

life groups

NorthStar Church

How to raise a warrior for God

Judges 13

April 9, 2017

Main Idea – NorthStar has a commitment to raising radical followers of Christ in the next 2 generations. It begins with families. It is a churchwide responsibility. This message shares a biblical model for making an impact in the next 2 generations for Christ.

Introduction -

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Who is your favorite TV dad and why? On the other hand, who is one of the worst dads you've seen portrayed on TV or in a movie? What do they teach you about how not to parent?

A roof is intended to protect us from the elements. What are some of the "elements" the world throws at our spouses and kids that we as spiritual leaders need to protect them from?

The world's message or the Bible's message—which would you rather your family base their lives on? Parents and those with influence must speak truth when teaching their children about the standards of holiness. With the bombardment of the world's message, we need an unchanging objective to focus on. We see this play out adversely in the story of Samson, one of Israel's judges. His story shows us the importance of spiritual leadership in the home and the reality of the struggles we face in our world.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE VOLUNTEERS READ JUDGES 13:1-23.

In Judges 13:1-23, the prelude to the story of Samson, including the announcement of his upcoming birth, we discover that Samson was born to pious Israelite parents. The wife of Samson's father, Manoah, had been barren. Then the Angel of the Lord appeared to her and announced that she would give birth to a son. The Lord would give her son a special calling and empowerment.

Scott's first key is: Dedicate this child to the Lord from the womb.

What opinions do you have about Manoah and his wife from this passage? How would you assess their spirituality? Who seems more devout? More level-headed? Explain.

Because they were devout, Manoah and his wife believed the promise given to them and sought for further information on how they should raise the boy (see Judg. 13:8). They made an offering of thanks (see 13:19), and they showed reverential fear and then wisdom when they saw that the Messenger who came to them was in fact the Angel of the Lord (see 13:20-23). But we also learn from Samson's birth story that his father lacked struggled to believe God in faith (v. 8,17), and feared what God was doing in his life (v. 22).
Scott's second key is: Seek God's direction for every day of their lives.

From what you know about those who are "set apart" from birth to serve the Lord, what are its benefits? Its potential drawback? How do you go about "separating yourself" to be with God but apart from the world (see John 17:13-19)?

Scott's third key is: Give them a name of blessing. Samson means "like the Son". He had a huge task to deliver Israel. He needed to know who he was and you can do that through a name.

Manoah may have struggled with the faith to trust God, but he knew to ask for wisdom in raising Samson (v. 8). How did your parents show wisdom in raising you to serve God? Is this something you do often enough in your parenting?

Have a volunteer read Judges 13:24-25.

Scott's fourth key is: position them to hear God's voice. We are to teach them about the Spirit of God as a child.

From birth, Samson was set apart for the Lord's service. Why is it important to keep that which is set apart for the Lord holy? What might honor for the sacred look like today?

Samson was bound by the Nazirite vow even before his birth. Furthermore, the Spirit of God gave Samson extraordinary strength (see 14:6). Although other judges won great victories, none had such physical prowess as Samson did. On top of everything else, God answered Samson's prayers (see 15:18-19). Whatever the eventual failings of the man, Samson was unique among the judges for the great gifts God had given him. The boy grew, and the Lord blessed him. The blessing of God implies that Samson did well in life. He was healthy, in good circumstances, and under God's favor. Yet the divine blessing also implies that Samson was marked for a special purpose. God didn't bless Samson just because He wanted the boy to be happy and to live an easy life. God wanted Samson to be ready and able to fulfill a calling.

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Scott explained that the result of these four keys is supernatural strength: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

Read Hebrews 3:12-13. Without the positive influence of others, what do we miss out on?

How can spiritual leadership and influence protect our hearts and point us toward God's best? How might spiritual leadership have shaped Samson's life?

Read 1 Peter 1:13-16. How do we act as a roof for homes, protecting our families from the world's elements? What role does God's Word have in helping us instruct, model, protect, and equip them?

Pray

Consider dividing up into small groups of men and women for this closing prayer time. Encourage group members to share some of the hurdles they are facing in living holy lives and being spiritual leaders in their households. Have them pray for these specific concerns in their small groups. Pray for the wisdom and strength to do whatever it takes to instill the truth of God's Word in our homes.

Commentary

Judges 13

Judges 13. The opening of Samson's story, "There was a certain man," exactly matches that of Samuel, inviting comparison of these two sons born to formerly barren women. The description of Manoah's wife as unable to conceive and having no children echoes the description of Sarah in Gen. 11:30, raising expectations of a child who would be of great significance for God's plans. Their personal tragedy mirrored the pitiable state of the nation as a whole.

As in many other accounts in the book, this story is dominated by dialogue. The series of speeches is initiated by the messenger of the Lord who addresses Manoah's wife with a long speech announcing her imminent conception and the special role her son will play. While the contacts between the messenger and the woman are crucial to the story, significantly she never addresses the messenger. Instead she rushes home and reports to her husband what she has heard. Verses 8-18 are dominated by an almost comical series of interchanges between Manoah and the phantom (in his mind), as the former seeks to learn and thereby gain mastery over the situation and the latter displays reluctance to share any new information with Manoah. Although Manoah tries to control the dialogue, between him and his wife the latter has both the first and last word.

Indeed, as several have observed, while the namelessness of Manoah's wife might suggest a marginalized character, Manoah is the one the narrator deliberately minimizes by (1) introducing him with the seemingly superfluous expression, "a certain man" (13:2); (2) referring to his tribe, Dan, as a "clan" rather than a "tribe"; (3) leaving his identification by name to the end of the note in 13:2; (4) noting that the divine messenger appears not once but twice to his wife, even after Manoah had summoned him; (5) characterizing Manoah as a skeptical person throughout, unlike his wife, who takes matters at face value; (6) keeping the focus on Manoah's wife and emphasizing particularly how she, the woman, is to act, even though Manoah seeks to control the actions and the conversations; (7) describing how, in the end, Manoah's reaction to the visitation is fear of death, while his wife reassures him with a reasoned explanation of what has transpired (v. 22); (8) noting that Manoah's wife, not Manoah, names Samson (v. 24). Meanwhile, as Manoah is being marginalized, the narrator skillfully enhances the image and importance of his wife.

The first phase of the Samson cycle is brought to a fitting conclusion with a birth announcement. Verse 24 consists of four simple statements: (1) The woman gave birth to a son. (2) The woman named her son Samson. (3) The boy grew. (4) Yahweh blessed him. The Lord's design for Samson paralleled His design for Israel. Israel was intended to be a holy people, because their Lord was holy (Lv 11:45). Their subsequent history and lack of faithfulness to their calling was matched by Samson's career as he disobeyed every single one of the vows

made on his behalf. From the womb on, Samson is a picture of Israel—chosen for holiness, but defiled by sinful actions.