



Bad Girls of the Bible: And What We Can Learn from Them

Liz Curtis Higgs

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“Popular storyteller Higgs takes a look at the vamps and tramps of the Bible, searching for the lessons these wicked women have to teach. Higgs retells these biblical stories with rollicking humor and deep insight as she teaches about the nature of sin and goodness.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

Ten of the Bible’s best-known femmes fatales parade across the pages of *Bad Girls of the Bible* with situations that sound oh-so-familiar.

Eve had food issues. **Potiphar’s Wife** and **Delilah** had man trouble. **Lot’s Wife** and **Michal** couldn’t let go of the past, **Sapphira** couldn’t let go of money, and **Jezebel** couldn’t let go of anything. Yet the **Woman at the Well** had her thirst quenched at last, while **Rahab** and the **Sinful Woman** left their sordid histories behind.

Let these Bad Girls show you why studying the Bible has never been more fun!

“When she was perfect, beautiful, and innocent, I found no toehold where I could connect with Eve. When she was tempted by her flesh, humbled by her sin, and redeemed by her God, I could sing out, ‘Oh, sister Eve! Can we talk?’”

—from *Bad Girls of the Bible*

Includes Discussion Questions and Study Guide

A Novel Approach to Bible Study

More than one million readers have already taken a walk on the wild side with Former Bad Girl Liz Curtis Higgs and her eye-opening blend of contemporary fiction and biblical commentary. Laced with humor, solid research, and heartfelt self-disclosure, Liz’s unique brand of girlfriend theology has helped women of all ages experience God’s grace anew.

Bad Girls of the Bible: And What We Can Learn from Them Details

Date : Published (first published January 1st 1999)

ISBN :

Author : Liz Curtis Higgs

Format : Kindle Edition 256 pages

Genre : Christian, Nonfiction, Religion, Inspirational, Christian Non Fiction

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Curtis Higgs**

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Narelle says

The first chapter is all about Eve. We are able to walk in Eve's shoes in a modern day setting and experience her thoughts and feelings as we journey through her story. Later in the chapter we are given a personalised commentary of the Biblical story of Eve, including lessons we can learn.

I gained new insights into each of the women who were brought to life in these chapters. The author explores their possible thoughts and emotions in a very real way. The chapters are easy to read and I enjoyed Liz's light and humorous tone. I recommend this book to those looking to gain a deeper understanding of the Biblical stories of 'bad girls' like Eve.

Callie Rose Tyler says

Allow me to preface the following comments by saying that if someone enjoyed reading this and it taught them something about God or brought them closer to God, that's great and I don't want to take away from their experience but....

This book is AWFUL, terribly written.

The idea is fantastic, looking at the worst women in the bible and finding out why they are in there, genius. The only problem is that instead of telling these women's stories the author comes up with fiction stories, no more like fictionalized versions of the biblical stories but with different names and writing equivalent to a BAD romance novel.

The author should have done one of two things: presented the actual stories from the bible just written in a more palatable style or, created completely different stories that can be used as parables or modern metaphors for these biblical stories.

This author took Shakespeare and made it into a Lifetime movie...for shame.

HUGE LETDOWN

innae says

I remember picking this up at the grocery store -- I think it was the cover, intrigued me.

In any case -- I am NOT a Christian, not even close, however, with that stated, here are my thoughts on this excellent book:

She has the chapters (a prologue, a chapter devoted to each "Bad Girl", and an epilogue) separated into the fiction story -- the Bible's version (with amusing comments ala Elvira or perhaps Mystery Science Theater provided by her) -- the lessons learned from the fable -- and questions for discussion. Nice. I didn't read the

questions for discussion -- but the other stuff was nice.

The book is sprinkled with quotes, both from the Bible and from without -- I had a few I particularly liked (even one from the Bible, go figure)

"Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned,
Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned." -- William Congreve

"That money talks I'll not deny,
I heard it once: It said 'Goodbye'" -- Richard Armour

"The rooster may crow, but the hen delivers the goods." -- Ann Richards

"Your beauty should not come from outward adornment....Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight." 1 Peter 3:3-4

And the lessons I took from the "Bad Girls" (I keep putting them in quotes because she includes Michal in that category, and she was not bad -- misguided. Loved her father. Infatuated young thing? not bad)

From Eve: Avoid the blame game (always good advice, and something people really need to pay more attention to -- just because your child listens to Rock, or watches TV or plays video games does not excuse his/her actions -- or yours for that matter...take some responsibility already! geeesh)

From Potiphar's Wife (is it odd that the Bible doesn't give some of these women names?): Surround ourselves with support and Confession beats a cover-up (just ask Nixon)

From Lot's Wife: Stuff is temporary (now while I do love my stuff, and would have a very hard time letting it go - it is stuff...my life and the lives of my loved ones is much more important)

From the Woman at the Well: Never be afraid to ask questions (how many teachers have said this very thing??)

From Delilah: The love of a man is to be treasured
(I will add...the love of anyone is to be treasured -- it is a rare gift for anyone to give you their love)

From Sapphira: Learn to give when nobody's looking (anonymous charity is a special thing --)

From Rahab: Our past does not determine our future

From Jezebel: No one wants to work for a witch (my addition is, a bitch really not a witch per say, if you treat those who serve you poorly, they will remember -- and I don't just mean those who are lucky enough to afford SERVANTS -- the waitress you were mean to, remember she sees your food before you do...)

From "The Sinful Woman" (the one who anointed Jesus' feet with her tears and dried them with her hair): People will talk, no matter what we do

I would also like to commend the author, not only is she a really good story teller, and able to make the Bible interesting and understandable, but she is a former Bad Girl, and isn't afraid to say that sometimes she still

missteps. She is honest and human, and a "religious freak" by her own admission. Refreshing that.

Laura says

In *Bad Girls of the Bible*, Curtis Higgs makes the case that often the “bad girls” of the bible are easier to relate too than the good girls (such as Mary). She then presents different bad girls from both the Old and New Testaments. Each story is first told as a modern day story, then a discussion of the Biblical context, and then lessons that can be learned from each story. While the modern story sometimes allowed one to really understand the story in terms of today (such as Lot’s Wife and the Sinful Woman who washes Jesus’ feet with her hair), others fell flat (Eve and Sapphira). My favorite part was actually the discussion of the Biblical context. I thought each story had a very interesting discussion in biblical terms and made me think about some of these Bible stories in a new way.

I did have problems with the characterization of some of these bad girls, especially Micah. Micah had a rough life as a pawn of King Saul and King David. I don’t know why she would be characterized as a “bad girl” for telling King David that she thought he shouldn’t be dancing in the streets and showing his jiggle bits. If I were her, I would probably have more words than that for him, especially a heart to heart about his treatment of women in general. The discussion for this part was that she should have honored her husband and not said anything. I think this is a bit of a stretch. You should honor your husband, but I think you should also have honest discussions and be able to tell him when you think he is being foolish. I would fully expect my husband to tell me I looked like a fool if I were dancing about town with my jiggle bits exposed!

I think my favorite and most enlightening reading of the book was about Lot’s wife. I had always really thought before about it being a story of someone who did not follow God’s directions and was therefore turned into a pillar of salt. In this book, it talks more about the fact that perhaps Lot’s wife couldn’t let go her possessions and that we shouldn’t become so attached to things. It was a good discussion and gave me a lot to think about.

Overall, it was a very interesting book. I think it would have been even more interesting to read it with a church group of ladies. It would be a great book to use for a women’s bible study and discussion.

Tracy says

I confess that I picked this book because the title was so intriguing. Higgs profiled ten women in the book and started each section with a modern fictionalized version of the highlighted bad girl. She then told the story of the Biblical bad girl and went over what we could learn from her.

This book was a Bible study this summer at our church that I didn't do because of prior commitments, but if it were offered again, I would do it. There was a lot of good material covered and I learned something from each section.

Kate T. Bug says

This book was really great and a definite must read for all Christian women. I love how Liz tells a modern

story that is similar to the bible story before she discusses the events in the bible. It helped me relate to the women in the bible so that I can understand where they were coming from. It teaches Christian women that although we may have backslidden in the past that we are not defined by our misdeeds. Jesus loves us and has washed those sins away. In fact, those sins have made us better, stronger people. We can really appreciate God's love and be better witnesses since we too can understand that everyone is human and falters. God is a forgiving God. I will read Really Bad Girls now and Slightly Bad Girls as well. Highly recommended.

Alana says

I remember hearing Liz Curtis Higgs speak years ago at some women's event, and really enjoyed her. She has a good sense of fun and wit, and with a "bad girl" past isn't quite so "goody goody" in her approach to the study of classic Bible stories.

Her review of some of the more well-known "bad girls" of biblical fame isn't as deep as some, but it's fun, honest, and practical. She retells each story in a modern context and puts faces and stories to the names, making the characters sympathetic, someone to relate to, but also deeply personal. We get to the core of their choices, despite whatever circumstances in which they found themselves, and analyze the heart of their motives, and the consequences of their choices, both the good, and the bad. It's a thought-provoking, fun selection that would be good for a small or larger group study.

René says

At first I was excited for this book. I like complex characters and I like Scripture, so for those two to be presented together pleased me.

Then I read the book and it was terrible.

The author simplifies the stories of these women to the point that they lose their integrity. She villanizes the women, even in situations where it's not appropriate. She can't decide if the women are being used by their culture and fulfilling their duties as women in their cultural setting or if they were masters of their own fate and fully responsible for what happened to them. (I saw this especially with the story of Michal and it was irritating.)

The biggest issue I had though was that in her attempt to relate the stories to present day situations, she created mini-fictions at the start of each chapter that often missed the point of the Biblical story. Some of them were so far from what Scripture actually teaches, I was confused as to how a Christian publisher allowed this to be printed.

Basically, it was exhausting.

Lo says

I was excited to read the book hoping that it passed along lessons of how being "bad" was okay because

these girls from the bible were bad too.

I had been taking a feminist biblical interpretation course and without reading the reviews for this book, expected it to continue along that same line of thinking. That we can consider the women of the bible in a sex-positive, pro-women, anti-shame way. Unfortunately the first chapter starts off with a stab to the heart. The author tells a fictional story of a girl who is abused and then, after noting that the story is her own, victim blames the girl for essentially choosing the wrong guy. Ouch.

Each chapter starts with a soap opera retelling of a story from the bible. As someone who isn't super well read in the bible, I found this helpful. Granted, the stories are very lifetime-y as another reviewer noted. They too continue the theme of shame (women are bad because they choose to be bad not because their circumstances make them do things they don't want to do.)

I also noted throughout the book a very odd reoccurrence of women putting other women down. Like - *Oh, she was that typical pretty type, thin and beautiful, the ones all the men like, oh I'd never be like her. I was way smarter than that!* That sort of thing. The language idealized this "perfect women" that the author seemed to create herself, and then immediately put that type of women down. Why why why? Whyyyyy?

While the book does its duty in making a case for its beliefs, it does so in a way that is very oddly women-hating. You don't need a new book to tell us how horrible the women of the bible were. It does that pretty well itself. I was hoping for something very different.

While there were some redeeming points to this book, I feel sore about it, and expect that they were not put there intentionally. I hope that the women who do read this book know that a mistakes, bad choices, and violations happen, and that it does not stain their character to experience life through living it. I also hope they realize that being bad by anothers standards does not necessarily make her less of a woman, in her own eyes. I'll keep looking for the book that reminds me why all the nameless women deserved to be named.

Claire says

I tried to stick with this... I really did. In fact, I made it to about page 200 before I gave up.

I think there are definitely people this book will appeal to, but I guess I'm not one of them. The contemporary retellings of biblical stories seemed to be reaching a lot to make the connection between the two worlds. In addition, while the author says she used many different commentaries and did lots of research, it's pretty obvious she picked and chose which to use by picking sources that agreed with her preconceived ideas.

If you're the typical evangelical Christian woman, this book will probably appeal to you. If you're a little... left of center, shall we say, it's probably not for you.

Kara says

I'm reading this with my friends and we're doing the study book too. So far...excellent. The way she re-writes the biblical stories into modern life situations (usually NOT a fan of this) is so helpful. I suddenly relate to all these 'bad' girls. A snake, an apple, not so tempting, but a smooth-talking guy, a

kiss....yup. Understanding the wife of an Egypt official in the kings court, ordering around slaves, no, but the bored wife...again yup. I get it. And I'm learning how to see the signs early and get my eyes back to Jesus, so I don't fall in.

Kristine Coumbe says

I was excited to read another Liz Curtis Higgs book. However, I am experiencing trouble in reviewing this book. I like some insights Liz has about bible characters: Potiphar's Wife, Jezbel, Delilah, Lot's Wife, the Sinful Woman and the Woman at the well, I learned more about Sapphira and Michah. I guess I saw them as minor female characters and they are not.

I do have some concerns about this book. Yes Higgs admits that she is not a bible scholar and it does show in her writing. I find some of the colloquial and casual language about the bible off-putting at times, such as the girlfriend references throughout the book. I do not find the introduction of each chapter with a fake and modern character similar to the biblical ones helpful, but confusing or distracting.

I dislike Higgs categorizing each woman as Bad to the Bone, Bad for a Moment, and Bad for a Season but not forever. Liz is correct in her criticism of older (possibly male) scholars for blaming biblical women for everything that goes wrong, while exhorting men as heroes. Yet Higgs labeling of these biblical women is not much different than the scholars she abhors. As a reader I would prefer to decide for myself and not have the author make that judgment for me.

Also, I disagree with Higgs portrayal of Eve as the first bad girl because Eve was innocent until she partook of the forbidden fruit so, she would not understand that getting into a debate with Satan was wrong or that Eve's choice led her to make the choice to disobey God. I feel Eve did not stop listening to God or her husband. She did repent of her sin of disobedience. If Adam and Eve did not eat of the fruit of the knowledge of Good and Evil we and all our ancestors would not exist.

In spite of my caveats of Bad Girls of the Bible, Higgs does provide biblical references and helpful insights at the end of each chapter. The author has a study guide in each chapter and discussion questions. Also the reader does not need to read the book in chronological order but can pick which biblical woman to study instead. Higgs does write in an engaging manner for the most part. I would recommend reading this book with a bible in hand. I am sure that there are woman's bible study groups that may want to use this book and I suggest caution because this book would be better for personal study instead due to the nature of questions to consider for the reader may be too personal in nature. I received a complimentary copy of Bad Girls of the Bible from WaterBrook Publishers and am not required to give a positive review.

Donna says

In her first book on "Bad Girls of the Bible," Liz Curtis Higgs encourages her readers to take a new look at these women who had a problem with sin. It may have been for a moment, for a season, or they may have been "bad to the bone," but each has something to teach us. As each chapter opens, Ms. Higgs gives us a real time story based on the life of the woman she is discussing before introducing us to her. Tying the past to the present, each story shows how Satan continues to tempt in the same manner year after year. Each chapter also offers us hope and steps for change, along with questions to ponder alone or in a group. Come take a

new look at Eve, Potipher's Wife, Lot's Wife, the Woman at the Well, Delilah, Sapphira, Rahab, Jezebel, Michal, and the Sinful Woman. Come glean wisdom from their lives.

I found this book to be full of wonderful suggestions on how to combat the devil; how to win the daily struggle with sin. It gave me new insights into the lives of these women, and how I can grow from studying them. I now want to read the rest of her books!

Summer Lane says

Very good read! It's so nice to read stories about women in the Bible who were imperfect. Some of them received their justice in the end, while others realized the error of their ways and opened their hearts to God to receive forgiveness and life.

I like the Liz Curtis really gives a voice to the inner commentary going on in my head while I read. For example, I've always thought David did some pretty dumb things (I mean, we're human so we ALL do dumb things), but I love how Liz points that out. Hey, David's not perfect. He screwed up AND he screwed OVER his first wife Michal. But she helps to explain the purpose behind every Bible story, and the mention of every woman in the Word who was, indeed, "bad."

My favorite stories are the tales of Rahab the prostitute in Jericho and the weeping woman who cried on Jesus' feet. Lovely stories of forgiveness, and illustrations that Jesus offers His love freely to all who first have faith. Our relationship with Him is really the most important thing!

Anne says

You might think, given the format of this book (short fictional stories of modern women followed by short character studies of Bible women) that it's a light read or a shallow Bible study with no more depth than the latest novel. But in reality, Liz Curtis Higgs, the author, has studied these Bible women extensively, and her study is evident in the lessons found in this book. The fictional stories add a dimension to the women in the Bible that we thought we knew. The Bible studies offer insights and useful information about the times and cultures in which the women lived. She also asks probing questions that allow you to apply the lessons learned to your own life.
