



Dynamic Women of the Bible: What We Can Learn from Their Surprising Stories

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Though we often focus more on the male heroes and villains in the Bible, the pages of Scripture are brimming with women who are edgy, strong willed, and controversial. Far from the stereotype of sweet and submissive, many women of the Bible steal the show despite being cast in the supporting roles. What parts did these women have in the vast family of God? What challenges did they face that we face even today? And what can we learn from them if we allow them to be the three-dimensional people they really were?

In *Dynamic Women of the Bible*, the lives of more than fifty biblical women are summoned from their graves to live again by the author who brought you *The Biographical Bible*. Scripture references, biographical profiles, sidebars (featuring twenty additional women of the Bible), discussion questions, and life applications make this book perfect for small groups, Bible studies, book clubs, and personal reading.

Dynamic Women of the Bible: What We Can Learn from Their Surprising Stories **Details**

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From Reader Review Dynamic Women of the Bible: What We Can Learn from Their Surprising Stories for online ebook

Kristin says

I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

When I got this book, I'm not sure what expectations I had for it, but I was disappointed at times. Perhaps more scholarly information, less theorizing. More concrete proof, less assumptions. There are over 50 women here that the author delves into, with the same format. The author introduces the story they are in, then theorizes how she thinks they may have acted, thought, and spoken. The whys behind their actions in the Bible.

It lends to an interesting sort of daydreaming, but didn't give me any of the meat that I was hoping for.

Chanover55 says

Not at all what I expected. You had to read the "disclaimer" closely to realize that what she was writing was her fictionalized musings of what these women's lives were like. Used this book for a Bible Study; even they felt she was stretching it at times. Glad we read it but be careful if you don't closely follow the Biblical text to see what is really recorded.

Grayson Gilbert says

I set out to read Ruth A. Tucker's Dynamic Women of the Bible with the hopes of being able to find a decent resource to encourage women with. I had no idea of whom Ruth Tucker was until I read this book. That will be important later. For now, let's examine this book under its own merit.

Within the first chapter, it was readily apparent that much of what this book was going to offer was pure, idle speculation on the nature of the women of the Bible. Interestingly enough, the authors who penned the scriptures were not moved by the Spirit to write much about many of these women. Truthfully, there is a ridiculous amount left open for speculation. However, I do not find such speculation profitable for the reader or the maturation of their faith.

The really interesting thing that I found was that through the midst of this, Tucker acknowledges that the point of the scriptures was not to highlight these women. Not necessarily, anyhow. The primary focus of the scriptures is redemptive history through the patriarchal lineage tracing to Christ, what His specific ministry was here on earth (yet also now, being seated at the right hand of the Father, and His eschatological purpose), and what implications this redemptive history has for those who confess Christ as Savior and Lord.

While these narratives are given in scripture, Tucker admits to being curious as to what their attitudes were. Surely, they were real women, as she writes. However, this is seemingly where Ruth Tucker lands: some strange middle ground where she asks a ton of questions that the reader is left to postulate upon.

The chapters move from character to character, speculating large chunks of narrative, such as, "There have been so many monthly periods she cannot begin to count them. Cramps and PMS sometimes lasting for days.

And what a mess! No corner drugstore where she could stock up on tampons and sanitary napkins or buy a bottle of Midol. If she were like most women, she would have begun ‘the change’ in her late forties or fifties, bleeding at times like a stuck pig. Then would come the near fainting spells and what could only be described as grand-mal hot flashes—never-ending menopause. How long has it been since she made love with Abraham? Years? She doesn’t keep track.”

Granted, I am a man, and beyond the biological aspects of menstrual cycles and menopause, I don’t get it. However, to speculate on this simply seems to be trying to relate much more to the story than we have. Did she have this in commonality with all women? Of course. Do we need to speculate on the heaviness of Sarah’s period, her menopause experience, or her sex life with Abraham? Not really. It does nothing to substantiate Sarah’s character nor does it add particular value to this discussion.

Tucker does move beyond menstruation in this chapter, but to more and more speculation in the midst of the legitimate Genesis narrative. She presents some of what the text says, and then elaborates with mere speculation.

Through what I did read in this book, I was overwhelmed by the vast majority of biblical gossip Tucker purported to make her points. I decided to give the book 150 pages (the halfway point) to see if it would get any better – I made it to page 65 and skimmed some other chapters remaining.

What I got out of it was that the Patriarchs are viewed too positively and that modern biblical scholars comment too negatively on the sins of these women; Priscilla wrote the book of Hebrews; Lot’s wife got a bad rap (Sapphira possibly, too); and a whole boatload of other hypotheticals.

I have mentioned this before, and I will do it again here: research the author for a minimum of one hour and see what you can dig up.

For what I found on Ruth Tucker in 15 min:

She is egalitarian.

She is a biblical feminist.

She has about 10 blogs devoted to slamming her previous employer (again, I don’t know everything that happened in this situation – but surely there is a more mature way to handle these things).

She has other blogs where she spends more time speculating and asking questions than she ever formulates biblical answer to.

My point is not to slam her in any way. My point is simply to show that she has developed a set of presuppositions by which she operates under as she approaches the scriptures. We all do this – however, some just do it in a poor, unbiblical way. What you read in their books will evidence this, always. It is far more valuable to read from authors who want to be mastered by what the scripture dictates. They may make mistakes in their hermeneutic, but it will not be altogether unprofitable.

You know you find a good author when you can see their desire is to be mastered by the text. They don’t spend tons of time positing on the details they don’t have – they unpack what they do have and seek to make it applicable for their readers. I have been growing more and more in my appreciation of these types of men and women because they have an earnest desire to show others what God’s Word evidences and what He desires for us.

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Rebekah says

They were wives, mothers, daughters, and friends. They were faithful and faithless. They were benevolent and they were brutal.

But always, they were real.

This text from the back cover is intriguing to me. Because I think that's what is lost about the women in the Bible. I grew up in the church, and when I wasn't there or at Sunday School I was playing church, baptizing my dolls, wearing my grandmother's fur collars over my play clothes, having fake conversations with the ladies while our imaginary children ran around sneaking cookies. I know the stories. Eve brought sin into the world. Rahab sneaked the spies out of town over the wall. Esther saved her people. Bathsheba was an unwitting victim of King David's lust while Potiphar's wife, Delilah, and Jezebel made victims of their own. And then the new testament. Mary is the sweet, innocent mother of Jesus. The other Mary followed him around, learning from him and believing in him, even when his other friends didn't. As I grew up and heard the stories I began to understand they were a bit more complicated than I originally thought--Adam is just as guilty, right? Rahab was a what?! Couldn't (shouldn't?) Bathsheba turned down the king's advances? And how did Mary actually love Jesus (hey, I adore "Jesus Christ Superstar" and can sing nearly every word)?

But how real have these women ever really been to me?

Obviously Sunday School needs to quiet things down and make its subjects rather one-dimensional. I mean, five year olds can barely sit still and listen, let alone understand who Rahab was when she wasn't aiding and abetting spies. And then, when you get a little older, and you start sitting through sermons and your own readings of the text, the writers of both testaments give too little time or space to these women to make them any more than two-dimensional characters.

Tucker takes those two-dimensional women who lived and died so long ago and breathes life into them. Yes, it's conjecture. It has to be. There is no one living today who sat with Bathsheba and talked with her about the pros and cons of getting involved with the king while her husband was away at war (but wouldn't that be an interesting conversation?!). So Tucker looks at what the Bible does give us about fifty Biblical women--both the commonly known and the obscure--and asks the "what if" questions. In the introduction, she wisely notes that this book isn't about the hows or the whys of the decisions they made and the lives they lived. There are no real answers here. Like 17th-century philosopher Spinoza writes (and Tucker quotes in her introduction), "the purpose of the Bible 'is not to convince the reason, but to attract and lay hold of the imagination.'" So there are a lot of questions about what makes these women real--and how that relates to us as women today.

Dynamic Women isn't perfect. I found the sidebars confusing and disruptive to my reading. Tucker includes those and questions--fluffy and more intentional--that can guide a small discussion group. There were several chapters I found myself wishing I could talk about with my friends, if only to ask the "what if" questions with them. But many of the chapters have stuck with me, and I look forward to rereading these women's stories in the Bible with new eyes that long to see beyond the few verses they are given and imagine what

depth those women have.

As Tucker writes, "The Bible is a big book, but brevity is too often the rule . . . [these women] are far more . . . than what the Bible tells us." And, Tucker would have us believe that by considering what more they are, by allowing the wonderings to lay hold of our imaginations, we can learn more about their stories, about ourselves, and about God. I think she's right.

{I received this book free from Baker Books through the Baker Book Bloggers program. I have expressed my own opinions, and I was not required to write a positive review. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.}

Michele Morin says

O.K., I'll confess: I started reading *Dynamic Women of the Bible* beginning with the last chapter. I happened to notice that it was about Priscilla, and since I have had a long-standing desire to prove that Priscilla wrote the book of Hebrews, it was imperative that I verify whether or not Ruth A. Tucker was going to support me in this. I'm pleased to say that she did; therefore, I was even more enthusiastic in suppressing the big question that arrived in the mail with this package from Baker Books: How many books about the women of the Bible do we really need? Seriously. After John MacArthur and Alice Matthews have weighed in, the scholarly approach is pretty well covered. Liz Curtis Higgs has categorized most of them by conduct (Bad, Really Bad, Slightly Bad). Lisa TerKeurst even has a DVD with her book. What's left?

Plenty. I would argue that this well-researched (303 pages) and documented (7 additional pages of notes) study is an intriguing scavenger hunt in which the author examines her own story alongside that of the sixty-one women she profiles. With Lot's wife, we learn that Ruth Tucker also fled and looked back — not from the fire of God's wrath, but from a world falling apart because of her husband's sin. With Dinah and Tamar, we examine the horror of rape through the grid of Tucker's abusive marriage. Because of the sword through Mary's heart, we learn that the author bared her own pierced heart in prayer, kneeling in the snow to plead for her wayward son.

As a long-time seminary professor, Ruth A. Tucker is well-qualified to produce the informative side bars and thought-provoking questions at the end of each chapter. She is a scholar and could show off if she wanted to. Instead, she reveals a sense of humor that humanizes these Biblical women. Who would have thought of Rachel in the role of 1960's country music star? (Why not? The Genesis account raves about her beauty and identifies her as a sheep herder.) Because of the author's creative chapter groupings, I am inspired to picture a ladies Bible study attended by Gomer, the Proverbs 31 woman, Job's wife, and the Song of Songs lover. Most of all, I am motivated to "dig deeper" — as we are urged to do in the Epilogue. The grace to serve God "acceptably with reverence and godly fear" promised at the end of the book of Hebrews (whoever wrote it!) is revealed in its many facets through the lives of the women profiled in the pages of Scripture as well as in the life of the author of this fine book.

Bethanie Ryan says

Awesome, awesome book! When I received this book from the publisher, it was in a format that I could only read on my computer. Honestly, I blew off reading it for a month because the last thing I wanted to do was read a book on my computer. Three hundred pages? Staring at a computer screen? Please! Once I started, however, I had a hard time stopping. The writing was entertaining and engaging. I was easily able to read all 334 pages on my computer, and thankfully, you won't have to.

In this book, Tucker systematically looks at many of the women mentioned in the Bible. From Eve to the women mentioned in Paul's letters, she takes their stories and breathes into them new life. She tells their stories using modern words and concepts. She uses her imagination to fill in the all-too-many gaps.

As a faithful Catholic, however, I do unfortunately need to add one caveat. I really wish I didn't, I generally loved this book so much. Several times in the last 6 chapters, she said things that are offensive to Catholic sensibility. You can't entirely blame her. She has an evangelical Calvinist background. It should be no surprise that her views on Mary and the deuterocanonical texts do not align with Catholic views. It is impressive that she even mentioned the deuterocanonical heroine, Judith. Many Protestant scholars wouldn't have done that.

But I've spent enough time on my regrettable caveat. Yes, she does add things that are not found in the Biblical texts. Once or twice, she even says things that seem to go against the texts, but she is upfront about it when she does so. The book is also peppered with interesting quotes taken from other scholars and writers about the various women. I think the quotes really added another dimension. The quotes led me to adding even more books to my reading list. She really placed herself in the stories and encouraged the reader to do the same.

She has made me want to crack open the stories of some these Biblical women again. I hope she does the same to you. I fully intend to buy this book myself so I can read it again, this time not on a computer screen.

This review originally appeared on my blog: <http://truedignityofwomen.wordpress.c...>

Melissa Hinnen says

I am always so happy to see books that celebrate the women in the Bible. This is cleverly written and makes their lives relevant to today's experiences. It does seem that there are some liberties taken to fill in gaps that embellish the stories. Because of that, there are some assumptions made that don't seem authentic or necessarily accurate. It offers some good conversation starters but I wouldn't use it as an academic source.

Nicki says

It is so speculative. This could have been her motivation...That might have been how she felt... I really couldn't bring myself to read more than the first chapter, which for me is extremely rare.

Ashley Carmichael says

This book covers a broad range of women in the Bible, which I appreciated as a study. The diversity of

women and their many varied roles in Biblical history was both fascinating and interesting to read and discuss. The author was not at all objective in her presentation. She often portrayed conjecture as fact which if unfamiliar with Biblical principal or text can be misleading at the very least. While I can appreciate a little interpretation and personal spin, it is important to distinguish between the two in both diction and tone.

Edythe Hamilton says

Dynamic Women of the Bible shares accounts of familiar women and women with little notoriety with significant roles in the history of Christianity before and during the life Christ Jesus. The women Ruth Tucker shares that are commonly referred to in Sunday sermons are Mary, mother of Jesus, Mary and Martha of Bethany, Mary Magdalene while Lot's Wife Miriam, Deborah, Abigail, Sapphira, Dorcas, and Rhoda are not the main subjects or topics of discussion. The book recounts the personal trials and tribulations of the majority these women and more women who remained nameless whose lives were not always the upstanding citizen in their ancient times but their faith and belief in God made them worth the mention.

After each chapter, there is a 'concluding observation' and 'questions to think about' lending further debate or analysis to the role-play of each woman's importance to Christian history and how their individual situations possibly impact women of today's culture. In the 'Concluding Observation' of chapter eight, Rahab, and the Five Daughters of Zelophehad, Tucker refers to Rahab, "She is essentially a nobody, but she realizes that she has power over their lives. Simply saving herself and her family would be reason enough to include her story in the biblical text--and reason enough to cite hers as a singularly liberating account in ancient history. But that she was singled out by God to be rescued by the Israelite army, per an oath made by nameless spies, is the greatest wonder of all." In response to this observation of Rahab, not believing or following God, she realized after her encounter with the spies sent by Joshua to spy on the city of Jericho, she chose to acknowledge the existence of God through sheer faith that he would protect her and her family if she helped the spies escape to complete the mission.

One of the 'Questions to Think About' section in this chapter asks, "Do we too easily look down on individuals because of their immorality or scandalous reputation?" is a question some or maybe even most people would answer yes which leads to judging and condemning someone without full knowledge of the situation in which it came about. For the most part, this book takes an in-depth perspective on the situations women of the Bible confront and the speculative viewpoint of what might have been their underlying principle or reasoning for their action. I recommend reading this interpretive analysis of Bible stories along with your personal Bible and answer a few of the ending chapter questions to sharpen your knowledge of these great women and compare the situations to the culture of today.

I received this book free from the Net Galley Reviewer Program in exchange for an unbiased opinion in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's guidelines.
