Design.** Through Deborah's example, we'll discover how to embrace the beauty of God's design for our identity as women.
- **Trust and Obey.** We'll see the danger of disobeying God and the magnitude of His grace. Deborah, Barak, and others will show us how to respond to the Lord in obedience despite our hesitations.
- **Surrender to His Purpose.** When God places a calling on our lives, He equips us to fulfill His purposes. We'll see how He uses us as instruments for His glory to share the truth of the gospel.

- **Become a Woman of Influence.** As we see Deborah's demonstration of humble valor, we'll learn how to become women who exert a godly influence on others through Christ who lives in us.

TIPS FOR USING THIS STUDY

As you use this study, ask yourself:

- What does this passage teach me about the heart, ways, and character of God?
- Is there an example to follow or avoid? If so, how should I seek to change in response?
- How does this passage point to Jesus and the gospel?

Each week of the study is divided into five suggested daily lessons, but feel free to work at your own pace. Do what works for you!

You may also find it beneficial to listen to the audio series "Deborah: A True Woman Joins the Battle" at ReviveOurHearts.com/Deborah.

Remember, the Holy Spirit helps us understand God's Word. He is a gift and a "Helper" who is able to "teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all" that the Lord has said to us (see John 14:26).

Secondary tools to help you better understand the Word of God (but aren't necessary) include:

- An English dictionary to look up the basic meaning of words
- Various translations of the Bible (a good online tool is BibleGateway.com)
- A concordance
- A Bible dictionary
- Commentaries
- A study Bible
- Colored pens or pencils to write in your Bible

We've included group discussion questions at the end of this book. Join the conversation about Deborah with the *Women of the Bible* podcast created to accompany this study. Find it at ReviveOurHearts.com/WomenoftheBible.

OUR HOPE FOR YOU

Throughout the next six weeks, the Revive Our Hearts Team hopes you:

- Find practical wisdom to apply to your daily life.
- Read your Bible with greater passion.
- Delight in the Lord's design for your identity.
- Step out in faith where the Lord is calling you.
- Let Jesus use you as an instrument for the gospel.
- Know God better as a result of this study.

Israel During the Time of Deborah



SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Spend time meditating on and memorizing the following verse this week:

then the LORD
RAISED UP
judges,
who SAVED them
out of the hand of
those who plundered
them

JUDGES 2:16

JUDGES OVERVIEW

AUTHOR

The Bible does not say who wrote Judges, but most scholars agree that it was written by the prophet Samuel. Samuel was the last of the judges (Acts 13:20).

WHEN

Judges is both a book of the Bible and a historical period. The period of the judges began after the death of Joshua (Judg. 2:6–10). The judges ruled Israel for about 300 years (approximately 1380 BC to 1050 BC).¹

WHERE

The book of Judges takes place in Israel following the Israelites' conquest of the Promised Land (Judg. 2:6). The book opens with the death of Joshua in a time of relative obedience for God's people. The book concludes with Israel in moral and spiritual decline when "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (21:25).

Week 1

FROM DISOBEDIENCE TO DELIVERANCE

Big Idea: OUR DISOBEDIENCE
AND DISTRESS LEAD TO GOD'S
DISCIPLINE AND DELIVERANCE.

Wash. Rinse. Repeat.

Plant. Water. Harvest.

New moon. Waxing crescent. Full moon. Waning crescent.

So much of our lives operate in cycles. The book of Judges describes a cycle God's people lived in for nearly 300 years: disobedience, discipline, desperation, deliverance—the Four Ds.

Even though they had:

- experienced God's care during their wilderness wandering
- successfully marched into the land He promised them
- witnessed the consequences of rebellion many times before

... the Israelites put themselves in the spin cycle of disobedience over and over (and over!) again.

And over and over (and over!) again, God raised up deliverers—the judges—to call His children back to Him.

Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them.
(Judg. 2:16)

The book of Judges lists twelve judges, handpicked by God as deliverers, including Deborah, a woman of faith and fortitude—a *true woman who exerted strong, godly influence in a distinctly feminine way*.

The cycle of the Four Ds didn't end with the period of the judges. As broken people living in a broken world, we all gravitate toward this cycle. As you dig into the book of Judges this week, may God's Word point you to Jesus, *your* righteous Judge, and remind you that He is able to fully deliver you from the cycle of sin and shame.

Day 1: *The Danger of Disobedience*

Read Judges 1–2.

Every parent knows children don't have to be taught to disobey. Two-year-olds throw tantrums without a lesson on how to do so. Kindergartners sneak sweet treats, even when their mothers warn them not to. Teenagers don't rebel because they're teenagers; they rebel because they're human.

Write out your definition of disobedience.

Though we may be tempted to think that rebelliousness, disobedience, and defiance are reserved for those who don't acknowledge God's authority in their lives, God's Word tells us differently.

THE END OF AN ERA

The author of Judges wrote two introductions to this Old Testament book. Judges 1 and Judges 2 both begin with the death of Joshua, who succeeded Moses as the leader of God's people (Josh. 1:1–9).

According to Exodus 7:7, how old was Moses when he stepped up to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt? _____

According to Deuteronomy 34:7, how old was Moses when he died? _____

Though Scripture does not provide as many details about the timeline of Joshua's leadership, Bible scholars believe that he led the Israelites into the Promised Land around 1406 BC and died at age 110 (Judg. 2:8) around 1380 BC, meaning Joshua ruled approximately how many years?

Moses' total years of leadership + Joshua's approximate years of leadership = Years of godly leadership



Strong, godly leadership did not result in perfect obedience among God's people. The Old Testament records many times when the Israelites disobeyed God's Law during the period that Moses and Joshua led the nation. Still, Joshua's death marked a pivot point toward ongoing and worsening disobedience.

According to Judges 2:10, what defined the generation born after Joshua's death?

What was the result (v. 11)?

A lack of godly leadership combined with the Israelites' failure to focus on God's character kicked off a vicious cycle, ushering in the period of the judges.

Read the following:

- Judges 2:11
- Judges 3:7
- Judges 10:6
- Judges 13:1



What did God's people do over and over?

Read Judges 2:12–13. How did the Israelites rebel specifically?

These were the people of Israel—God's chosen, covenant people—bowing at the altars of pagan gods. We tend to focus on the sins of unbelievers, but the book of Judges sends a strong message:

God is concerned about the holiness of *His* people.

Look up the following passages. In a word or two, write down the theme of each passage.

LEVITICUS 19:2

1 PETER 1:15–16

1 THESSALONIANS 4:7

Can you think of examples from Scripture where God called His children to turn away from idolatry and toward pure worship of Him alone? Write down whatever comes to mind.

Revisit Judges 2:11. Write out the verse below.

Like the Israelites, the tendency of every human heart is toward idolatry, the worship of something or someone other than the one true God. This is always an act of disobedience, worthy of divine discipline.

Ask the Lord to use this study to grow your commitment to turn from worshiping anything except Him. Write a prayer expressing your desire to be holy as He is holy.

Lord,

Amen.

Day 2: *Be Strong and Courageous*

Read Judges 2:14–15.

Think back to a time when you experienced appropriate discipline from a parent or teacher. How did you feel at the time?

The book of Judges shows us that human disobedience always leads to divine discipline. In the moment, discipline is always painful.

Revisit Judges 2:14–15 below. Circle all of the words that describe the discipline received by the Israelites as a result of their idolatry.

So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. Whenever they marched out, the hand of the LORD was against them for harm, as the LORD had warned, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were in terrible distress.

Based on your experience with discipline, do you think God's children recognized their distressing circumstances as God's correction? Why or why not?

Israel's idolatry wasn't a one-time mistake. Over and over they disobeyed God's commands; over and over they experienced divine discipline. Why do you think the Israelites didn't turn from their sin once and for all?

Why don't we turn from our sin once and for all?

Judges 4 finds the nation of Israel facing another leadership vacuum. How did they respond (v. 1)?

Again, God responded with discipline. Write out Judges 4:2 below.

This time, divine discipline came in the form of a Canaanite king. What is the significance of Jabin being a Canaanite according to Genesis 17:8?

Jabin was an enemy inhabitant of the land that God had gifted to the Israelites. When God promised to bring His people back to the land, He specifically commanded them to drive out the Canaanites (Deut. 7:1–6), but He never asked them to do it alone. He vowed to send an angel

before them as they systematically drove their enemy from the land. Surely a command straight from God accompanied by an angelic warrior would inspire God's people to obey—except, of course, it didn't.

Read Judges 1:27–36. In your Bible, underline every time the Israelites disobeyed God's command to drive out their enemies.

The description of God's discipline continues in Judges 5:6–8. Circle the specifics of His chastisement below.

“In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath,
in the days of Jael, the highways were abandoned,
and travelers kept to the byways.

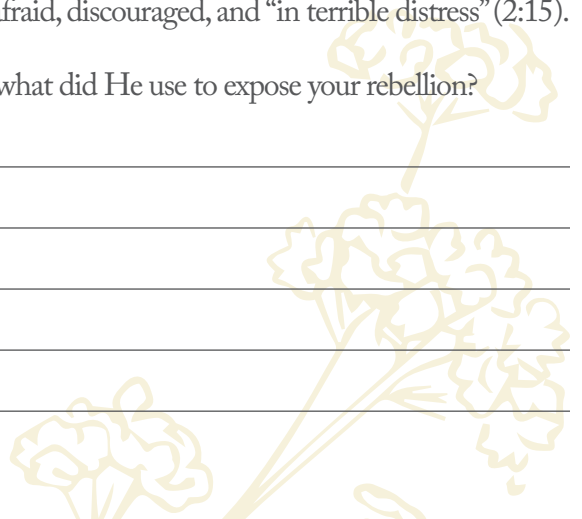
The villagers ceased in Israel;
they ceased to be until I arose;
I, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel.

When new gods were chosen,
then war was in the gates.

Was shield or spear to be seen
among forty thousand in Israel?”

Beneath the chastening hand of God the Israelites were forced to live under the oppressive rule of the Canaanites, enemies from whom God had promised deliverance if only they had obeyed Him fully. They were outnumbered and overwhelmed: afraid, discouraged, and “in terrible distress” (2:15).

Have you experienced the Lord's discipline? If so, what did He use to expose your rebellion?



Think back to that moment of human discipline you described at the beginning of today's study. How do you feel about that moment now? Has hindsight changed your perspective?

The Bible provides rich hope concerning the Lord's discipline. What beautiful truths do the following verses teach?

PSALM 94:12

PROVERBS 3:12

HEBREWS 12:6

Most of us can look back at the discipline we received as children and realize it was rooted in love and for our good. God's Word gives us the perspective that divine discipline, though painful, is a gift grounded in love. To wrap up today's study, write out a prayer thanking the Lord for loving correction in your life.

Day 3: A Turning Point

Read Judges 4:1–3.

Twenty years.

That's long enough to finish your entire primary education and start college . . . long enough to get married, have children, and build a life . . . long enough to watch your child grow from toddler, to teenager, to twentysomething . . .

And it's a long time to experience the Lord's discipline.

Revisit Judges 4:3. Underline the phrase that indicates how long the Israelites lived under the oppressive rule of Jabin and his general, Sisera.

Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help, for he had 900 chariots of iron and he oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years.

It took intense discipline over two decades to get the Israelites' attention. Why do you think they resisted the Lord's correction for so long?

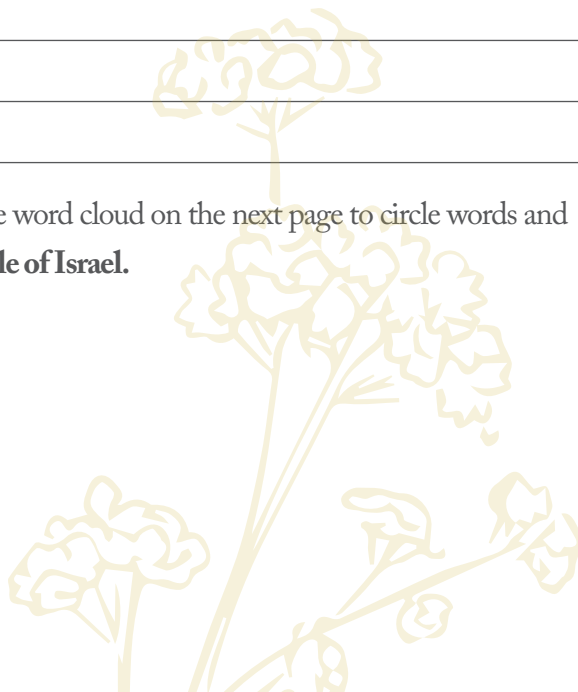
Look up the following passages then use the word cloud on the next page to circle words and phrases that Scripture uses to describe **people of Israel**.

DEUTERONOMY 9:6

DEUTERONOMY 31:27

EXODUS 32:9

NUMBERS 14:27



arrogant *stubborn* cooperative
rebellious
stiff-necked clever
COMPLIANT
submissive *cheerful*

Look up the following passages then use the word cloud below to circle words and phrases that Scripture uses to describe **God**.

EXODUS 34:6

DEUTERONOMY 4:31

ROMANS 2:4-5

happy *tolerant* gracious
forbearing harsh
slow to anger kind
MERCIFUL
abounding in *patient*
love & faithfulness

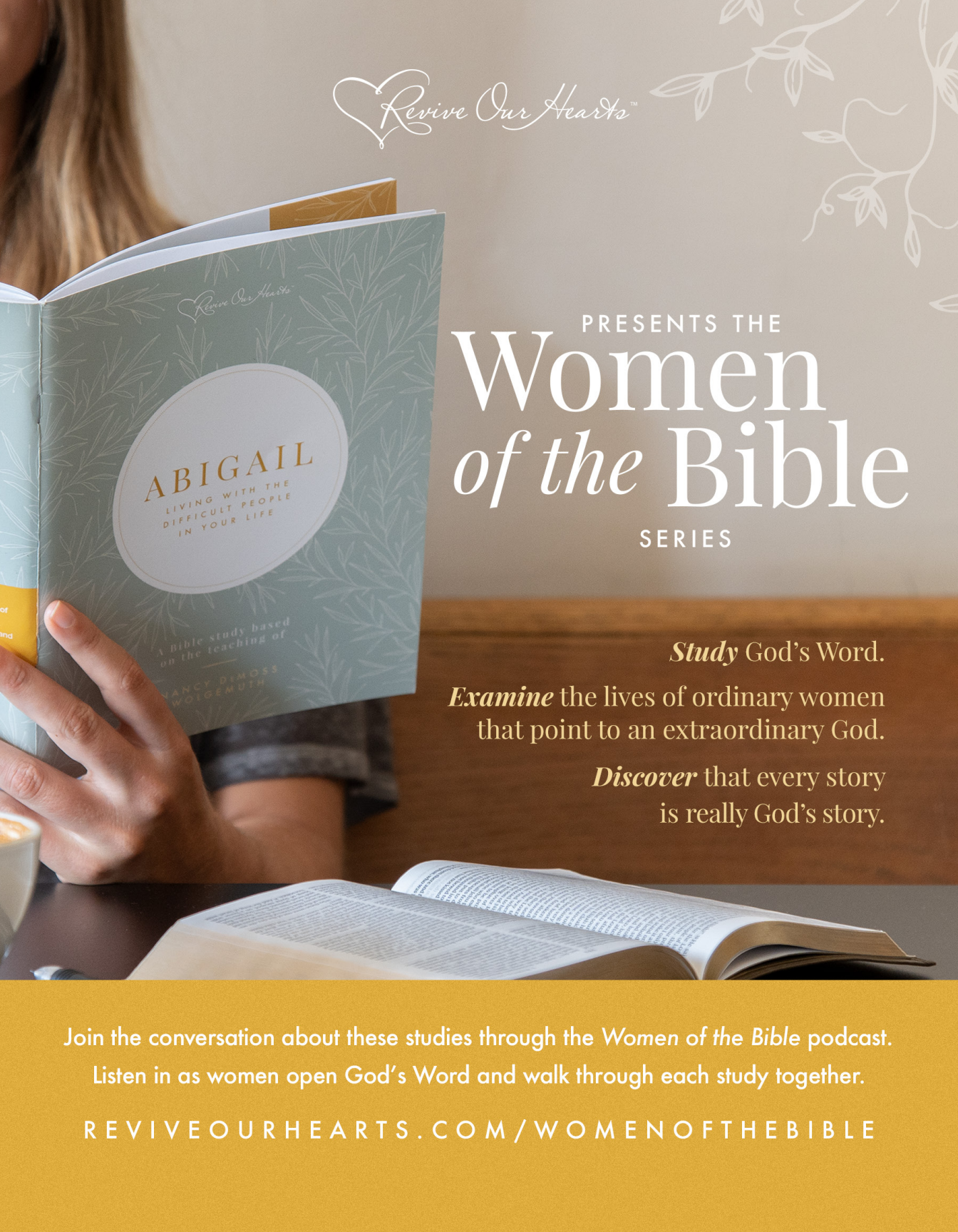
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What Difference Can One Woman Make?

As we step into the fourth chapter of the book of Judges, we find the nation of Israel in a prolonged season of moral decline, economic crisis, enemy oppression, and a vacuum of wise, godly leadership.

In His mercy, God raised up a woman named Deborah as an instrument of grace and hope for His people. With courage and conviction, by trusting God and His plan, *Deborah became a woman of influence*—not only in her time, but also for our day.

In this six-week study, discover how to become a woman of greater influence by exploring the life of Deborah. With Scripture memory, daily study, and group discussion questions, this resource is ideal for both individual and group study.



NANCY DEMOSS WOLGEMUTH is the founder and lead Bible teacher for *Revive Our Hearts*, a ministry that has impacted millions of women around the world. Her passion for Christ and His Word is evident in her two daily, nationally-syndicated teaching programs, her Bible studies,



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