

# Heroes of Scripture and Screen:

## Deborah and Mulan

After watching the movie, read these **questions** and the Bible passage and talk about them as a family. It's best to do this right after watching the movie but you can also do it in the next day or so. The conversation could take anywhere from 10-20 minutes but we hope that it sparks an interest in noticing and sharing God throughout your daily life.

**A Moment to Remember:** Which moment in the movie did you like the most? Why?

*Read this passage from the Bible (Judges 4:2-9 NRSV):*

So the Lord sold them into the hand of King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-ha-goim. Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and had oppressed the Israelites cruelly for twenty years. At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for judgement. She sent and summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, 'The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you, "Go, take position at Mount Tabor, bringing ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun. I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the Wadi Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will give him into your hand.'" ' Barak said to her, 'If you will go with me, I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.' And she said, 'I will surely go with you; nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.' Then Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh.

*If you have the time, take a look at this Venn Diagram and talk about whether it lines up with how you interpret the scripture and the movie (or just skip to the rest of the **questions**):*

### Deborah

Is known far and wide as a prophet and judge.

Open about how her gender is a problem for others.

Humble. Brave.

Leads an army against an overwhelming foe, and wins.

Becomes a lasting symbol of hope to her people.

### Mulan

Comes from obscurity.

Forced to conceal her true self because of how others perceive her gender.

### **Theme in Scripture – Humility**

Deborah is one of the most impressive figures in all of scripture. She is a legendary figure not just as a judge but also as a prophet, and also as a military commander, and also as a musician. This passage demonstrates how much the people of her time respected and admired her. Are you surprised to hear, then, that the theme of this scripture passage is humility? Spoiler alert; when Deborah accurately predicts that a woman will have the glory of defeating the cruel General Sisera, she is not talking about herself. For all of her accomplishments, Deborah did not brag. She did not consider herself a hero but rather a humble servant. She worked tirelessly for God's glory, not her own; and she did so by helping and protecting those in need. **Can you think of anyone else whose heroism comes from a place of humble servanthood?**

### **Theme on the Screen - Humility:**

Fa Mulan conceals her true self in order to take her elderly father's place in the army. She doesn't start out already a legend, like Deborah, but she certainly becomes one. Mulan trains and fights knowing that any great feat she accomplishes or any victory she earns will never be hers because she is a woman in a man's army. But Mulan isn't fighting for her own honor. She isn't fighting for herself. At first she fights for her father. Then she fights for her friends. Finally she fights for all of her people. Mulan is forced to be selfless but she chooses to be humble. In the end the emperor is wise enough to see that Mulan is always willing to make the tough but right choices and frees her to truly be herself. **What is the most important choice that Mulan makes in the movie? Why is it the most important and why does she make it?**

**The Scene that Says it All: Which scene in the movie best represents this theme of humility. Why?** *(Is it when Mulan cuts off her hair, or when her friends rejoin her and take on their own disguise to protect the emperor, or another scene?)*

**Bonus question: Who in your family can do the best karaoke of "I'll Make a Man Out of You?" Why don't you practice to find out?**