

Answer Your Divine Assignment With These 3 Scriptural Strategies

I look at the account of Deborah's integrated approach to life, work and ministry as one of the most complete and succinct examples of one who leads leaders. Picture Deborah the prophetess and judge going about her business in the house of Israel day in and day out. This mighty woman of God was positioned strategically for dramatic deployment into action. As Deborah performed her duties, I doubt she ever dreamed she would call a king to war and ride a horse into battle—but she did.

If you sound the call, be willing to go.

In the account in Judges 4, Deborah called Barak forth and spoke to him words like this: “Barak, has not the Lord, the God of Israel, commanded you, ‘Go gather your men’...” (Judg. 4:6 paraphrased). Barak was a leader of Israel. These words must have struck him as a startling reminder of something he already knew in his heart. So why did Deborah need to deliver the message? Perhaps it was because Barak was not acting upon his commission from the Lord. As the drama unfolded, Barak was encouraged to fulfill his God-ordained assignment to defeat Sisera, but not without demanding that Deborah ride into battle with him. In response, she mounted up and cried, “I will go with you.” Many of us in this hour of cultural upheaval are looking for someone to go with us as well.

What kind of woman does such things? Who was Deborah?

Judges 4:4-5 says, “Now Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth, was a prophetess. She judged Israel at that time. She would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim. The children of Israel would go up to

her for her to render judgment.”

We see immediately that Deborah flowed in spiritual ministry as a prophetess, that her professional role was as a judge over the nation, and that she was married. She also had a great “office” with a view under a palm tree. We don’t see any hesitation in Deborah about moving in her spiritual gifts or office as she performed her role as a judge. We see a woman who had certainty and confidence in who she was in God, and better yet, it seems she knew that God was in her.

Know who you are in God.

Deborah didn’t divide her life up into two tracks: The Spiritual and The Professional. Granted, the culture Deborah found herself in was an integrated one, unlike our western culture that leads to compartmentalized living. Nevertheless, Deborah didn’t stop to say, “I can’t prophesy today because I am going to work—I have to sit on the bench under the palm tree and render decisions and judgments. I’ll follow up on this at church when I see Barak. I’ll call him aside to give him God’s reminder.” No, not this woman!

She sent word to Barak, brought him into the office and delivered the word with such confidence that it seems he was compelled to issue an ultimatum that she come with him into battle. Barak refused to go without her. Was it the strength in Deborah’s spirit that caused Barak to invite her to ride into battle? We see power in Deborah’s words because her life and her identity were firmly grounded in God.

Deborah was such a great leader because she understood her assignment, she was confident in God’s leadership and she acted on her assignment in God’s timing. Because of her leadership, we read that those who followed were following with all their heart.

Understand the assignment and the timing.

The enemy got word of Barak's campaign and responded with 900 chariots of iron. Barak may have been shaking in his boots or perhaps he was just waiting for the right moment to launch the attack—either way, once again, it was Deborah who called the charge.

Judges 4:14 says, "Then Deborah said to Barak, "Get up, for this is the day that the Lord has given Sisera into your hands. Has not the Lord gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men behind him."

We see Deborah literally calling Barak "Up!" to go into battle. What was the protocol in the military? Who was in charge? God used Deborah, the prophetic judge and wife, as a military commander to bring victory in battle. All of Sisera's army fell by the edge of the sword—not a man was left.

What was Deborah's secret? How did she overcome the stigma of being a woman in office, flowing in the prophetic at work, and leading in battle? Is it possible that Deborah flowed powerfully in these arenas of family, government and religion, surmounting each challenge as though it was all in a day's work, because she was grounded in God? We tend to wrestle in our culture over moving between different cultural spheres. Deborah had her own struggles, but the answer in both time periods is the same: be rooted and grounded in the love of God so that He is the one we please above all else. We have given too much power to others to define us. Oh, that we too would run and live as Deborah did, with the primary goal of pleasing God. {eoa}

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