Use What's In Your Hands
by Beth Jones

When I was a child, my younger sister Maria and I played with Baby Tenders and Barbie dolls. We loved being girls and playing with our dolls. However, our older brother Greg played with little, plastic, green army men.

I would watch him with interest, making big hills with the Georgia dirt and clay, for the army men to climb and fight on. He'd make the men crawl on their bellies toward the enemy, march on the hill, run ahead to face the enemy and shooting them loudly with the guns attached to their green-clad bodies. And sometimes the army men would have a surprise attack from the enemy on the hill, Greg making the men dramatically yell and fall over dead. He never tired of the game.

Historically, fighting and wars have been primarily a man's business because:

- women were believed to not have the physical strength and endurance for combat
- it was believed that women were more at risk for becoming prisoners of war and being raped/sexually molested after one female was captured as a prisoner of war and sexually abused by the Iraqis in the Gulf War
- romantic relationships and pregnancy was a concern for women working in the military alongside men (which could be distracting for the men doing their jobs, especially in combat)
- men would not trust women to be physically able of performing their jobs, which undermines the esprit de corps.¹ Although women have come a long way in strides in

¹ [http://www.edi.org/issues/women/combat.html](http://www.edi.org/issues/women/combat.html)

equality, work along-side with their male counterparts, and hold higher authority positions than ever before, today only about 20% of the U.S. military are females.²

In Bible times, women were mostly home-makers, although there were a few exceptions to the rules. It was the men who went off to war, and brought the spoils back home, while women prayed and took care of the children as the battle raged. But there was one important battle for the people of Israel, where God's victory over the enemy was at the hands of a woman!

Let's study this story a few moments. The background of the story is that the people of Israel had grown comfortable and spiritually apathetic in the Promise Land that God led them to, living among the “ites” — the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. They married their daughters and gave their own daughters to their sons in marriage, even worshipping their gods. They didn't obey God's laws. They forgot about God, and as a result were sold to other nations and kings. One of these kings was Jabin, king of Canaan who ruled from Hazor.

The commander of Jabin was Sisera. Sisera in the original Greek language means “battle array.” Sisera was cruel to the people of Israel and oppressed them for 20 years. He had 900 iron chariots and was greatly feared by the people of Israel.

But doesn't our great God always have a plan? Deborah was a prophetess in Israel, the wife of Lappidoth. She served as a judge over Israel during this time. She held court under the palm tree, also called Deborah's Palm, between Ramah and Bethel in the hills of Ephraim.

God spoke to Deborah at Deborah's Palm, giving her the word of the Lord and specific instructions for the battle to give to Barak.

She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, “The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: ‘Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and

² [http://usmilitary.about.com/cs/women/a/usmcwomen.htm](http://usmilitary.about.com/cs/women/a/usmcwomen.htm)
lead them up to Mount Tabor. I will lead Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.” Barak said to her, “If you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go.”

“Certainly I will go with you,” said Deborah. “But because of the course you are taking, the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman.”

“So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh. 10 There Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali, and ten thousand men went up under his command. Deborah also went up with him.”

God had given Deborah the word of the Lord. He wanted Barak, a man, to lead the army and to destroy the enemy. But Barak was afraid and so the victory and honor went to the hands of a woman – Jael, a stay-at-home mom who took the plunder!

Let's read what happens next.

“So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh. There Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali, and ten thousand men went up under his command. Deborah also went up with him. Now Heber the Kenite had left the other Kenites, the descendants of Hobab, Moses’ brother-in-law, and pitched his tent by the great tree in Zaanannim near Kedesh. When they told Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, Sisera summoned from Harosheth Haggoym to the Kishon River all his men and his nine hundred chariots fitted with iron.”

Sisera, the captain of the enemy army, is preparing for battle, thinking he's got it made and this is going to be all wrapped up soon. What he didn't know, though, was that God was on the move!

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Now look at what Deborah does. She begins to prophesy the word of the Lord in the heat of the battle! It's very important that we speak God's word with faith – not negative and pessimistic words that are full of unbelief, fear, and doubt. Our tongues have the power to speak life or death, blessing or cursing. Begin to prophesy the word of God in your circumstances today.

"Then Deborah said to Barak, “Go! This is the day the LORD has given Sisera into your hands. Has not the LORD gone ahead of you?” So Barak went down Mount Tabor, with ten thousand men following him. At Barak’s advance, the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword, and Sisera got down from his chariot and fled on foot. Barak pursued the chariots and army as far as Harosheth Haggoym, and all Sisera's troops fell by the sword; not a man was left.

Did you catch that? Not a man was left. God had slaughtered the enemy! Now Sisera turns chicken and starts running away from the battle – the worst thing a leader could do! And he's about to meet his fate.

4 James 3:8-10, KJV.
“Sisera, meanwhile, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there was an alliance between Jabin king of Hazor and the family of Heber the Kenite. Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, “Come, my lord, come right in. Don't be afraid.” So he entered her tent, and she covered him with a blanket.”

Jael was a tent-dweller and her family were making weapons for the army. They traveled wherever they could to find work. Her camp site must have been close to the battlefield because her family was making and supplying weapons.

Jael's husband Heber was related to the Israelites. He was descended from Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. So Jael was bound to the Israelites through her husband's kinship. But Heber was on good terms with the Canaanites, and Sisera saw Heber's and Jael's camp as a refuge from war.

The Bible says that the wise woman builds her house, but the foolish tears it down with her own hands.⁵ Jael was no fool. She saw the opportunity at hand that the Lord had given her.

Sisera says that he is thirsty and asks Jael for some water. Instead, she gave him a drink of milk, and a blanket to cover up. Makes me think of the milk ads, “Got milk?” He asks Jael to stand at the doorway of her tent, and if anyone comes by and asks if anyone is in there, to say no.

Then he falls asleep, exhausted. Jael sees it is the right timing to act, and picks up a tent peg and hammer, driving it through his skull – and Sisera dies.

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⁵ Proverbs 14:10, NASB.

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Now Barak comes on the scene. Barak, who was supposed to lead the army of Israel at God's command. Jael, a woman, saunters out to meet him. Okay, the Bible doesn't say she saunters, but I think she might have sauntered just a little. Who needs a man with God and a hammer around? Here she is, doing a man's job – driving a tent peg through the captain's head! A woman had just won the war with the help of her God!

“So on that day, God used the people of Israel to crush the power of King Jabin of Canaan. The Israelites became stronger and stronger until they destroyed him.”

What's in your hands?

Notice, that the Bible doesn't say that Jael was some spiritual giant, like Moses. She was simply a stay-at-home mom, who took care of her kids, provided supplies and made weapons for the army. An ordinary, everyday woman used in an extraordinary way.

She didn't have to take years of difficult college courses or train for years in seminary. She didn't need anything fancy, expensive, or worldly to make an eternal difference.

Jael used what was in her hands for God. A tent peg and a hammer. Simple tools and simple faith.

What is in your hands to use for God? Maybe God wants to use you in one of these ways:

• Writing and speaking
• Teaching children
• An online business
• Painting/drawing/other creative work
• Nursing/paramedic/EMT
• Financial wisdom and skill to help others
• Website designing/graphics
• Networker – you help bring people together
• Coaching
• Wife/mom
• Ministering
• Teaching an exercise class

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God wants to use you wherever you're at for His glory. “A psalm of David. Praise the Lord, who is my rock. He trains my hands for war and gives my fingers skill for battle.”

You just have to have simple faith. ~ Former President Jimmy Carter

Have simple faith. Trust in God. Listen for His word. Obey. And He will use you mightily.

The prophecy to Deborah came true. The victory, the glory, the honor of the battle went to a woman, Jael. She seized the opportunity God had given her and she destroyed the enemy of the nation of Israel. She didn't hesitate, she didn't let fear or intimidation or low self-worth hold her back. She used the weapons God had put her in hands at that moment.

We may think God is a pacifist and doesn't like war. We may wonder how Jael could have done something so graphically violent and why that is in the Bible.

I'm sure war breaks God's heart with its death of the innocent and its destruction, but sometimes war is necessary to defeat evil – just as I truly believe that President Bush's “Shock and Awe” military operation was necessary in our nation's war with Iran.

Our God is the God of the Angel Armies. A God of War.

Whatever is in the Bible is penned from the thoughts and heart of God. God not only approved of what Jael did, but He authorized it. He had already spoken through Deborah what was going to happen.

It happened just as He said. God always gets the last word, even when the odds are against God's people and it looks impossible. In fact, God specializes in doing His greatest work in the impossible! Let God use you and whatever He's put in your hands today, right now. Women of God, you are God's battleax and sword in prayer.

You are my hammer and weapon of war: with you I break nations in pieces; with you I destroy kingdoms.

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6 Psalm 144:1, NLT.
7 "Shock and “Awe”, YouTube video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aEvzuA4f0c&feature=related
8 Jeremiah 51:20, ESV.

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