

Raising Children in a Philistine World (Judges 13)

The main thought I would like to leave with you is, “How can we our raise children in a Philistine world?” When we think about the Philistine who brought a culture filled with immorality, it’s not much different than what we see today. What a challenge it is to shield our children from Atheism, materialism, skepticism, and all the other ism’s in the world. That was the challenge given to Sampson’s parents.

In High School I remember taking a survey asking, “Who is most likely to succeed?” If we were to conduct a survey based upon what we read in chapter 13, on who will likely succeed, we would all vote for Sampson. He will succeed but not in the way we would think. I’ve decided to break up these 3 chapters into 2 lessons.

The first lesson will be about Samson’s parents and the second lesson will be about Sampson’s failures.

Background Information:

13:1-2, “Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.”

We don’t know a whole lot about the Philistines, their origin is unknown. Five Israelite leaders have dealt with them, Shamgar, Sampson, Samuel, Saul and finally David.

We would expect the Israelites to do what they always do in these situations, which is crying out to God, but we don’t have that here. It’s safe to assume their sinful condition is worse than before.

Judges 2:19, “And it happened when the judge was dead, they returned and made themselves more rotten than their fathers in following other gods to serve them.”

Let’s look at Sampson’s parents and learn how can we raise children in a Philistine world.

I. Manoah and his wife shared their lives together:

In the beginning of verse 3, an Angel appeared to Mrs. Manoah who was never able to have children. The Angel informs her that she “will conceive and bear a child.” The Angel then proceeds to give her instructions about restrictions she must take, and the restrictions Sampson must take.

Sampson is going to be a lifelong Nazirite from birth. Numbers 6 tells us the requirements. No fruit of the vine, no haircuts and no contact with the dead.

As husband and wife, they were going to work together in obeying God's instructions (Vs 12-13). They showed hospitality together (vs 15). They talked about God together (vs 19-23).

Have you ever heard the saying, families that play together, stay together? Let's not forget about the value of family togetherness.

II. Manoah and his wife prayed together: Vs 8

"Manoah prayed to the LORD, and said, "O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born."

He says, "teach us." They were partners in prayer.

Jer 10:5, "Pour out Your fury on the nations who do not know You, and on the families who do not call on Your name."

One of the greatest activities a family can do together is prayer. Gather everyone together and make a list. Take some time to write down what we're thankful for as a family. God loves to hear us ask for help in raising our families.

III. They Raised Sampson in the Lord together:

Sometimes we might hear a parent say, "Do what I say and not what I do." I don't believe that works. God wants us to live what we teach.

We see that with Sampson's mother in verse 4, 14. Sampson's first lessons in following the Lord came from his mother's example. He would become what she became first in taking the Nazirite vow.

In verse 8, Manoah asked God to "teach us what to do with the boy." In verse 12 Manoah asked the Angel, "What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?"

The Manoah family greatly desired to know the Lord's instructions on how to raise Sampson.

IV. They shared Heartache Together: 14:1-3

Vs 3 says, "Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?"

Close: It is my hope today, that we can learn some ways to raise up children in a Philistine world.

If you are a parent who is struggling, don't lose hope. Even if they are not doing what is right, that does not mean they will not do what is right later, which we soon see.