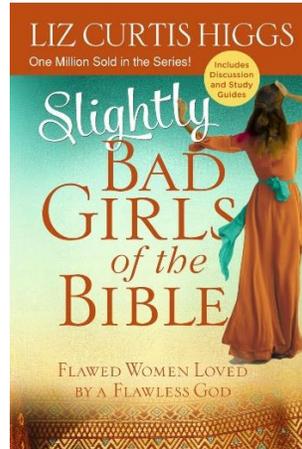


Word by Word with Liz Curtis Higgs on the Faith Radio Network

Bible Study Guide for August 4-5, 2018 | Hagar

from *Slightly Bad Girls of the Bible* by Liz Curtis Higgs



1. The Bible introduces Sarai's maidservant in Genesis 16:1, disclosing three vital facts about her: she was Egyptian, she was a slave, and (obviously) she was a woman. Each point defines her, and in many ways, confines her. Do you consider Hagar a Slightly Bad Girl for sleeping with Abram? Why or why not? What other choices would a slave have had in her time and place? Think of a situation in your life when you felt pressured to do something you didn't agree with simply because that particular behavior is deemed acceptable in our culture. How did you handle things, and what was the outcome? When God's Word says one thing and the world says another, it takes real courage to stand up for what you believe. How mighty the following verses help: Galatians 1:10; Matthew 10:22; and Psalm 118:6?
2. Sarai's envy of Hagar for the child she carried and the new place she held in Abram's life, and Hagar's lack of sympathy for barren Sarai, turned them both into Mean Girls of the Bible. How might Proverbs 27:15-16 and Psalm 64:4 describe their contentious relationship? When have you personally observed or experienced that kind of woman-to-woman cruelty? What directives in Luke 6:27-28 and 1 Thessalonians 5:15 can help us avoid such behavior?
3. In Genesis 16:7 the angel of the Lord makes his biblical debut. He will later appear to Abraham in Genesis 22:11, Moses in Exodus 3:2-4, and Gideon in Judges 6:12. But first, the angel of the Lord sought our sister Hagar. When the angel commanded Hagar to go back to Sarai, how would you explain Hagar's willingness to obey his angelic order? What do Leviticus 25:18 and Psalm 119:60 teach us about the best way to respond to God's instructions? Though the Scriptures do not tell us "And Hagar went back," clearly she did, after giving him the name, "God Who Sees Me." If the Lord has ever compelled you to return to a trying situation, what was the outcome? How did you grow as a result of your obedience? What encouragement does 1 Peter 1:6-7 offer us in the midst of such a trial?

4. Banished from Sarah's home, Hagar again fled, headed for what Jeremiah 2:6 describes as "a land of deserts and rifts, a land of drought and darkness, a land where no one travels and no one lives." A bleak place indeed. What's the significance of Hagar's wandering in a desert rather than, say, a grove of palm trees? If you've ever spent time in a spiritual wilderness, describe your experience. Might Psalm 63:1 and Psalm 107:4–6 capture it in words? Jeremiah 2:13 aptly addresses how not to solve the problem. In what ways did you perhaps forsake God during your time in the desert? And what cisterns did you dig in search of man-made solutions? Despite our wanderings, what assurance do we find in Deuteronomy 31:8?
5. As we read in Genesis 21:19, Hagar had a truly eye-opening experience on her second foray into the desert. What do Numbers 22:31, Mark 8:25, and Luke 24:30–31 indicate about *why* God opens the eyes of his people? Though Hagar may have felt abandoned by her master and mistress, God remained by her side and Ishmael's as well. Each of the following verses names a godly man whom the Lord favored with his abiding love: Genesis 39:2, 1 Samuel 3:19, and 1 Chronicles 28:20. How did each of these men experience God's blessing? What *must* you know about God to trust him as Hagar did? See if Isaiah 45:5–6 helps you answer that question.
6. Read Genesis 16:7-16 and 21:8-21. What's the most important lesson you learned from Hagar, who beat a path to the desert twice and found God waiting for her both times?