

...Samson? (Well, really his faithful mother and faithless 2nd wife!)

"(His parents did not know that this was from the Lord, who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines...)" Judges 14:4a

NUGGET – Today we're looking at ...Samson? Yes, I know we're studying Old Testament women, but Samson is the bridge between two women in the book of Judges that we will benefit from observing. When we get into the **GOING DEEPER** section we'll look at some specifics of what God, through these women, can teach us.

But for now I'd like to draw our attention, through our **NUGGET** verse, to the fact that God's plans are His alone and that we are called to be faithful in our obedience and not quick to judge (no pun intended!) others. Read through [Judges 13](#) to see how the birth of Samson came about. We see there that Manoah and his wife were faithful in following the directions of the angel of God and all that God commanded them to do for Samson to be born. The details of what they had to do, especially Manoah's wife, were very specific:

- no wine or fermented drink
- and eat nothing unclean

And after he was born, there was to be no razor applied to his head, as he was to live his whole life under a Nazirite vow. (That comes from the Hebrew word for 'set apart' or 'dedicated'.)

Now read [Judges 14](#), focusing especially on verses 1-4. (If you'll read the whole thing you'll see how today's **NUGGET** verse was fulfilled) In our nugget verse we hear that the Lord was seeking a confrontation for Samson with the Philistines. So the question may be asked, 'Why did the angel of the Lord not tell this to Samson's mother and father?' After all the Lord had made clear what was to happen regarding Samson's birth, why not also reveal what was to happen with this first wife of Samson's as well?

We may also ask, did the Lord reveal this to Samson or was this known only later? While we are not given the answers to these questions in scripture, what we are given is confusion on the part of Samson's parents. Perhaps these were questions they themselves asked at some point.

But, to our point today. His parents judged that Samson was making a mistake by wishing to marry from among 'the uncircumcised.' And they were right, as far as the world and their traditions are concerned. And according to what the initial outcome was as well. They were faithful followers of Yahweh however; they were not privy to all of Yahweh's plans for them *or* their son. And His plan had a very different outcome.

Likewise in our lives, we don't always, or hardly ever, get to see all of what God has planned for us. What we are called to see is that we are to be faithful followers of God as Samson's mother was faithful. Let us listen to what God *has* revealed to us in His law and gospel and do our best to remain faithful there. What God does and what His plans are with others is not for us to judge but to encourage them to faithful in.

APPLICATION –

1. Rather than judge what a fellow Christian is doing that you don't understand, how can you still be supportive of them in ways they can see and appreciate?
2. When you become aware that God's hand may be moving you in a certain way, what can you do to confirm that awareness?

PRAY – Seek God for a heart of understanding and good counsel for friends and family in their walk with the Lord.

GOING DEEPER

Looking at the whole of Samson's life - another thing that Mrs. Manoah teaches us is that no matter how faithful you may be – your children's faith and the choices they make are theirs. No one can have faith for someone else. Looking at her faithfulness again in chapter 13 – what did she do to earn the Lord's favor and send the angel of the Lord to her? And what does that teach us about God?

Compare verses 3-5 with verses 6-7 – what variations do you see there between what the angel said and what the Mrs. told her husband?

It's nice to see in the prayer in verse 8 that Manoah believed his wife – how do we know this?

In verses 15-24 the actions of the Angel of the Lord and Mr. & Mrs. Manoah are rather startling to say the least. Yet in the words of the Mrs. to her husband we hear grace and trust in the Lord being expressed. When we face 'deathly' circumstances we too can express hope in the mercy of God. What led Manoah to fear death?

In [chapters 14-15](#) we see how God was with Samson and how God used Samson to lead His people out from under the oppression of the Philistines and to be their judge for 20 years. And again there is a woman involved in this – the first Mrs. Samson. However this woman hounded him from day one of their marriage regarding the riddle he posed. After all that happens following that, the plan of God that Mrs. Manoah ([13:5](#)) was told by the angel of God comes to pass in that Samson is given the strength and guidance to defeat the Philistines. So God used this first wife of Samson, from among the 'uncircumcised', to accomplish His goal. How can seeing this affect the faithful when confronted with opposition to what we understand to be God's plan? Where else in scripture can we see or hear similar advice?

Read [chapter 16](#) and we hear the well-known story of Samson and Delilah. Take note that all this happens after 20 years of being a judge. Samson has seen much. But we're told that he falls in love with Delilah. And while we're not told that he married her, he certainly lived with her according to verse 16 and it would seem that Samson again, makes a poor choice in a woman. In this story we see him repeatedly lie to his 'love'. And we see her repeatedly try to get him captured and earn her reward – not unlike Judas did with Jesus! Eventually he tells her the truth to his own undoing. What can we learn from all this lying, deception and wearing-down by nagging?

It seems that only Delilah knew the secret to subduing Samson, as the Philistines did not keep his head shaved after they captured him. So either she failed to tell them out of some sort of allegiance to Samson or it just never occurred to her to say or them to ask. The upshot is that Delilah was not a faithful woman like Samson's mother. So this woman helps us to understand, perhaps, what St. Paul teaches us in [2 Corinthians 6:14](#) about the perils of being unequally yoked with an unbelieving spouse.

Delilah seems to undo all the work of the Lord in subduing the Philistines by the hand of Samson. But when you read to the end of the chapter we learn that, again as promised to his mother, Samson defeats again the Philistines. In fact it says in his death he defeated more than what he did in his life.

So also with Christ. By His death he defeats all the powers that stood against Him. He too 'brings down the house' and, unlike Samson, Jesus rises triumphant over death and the grave. It seems that perhaps, Samson's mother did not live to see this ultimate victory of Samson, given what we read in verse 31. But nonetheless, God kept His word to her, just as He keeps His word to us to deliver us from our oppressor, and grant us the victory of life eternal with Him. Peace, Pastor Rhodes