

STRONG WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

MIRIAM

PART 3

Miriam

READ

INTRODUCTION

In the story of Exodus we read the account of how God delivered the Israelites, who had been slaves in Egypt from Pharaoh. In this story we often remember Moses who God sent to talk on behalf of Himself to Pharaoh, Aaron who went with and helped Moses to speak, and of course the plagues that God delivered upon the Egyptians, but there is another instrumental character that God uses in His plan to free the Israelites that we sometimes forget... her name is Miriam.

Miriam is identified in scripture as both a leader and prophetess (Exodus 15:20-21), as well as the older sister to Moses. God used Miriam as a young girl to save her baby brother Moses, convincing the Pharaoh's daughter to allow Moses to stay with his mother before being raised in the Egyptian palace, this was during a time when Pharaoh had decreed all Hebrew babies to be killed (Exodus 2:1-8). Miriam was also chosen by God to lead the Israelites after their captivity alongside Moses and Aaron (Micah 6:4).

Despite being a leader to the nation of Israel, and having seen the way God had worked through Moses in freeing the Israelites from captivity, Miriam along with her brother Aaron began to complain and speak out against Moses' leadership because of his marriage to a Cushite woman (Numbers 12:1-2), and begin to question whether they should be in charge instead. God ultimately hears their complaining, and is angered as they are really questioning God's choice in Moses as their leader, and God addresses and disciplines Miriam with leprosy for 7 days before restoring her (Numbers 12:3-16). The story of Miriam reminds us to be faithful in the position that God has called us into, and to be cautious in our attitudes towards leaders that God has placed over us, even if we disagree with them initially. As we go through the discussion questions you'll see this pattern copied in the New Testament teachings as well.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. While it does appear that God gives men and women different roles throughout scripture, it also tells us that God used Miriam as both a leader and a prophet for the nation of Israel. Does this challenge your ideas about the types of roles God gives to women? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever had complaints about someone who was in leadership over you? How did you express your complaints? Looking back is there anything you would have done differently?
3. Read James 3:9-10, as we look back on the story of Miriam do you think that the way we talk about our Christian leaders or our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ has the potential to anger God? Why?
4. Read Matthew 18:15-20, how did this passage tell the early church to address issues against each other? Do you think this is still applicable for us today? What are some things that are difficult about handling issues this way?

WRAP UP

The story of Miriam encourages us to examine our motives when we criticize or confront others, it reminds us to honor our leaders and the role that God has placed each of us into. When there is a real issue we should of course bring it to attention, but always in a way that honors God and the individual.