

WELCOME (15 minutes)

- **Ice Breaker:** What's a favorite song of yours?

WORSHIP (10 minutes)

- Sing #10, "Made New" from the **2016 SG Worship CD**.

WIN (15 minutes)

- **PRAY** for your list of people who don't yet know Jesus as their Savior.
- **PLAN** something to do to reach out to these people (*and maybe have fun together!*)
- **Don't forget:** It's time to be discussing summer plans = Fun things you'll do together as a group; Will you take a break? (How long?); Who will do a Women's Summer Study and with what neighbor, friend, co-worker, or family member??

WORD (25 minutes)

Read: In this session, we will study about Deborah, who God raised up to judge the people of Israel. This was a woman who used her gifts in service to God, exhibited great faith in God's ability to save, and then gave glory to God for His mighty works.

Have everyone open their Bibles to Judges 4.

Point #1 – Faith leads us to use our gifts in service to God – Read Judges 4:1-7

Discuss: Again the Israelites found themselves in the same Judges cycle. Unbelief was the root of the Israelites' idolatry. They did not believe that God could satisfy them. So they kept chasing after other gods by doing what was "evil in the sight of the Lord" (v 1). In response, the Lord allowed them to be oppressed by a foreign king named Jabin. Finally, after 20 years, the people cried out to God. Once again God gave His people an unlikely leader. Deborah was a prophetess, and she was the only judge we see using her gift of wisdom while not leading the military. Maybe you wonder if your gifts can be used in service to God. Maybe God has a certain ministry opportunity on your heart. Let the way God chose to work through Deborah strengthen your faith that He will use your gifts to accomplish His purposes. What are some ways we can discover the gifts God has given us? What happens when we choose not to use our gifts in service to God? What are some obstacles to faithfully using your gifts in service to God, and how can you overcome these obstacles?

Point #2 – Faith leads us to be courageous in facing impossible odds – Read Judges 4:12-16

Discuss: Deborah was filled with faith and Barak with fear – a female judge and a hesitant general – coming together to walk in faithfulness. The odds were stacked against them – except God was on their side! And so they stood there and wondered what God was going to do. What is the significance of Deborah telling Barak that the Lord had gone out before him (4:14)? How was this word meant to encourage and challenge Barak? How do we encourage and challenge each other?

Discuss: The hinge of this narrative hangs on v. 14: “Hasn’t the Lord gone before you?” Faith in God is what leads us to be courageous when facing impossible odds. Our faith is not rooted in our giftings, found in our skills, or propped up by our ambitions. Our faith is in the sure Word of God and in His unshakable character. What can happen when we have more faith in our gifts than in God’s power?

Point #3 – Faith leads us to give all glory to God for working through us – Read Judges 5:1-11

Discuss: Other religions aren’t known for singing and writing hymns and praise songs the way that Christianity is. And here, after God gave His people the victory, Deborah and Barak broke out into song. The focus isn’t the characters in the story but on God as the rescuer. Why is it important to give God glory when He works through us? What happens when we take credit for what God has done?

Read: “We can, and should, live our lives and order our memories not only historically but theologically – not simply recollecting what happened, or what we did, but searching out what God was doing. This keeps us from over-honoring ourselves in success, or despairing in our struggles.” – Tim Keller

Discuss: Deborah and Barak knew that the people would be prone to forget the mighty works of God. That’s why they gave them a song of remembrance. Read aloud Colossians 3:16. How does singing praise to God fortify our faith?

Read: The story and the song of Deborah is our story; it’s our song. We were captive to sin and we had no hope on our own. Satan and his “900 chariots” were stacked against us. We could not fight on our own. And the Lord stood in our place, fighting on our behalf, claiming victory over the enemy in an unlikely way – through a cross reserved for criminals. Today, we are the people of God because God has crushed the head of the serpent (like Joel crushed Sisera). It’s through the great rescue – the great story – that we have been forgiven once and for all. There is one hero! The hero of Deborah & Barak & Jael’s story is God alone. The hero of the story of our rescue is Christ alone.

For next time encourage anyone who wants to read Judges 6-12.

WORKS (25 minutes)

- Break into smaller groups of **2 or 3’s of the same gender** to pray for each other.