



## ***LIFE LESSONS FROM THE LADIES: PART TWO***

### **WORDS FITLY SPOKEN: LESSON 19**

Words are so important. Words can encourage or discourage, heal or hurt, sting or soften. Whoever made up that old saying, “Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me” didn’t know what they were talking about. Some of my deepest wounds come from words that have been spoken to me or about me. Proverbs 25:11 tells us that, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.” Words are very powerful. In this week’s lesson, I want to look at some words spoken by some special ladies. Well, not spoken, actually, but sung. (Is that a word?) These three songs appear in the Bible and are expressions of faith, gratitude, and trust in their God. Though their stories are written by someone else, (the author of the book they are found in), the particular song attributed to them is considered their own. Last year we studied the writers of the songs but this week we’ll be looking at their songs more specifically. In Psalm 40:3, David reminds us “He has put a new song in my mouth – praise to our God; Many will see it and fear and will trust in the Lord.” I pray that if you need a new song today, He will give you one, full of praise, worship, and love! May He fill you to overflowing, giving you new vision, new perspective, and a renewed hope in Him.

#### **First Day**

The three songs we’ll be studying are the songs of Hannah, Deborah, and Mary. Let’s start with Hannah ... I LOVE her!

1. Read 1 Samuel 1:1-28 to get her story in context. Briefly summarize the chapter ... Who was Hannah? What was her “problem”? How did the Lord answer her prayer?

2. From chapter one, how would you describe Hannah? What are some of her character traits? What kind of person does she appear to be?
  
3. Was she loved by her husband?
  
4. How did she honor the Lord after He answered her request?
  
5. How does verse 18 give us a glimpse into Hannah's faith in her God?
  
6. Let's take a look at our own faith, shall we? Do you trust your God even before your prayers are answered? Do you trust Him while you're asking? Simply put, do you trust Him no matter how He appears to answer? (Why do I say "appears"?)
  
7. Who is her son?

Hannah gives birth to Samuel, who was dedicated to God before he was even born. He was recognized as a prophet (1 Sam. 3:20-21), became a judge (1 Sam. 7:15-17), called Israel to repentance (1 Sam. 7:3-6), anointed Saul as king (1 Sam. 10:1), and was lamented in death (1 Sam. 25:1). He was an inspired writer and prophet, a diligent judge, faithful to God, and powerful in prayer. She had a good son! 😊

8. Briefly read over her song in 1 Samuel 2:1-10 before we close and let it sink in. We'll discuss it tomorrow! See you then!

**Memory Verse of the Week:** “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”  
Proverbs 25:11

### **Second Day**

**Work on the memory verse. May it be a great reminder to us today to use our words carefully!**

Hannah’s name meant “gracious” which certainly seemed to fit her character. She is one of the few women in the Bible about whom nothing negative is reported. I love what Warren Wiersbe wrote about her, “Most people would sing if they could KEEP their son, but Hannah sang because she could GIVE her son to the service of the Lord.” Wow! Her prayer to the Lord wasn’t really a bargain, but an expression of her devotion. Notice that her request to the Lord in 1:11 was for a son who she would give back to Him. She wanted a man for God. Elisabeth George wrote, “True, Hannah’s longing for a baby was a very personal desire. A baby would bring joy to her heart, brighten her life, and silence her critics. But as time went on, Hannah’s desires slowly grew beyond her personal yearnings and focused instead on God. The time Hannah spent wanting and waiting gave Him time to work in her a desire for something more worthy than a child merely for herself. She came to desire a man for God.”

1. Let’s start with a heart-searching question, shall we? When you pray, is it for selfish purposes? What does James 4:3 say about this? What should be our desires and motives behind our prayers?
  
2. Read Hannah’s song again in 1 Samuel 2:1-10. Hannah and her husband brought Samuel to the tabernacle to dedicate him to God. This prayer, song, or hymn was recited at the dedication of their son. Were the words focused on herself, her pain, her sacrifice, or her problems? Where is the focus?
  
3. Hannah had waited a long time for a son, yet she was now basically giving him to Eli to raise in the service of the Lord. Being human, she must have felt some sadness, knowing that she wouldn’t have him with her every day. What other emotions may she have been feeling? How was she able to adjust her perspective, attitude, and focus to be full of gratitude, worship, and praise?

4. List some of the attributes, qualities, or “works” that she praises God for.
  
5. What does she say about God’s:
  - a. Strength?
  
  - b. Knowledge?
  
  - c. Power?
  
  - d. Judgments?
  
6. What does she say about her enemies, and God’s enemies?
  
7. How can focusing on the things above, rather than our own circumstances, change our hearts? How can reminding ourselves of God’s sovereignty renew our hope?
  
8. Hannah honestly believed that children were a gift from the Lord (Psalm 127:3). Because of that, she could commit Samuel to the Lord and trust Him to take care of her baby boy. How about you? Have you dedicated and committed your children to the Lord, knowing that they belong to God, and not to you? How should that knowledge change our parenting?
  
9. Summarize what you think Hannah meant in verse 3. (I love this verse.)

10. How do these words encourage you in a situation you may be facing? How does this reminder of how powerful, strong, mighty, knowing, and strong our God is, inspire you?

11. What's your favorite verse of this song? (Well, at least today!)

I pray that God is beginning to draft a fresh new song in your heart with a wonderful melody of praise to Him! Sing it out, ladies!

### **Third Day**

**Work on not only memorizing your verse but practicing it!**

Today we'll be taking a look at the song of Deborah, an epic poem that retells the victory of the Hebrews over their enemy the Canaanites while Deborah was judge of Israel.

1. Read Judges 4:1-24 to get a brief look at the story of Deborah and summarize it in your own words. (It's a bit of a strange story ...) How did God use two women, a jug of milk, a hammer, a tent peg, and a storm to defeat an enemy? (1 Corinthians 1:26-29)

Warren Weirsbe summarized the story like this: "The society of that day was strongly masculine, so it was humiliating when women had leadership in the land (Isaiah 3:12). The pages of church history record the names of godly women like Deborah who knew God's will, rallied God's people, and won God's victories, and we are grateful for them. In Hebrews 11:32, Barak is named as a man of faith, but Deborah enlisted him and saved the day. What a strange victory! One person's faith and obedience can make a difference in history. Whether you are a leader like Deborah or a follower like Barak, be sure to be a believer, because faith makes the difference between defeat and victory." Deborah was a wife and a prophetess, as well as an amazing leader. She was one of God's judges over His people, and her leadership extended from "the palm tree of Deborah" to the plain of the battlefield where she stood shoulder to

shoulder with Barak, the commander of the army. Deborah's faith was strong and she firmly believed that God would grant them the victory over His enemies, even when the odds were certainly not in their favor. Others, like Barak, wavered in their faith, but not Deborah. Her faith was steady, strong, and secure, because she knew her God!

Israel was not in a spiritually "good place" during the time of the Judges. They were characterized by disobedience, idolatry, and defeat, holding onto many pagan strongholds and heathen practices. Because of this, they seemed to experience an ever-present threat of battle. God let the Israelites fall into the hands of the king of Canaan (Jabin), who oppressed them for 20 years. This is where our story begins, as God uses Deborah to not only bring victory, but to bring the people back to Him.

2. Now read Deborah and Barak's song in Judges 5:1-31. It's a bit long, but that's ok, right? List different phrases, words, or thoughts that jump out at you.

3. The chapter simply begins with "Deborah sang." After this amazing victory, she is quick to offer praise, worship, and thanksgiving to God. She understood Who the source of their victory was. How quick are you to "Sing His praise" after a victory, an answered prayer, or simply the gift of another breath? (Ephesians 5:19)

Our text begins with a call to praise for the volunteer spirit in both the princes and the people! (Verses 1-5). Deborah says it again in verses 9-11, where she praises God for the people who stepped up during the crisis. She called on the rich and the poor alike.

4. I happen to love verse 2. I love the phrase "when leaders lead and when people offer themselves willingly." What do you think Deborah means?

5. What does she call herself in 5:7 that no other woman in Scripture is called?

According to verses 12-18, some of the tribes of Israel responded to the call to come join the battle, while others didn't. She praises some for their part in the battle.

6. Does Deborah take any credit for the victory for herself?
  
7. Which verses remind us that the Lord always goes before us?

I think it's interesting that although some of the tribes refused to help, she didn't allow that to discourage her. Some were willing to sacrifice, while others were content to stay home. This reminds me of people today. Often the same people are serving and engaged in the battle for souls, while others remain apathetic and lethargic.

8. Ok, two questions come to mind. Which of the two are you, engaged or disengaged? If disengaged, what can you do about it? And if you are fighting the battle, do you easily get discouraged when others remain on the sidelines? How can you take Deborah's example and remain encouraged, obedient, and willing? (Umm ... that's more than two questions. Sorry!)

Ann Spangler wrote, "It's difficult, even unpleasant, to listen to two pieces of music at once. Likewise, it's hard to listen to God's voice at the same time you are listening to voices of confusion, discouragement, and condemnation. Deborah's peace and confidence as a leader came from her ability to hear God clearly."

9. Do you struggle with hearing God's voice clearly against the background noise of the world, self, or others? Perhaps it's God's voice that's in the background rather than in the forefront. What can you do this week to discipline yourself to hear God's voice more clearly? How can you better discern His voice?
  
10. Is there anything that is making you reluctant to hear His voice?

Deborah concludes her song with a beautiful sentiment in verse 31. To be “like the sun when it rises” means to have a life full of blessings. Her heart was bursting with gratitude for all the Lord had done.

11. Can you write a short prayer or poem of thanksgiving and gratitude, perhaps using her song as a model? Be specific as you praise Him for some victory or victories in your life.

#### **Fourth Day**

**What’s your memory verse? How has a word “fitly spoken” encouraged you lately?**

Today let’s read another song by another woman of faith that we studied last year. Mary the mother of Jesus sang this song after she visits her cousin, Elizabeth. Both women were pregnant at the same time. Mary with Jesus, and Elizabeth with John the Baptist. The song expresses profound gratitude and appreciation for the goodness of the Lord!

1. Read Luke 1:26-45 to get the story in context, although I’m sure most of you are familiar with it! 😊 Summarize the story, with Mary being your main character!
2. Mary sings a God-song in verses 46-55. Weirsbe wrote, “A pregnant Jewish girl from Nazareth, engaged to marry a poor carpenter, what did Mary have to sing about?” (That’s a rhetorical question, obviously!) Upon first reading, write down some of your first thoughts or observations.
3. Are there any similarities between Mary’s and Deborah’s songs? Any differences?



4. She said her soul “magnifies” the Lord. What does that mean?
5. How does Mary praise Him for her “present” joy”? What about for her “future” days?
6. What character traits and/or attributes of God does she acknowledge and praise Him for?
7. What will God do for those who “fear” Him according to verses 50-53?
8. What had God done for the people of Israel according to verses 54-55?
9. What does Mary’s song tell you about her character and the things that were important to her?
10. When she watched Jesus die on the cross, do you think the words of her song came back to her heart?
11. Mary sang God’s praise in the midst of a seemingly impossible situation and promise. Are you in the middle of a situation that seems impossible, beyond your understanding, or hopeless? Is your soul magnifying the Lord? If not, what can you do to make that a reality in your life?

Tomorrow we'll continue with Mary's song. It's beautiful, isn't it? Hopefully it's a great reminder for us to praise and magnify Him, no matter what's going on in our lives.

### **Fifth Day**

**Write out your verse from memory.**

I find it fascinating to look at the three songs at the same time. Hannah's song stems from a prayer on her heart, Deborah's song is birthed as she acknowledges God's mighty victory, and Mary's song is composed as she is promised something that would appear impossible. What does that say to me? That I should be singing a lot, no matter what! No matter what's happening in my life, no matter what I'm feeling, and no matter what I think "should" or "should not" be happening, my soul should be magnifying Him, because He is worthy of all my praise!

1. Read Mary's song again in Luke 1:46-56. What does Mary call herself in verse 38? How do you think this mindset was the source of her perspective on everything?
2. She saw herself as God's servant and was willing to be obedient to Him. Are you able to say that? Mary's actions lined up with her words. She was a woman full of faith and continued to be obedient to Him. If you see yourself as God's maidservant, do your actions line up with that? Are you obedient?
3. Is something, right now, hindering you from being able to say, "I am God's servant"? What's making it hard?

4. As a servant, obedience is key. Jesus gave us the ultimate example of obedience. Read and summarize the following verses:
  - a. Matthew 26:39, 42
  - b. Philippians 2:5-11
  - c. Hebrews 5:7-10
  - d. John 14:15, 21
  - e. John 15:12-17
  - f. Luke 2:49
  
5. What are some of the “costs” of obedience?
  
6. Read the following verses regarding the process of obedience:
  - a. Galatians 2:20
  - b. Galatians 5:24
  - c. Luke 9:23
  - d. Mark 8:35
  - e. John 12:24
  
7. What does “death to self” mean spiritually? What does it mean practically?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What does Paul say in 1 Corinthians 15:31 and Philippians 1:21?

9. Paul could say “he dies daily.” How about you? What areas in your life do you find difficult to submit to the Lord? What challenges do you face while trying to live the “crucified” life?
  
10. I read the following prayer that was made after reflecting on the character of Mary. After reading it, please write your thoughts and comments: “My soul is full of you, O God, and I cannot hold back my gladness. Everyone who sees me will call me blessed because You have noticed me. You saw my lowliness and my need and filled my emptiness with Your presence. Form Your likeness in me so that, like Mary, I can bring You into a world that desperately needs Your love. In the name of Mary’s Son I pray. Amen.”
  
11. Which of the songs we read ministered the most to your heart?
  
12. What “action” item will you take away from our study this week?
  
13. What “fitly spoken” word have you given someone as a gift this week? What “word” have you been given?

I loved the part in the prayer that says the Lord filled us, like Mary, so we can take Him to a world that desperately needs Him. I never thought of it like that. Wow, I’m forever changed by that thought. We are blessed women, ladies, as we, too, are filled with Him! Let’s tell the world, shall we? See you next week!

