

# GOD PORTRAYS MORE WOMEN

by

Grace E. Mc Allister

Copyright © 1956

## CHAPTER NINE

### SAMSON'S MOTHER AND HIS LOVE AFFAIRS

(Judges 13-16)

THE FOLLOWING WORDS occur very frequently in the Old Testament, “**And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord.**” After them we read, “**But there was a certain man,**” or “**the Lord raised up a prophet.**” Whenever a time of great stress or difficulty arrived, God had the right man ready. The Lord began the preparation of Samson by training his mother before he was born. Every child has his own mother, for no child ever came into this world without a mother.

We know that godliness does not run in the blood, but the disposition of a parent is an ingredient in the moral make-up of the child. The parent's physical and moral weaknesses and deformities are liable to reappear in the son or daughter. It is humbling to see one's own defects and faults reproduced in his child day by day.

I believe the story of Samson's mother is a most striking example of the importance of prenatal influence. “**And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not; but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. Now therefore, beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing**” (13:3, 4).

It is a common notion that expectant mothers should satisfy their cravings. But the angel's instruction to this mother discouraged self-indulgence, and instead emphasized the importance of self-discipline and abstinence. God did not wait until Samson was full grown and “was called” to his work to prepare him for his ministry.

God says to His servants, “**Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.**” Job asks, “**Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.**” Children of dissolute parents are under serious handicaps, having a natural bias toward that which marred the lives of the parents.

The angel continued: “**No razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines**” (13:5). Strong drink was denied the priests and their sons that they might “**put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean**” (Leviticus 10:10).

**“It is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted”** (Proverbs 31:4, 5).

Daniel and his companions curbed their appetites and were rewarded by clear thinking and spiritual discernment.

The long hair indicated that the Nazarite was devoted to God, even as a wife should be to her husband. He was a marked man. The child was not given to Mr. and Mrs. Manoah for their personal comfort, but for them to train for God. He was to live to God. Many parents who expect great comfort from their children are startlingly disappointed by the indifference, selfishness, and neglect of their young folk. On the other hand, there are parents who refuse to recognize that God has first claim to their children. Two missionaries were embarking for China, and their mothers were on the dock. One mother wept disconsolately, the other was radiantly happy. She was the mother of four children. She said to the sorrowing one, “I cannot understand your tears. I am so happy my child wants to serve the Lord, and if God leads the others to the foreign field, my cup shall be filled with joy.”

Manoah’s wife hastened to tell her husband of the angel’s visit, describing him as a man of God, whose countenance was as an angel of God, very terrible. She did not forget one word of his instructions. Manoah wanted confirmation of the message to his wife, and he entreated the Lord to let the man of God come again to them. The angel did come again, not to Manoah but to his wife, and she hastened to bring her husband. On the way Manoah decided he would find out more about the messenger of God and prepared his questions. He was not going to be as credulous as his wife. He asked: “Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? What shall be the manner of the child? What shall be his work? What shall he do? What is thy name?” The angel of God did not satisfy Manoah’s curiosity. He told him nothing new. He simply repeated the instruction previously given to the wife.

**“And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee. And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; if thou wilt offer burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord”** (13:15, 16).

What a lesson to us not to give even the highest and greatest of the Lord’s servants the place or worship that should be God’s! It is easy to be occupied with the messenger instead of the message or Him who sent the message.

Manoah offered a kid with a meat offering, upon a rock before the Lord. The rock in the field became **“the holy place”** of acceptable worship, for their offering was accepted, and the angel ascended in the flame of the altar, **“And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground”** (13:20).

Taylor Smith used to say, “My bedside was my altar of surrender and devotion to God each morning.” One who knew him, when he heard that, remarked, “No wonder he remained so fresh, so sweet, so fruitful. God has his whole life.”

What is your altar? God's presence is not confined to a building. Have you ever fallen on your face before the Lord? Are you comfortable in His presence, or do you say like Jacob who had a bad conscience, "**How dreadful is this place.**" "**This is too holy for me.**" Manoah said to his wife, "**We shall surely die, because we have seen God.**"

Manoah's wife was a helpmeet for him! She did not belittle him for his lack of faith and confidence in God, nor did she assume a spiritual superiority over him. She reasoned sensibly, and by it dispelled his pessimism. You can picture her bringing cheer wherever she went. No wonder she called her son Samson, meaning *sunny*. She said: "**If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have showed us all these things**" (13:23).

If God intended her to have a son and to train him for His service, He certainly was not going to kill them. And she believed God. We are always blessed in believing Him. We have need of more folk to whom God can say, "**Great is thy faith, go in peace.**" Those who have little faith have weak knees and hanging hands and not much peace of heart. It is well when a wife can bring her husband out of the depths of gloom and apprehension by a word fitly spoken. Thank God for the encounters of faith that we meet. The Lord multiply "**the sons and daughters of consolation.**"

When Samson was grown to manhood, he went down to Timnath and saw a woman of the daughters of the Philistines. He came to his father and mother and said: "**I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore get her for me to wife. Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?**" (14:2, 3).

We can surely understand their distress to hear such a suggestion from Samson. What communion could he have with an infidel? You can almost feel the tenseness as the subject was discussed and Scriptures were produced to dissuade him from so rash a course. He seemed stubborn in his intent and would not give his parents a satisfactory explanation for his determination. All he would say was, "**Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well**" (14:3).

They would argue that a Nazarite was one who did not please himself but ought always to please God. He should have for his motto, "**Not my will, but thine, be done.**" Samson was adamant. "**But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines, for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel**" (14:4).

Following questionable methods may bring us special consequences. "The end justifies the means," is not true. We have an example of seeking to do the right things in the wrong way when Moses, in anger against his injustice, killed one of the Egyptians. Consequently he was disqualified for forty years because of his impulsiveness. His method was wrong.

Samson said, "**She pleases me well.**" He did not ask, "How does she please the Lord?" He went down accompanied by his father and mother to Timnath. Though they objected, they grudgingly yielded to his persuasions.

As they went on their way did the Lord seek to warn Samson by the roaring of the young lion against him? Samson had no weapon in his hand. No doubt he sent up a swift plea to God for strength to meet his foe, and we are told: **“And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him, as he would have rent a kid . . . but he told not his father or his mother what he had done”** (14:6). Here Samson showed his natural modesty.

When we are about to enter an enemy territory, we need not be surprised if we meet a lion in the way that roars against us. When the Lord began His public ministry, He was tempted of the Devil, but overcame him by the Word of God and demanded his departure. One does indeed need the Spirit of God to meet the Devil’s opposition. But in spite of the warning, Samson continued on his way and visited with the woman. If Satan cannot trip us with his roars, he will try his wiles, even using the attractiveness and arts of a designing woman.

After a time he came again to Timnath for the marriage. When he passed by the place where he had killed the lion, he turned aside to see what had become of it. Behold there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass. And he took the honey in his hands and came back eating it and shared it with his father and mother. Can you see his eyes twinkling as he thought about the riddle he would state at the wedding feast: **“Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness”** (14:14)?

Samson had intended only to have one Philistine for a companion, but there were thirty young men invited to meet him. One worldly connection involves many others we do not anticipate. As the custom was, he made a feast for the young men. He proposed his riddle for their entertainment and offered a prize of thirty sheets and thirty changes of raiment if they should find the answer within seven days. If they could not solve the riddle, they were to give him the same reward.

Three days went by yet no one had the correct explanation. The Philistines had no desire to pay Samson the forfeit of thirty linen wraps and thirty changes of raiment. Therefore, they intimidated the wife by threatening to burn her and her father if she did not tell them the secret, and demanded that she entice Samson to tell her the answer to the riddle. **“Have ye called us to take what we have?”** they indignantly asked her. Their threats were not mere words, for they carried out their intention.

The bride was petrified with fear of their vengeance. She used all her feminine wiles to extract the secret from Samson. The last four days of the feast were anything but merry. The bride was constantly in tears. She told her husband he did not love her. When he finally yielded to her urgings, she hastened to her false friends to disclose the meaning of the riddle. At the eleventh hour the young Philistines said to Samson: **“What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?”**

Then he knew his wife had told them, and he replied in these scathing words: **“If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle”** (14:18). The Spirit of the Lord came suddenly on him, and he went down to Ashkelon and slew thirty of them, and took the spoil and paid his debt.

Injustice to even an erring servant of the Lord is a deep concern to God himself. Then Samson went home full of indignation. We need to get away from scenes of conflict to think things through.

Samson returned at wheat harvest with a present for his wife and found that she had married the best man at his wedding. The father admitted he had given her to another and brazenly thought he could mollify the insult by offering Samson his prettier, younger daughter. But this only added insult to injury. Besides, the law forbade a man marrying his wife's sister as long as his wife was living (Leviticus 18:18).

Samson now had sufficient cause for his enmity against the Philistines. Giving place to anger certainly makes room for the Devil to work. The flesh inflamed by resentment is inventive of cruel vindictiveness. Had Samson compared the Philistines to the tricky fox? He determined to use the fox to teach them a lesson. He went and caught three hundred foxes and tied their tails together with firebrands in the midst and set the brands on fire. He let them go into the ripe, dry standing corn. At once the whole countryside was in flames.

Do we ever set loose a torch that will stir up resentment and lay waste that which might have been nourishing and helpful? Such devastation made the Philistines cry out, "**Who hath done this?**" The answer was: "**Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up and burnt her and her father with fire.**"

Samson did not punish his wife and her father for their treachery to him. The Philistines to whom she had betrayed him put them to death. But Samson then turned on the Philistines for their cruelty and killed them with a great slaughter. Then he went and dwelt in the top of the Rock Etam.

He was glad to get away from the Philistines, and expected to find fellowship with his brethren. But he had a sorer lesson to learn. He was betrayed by his brethren who were angry with Samson because he had stirred up the Philistines against them. They bound him and turned him over to his enemies. But the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him. He broke his bonds and slew one thousand of the Philistines with a jaw bone. Then we are glad to note the words, "**He judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.**"

Samson's morning of life was like his name, "Sunny," but we could almost wish his history ended here, and that we did not have to record the beclouded evening. He did not finish his course with joy. Samson's weakness was his inordinate love for women. Because one has been used of God does not make him proof against the temptations of the flesh. The flesh is unchanged, not to be depended on, even after years of a devoted life to God. We cannot trust it, we must not indulge it. We read, "**Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof**" (Romans 13:14).

"**Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her**" (16:1).

Of course he thought no one would see him, no one would know about it. He paid the hire, but it cost him more than money. He had a bad conscience, he was embarrassed before his enemies. If we tamper with sin, we pay the price the rest of our lives. “Keep us, Lord, oh, keep us cleaving to Thyself,” we should cry lest we too depart and make shipwreck of our testimony at the close of our life.

**“Be sure your sin will find you out”** was true in Samson’s case. The authorities heard that Samson was in the city and lay in wait for him all the night in the gate of the city, but kept quiet all night saying, **“When it is day, we shall kill him.”** And Samson arose at midnight. Was he roused by the smittings of conscience? Was this the place for a man of God to be found? We hope he abhorred himself. When he came to escape, he found himself imprisoned in the city. Strength was given to seize the doors of the gate and the two posts, bar and all; he put them on his shoulders and carried them up the hill that is before Hebron.

Samson was imprisoned for his own sins, but in contrast the Lord Jesus became a willing victim for our sins and was imprisoned in the dust of death, but in His own strength carried off the gate and bars of the grave, and the keys of death hang on His girdle.

A child once burned dreads a contact with fire, but Samson did not use the wisdom of a child but, like a singed moth, flitted back into the flame. **“And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman . . . named Delilah.”**

The lords of the Philistines knew it was no use to send soldiers to take Samson, he would soon put their men to flight or flay them. But they rejoiced when they saw him associating with a Philistine woman. They knew his weaknesses just as the world finds the hole in the Christian’s armor. They remembered that a woman tricked him before; and after a conference they came to Delilah, and each man offered her eleven hundred pieces of silver if she would entice Samson to betray the secret of his strength that they might afflict him.

Samson was no unsophisticated youth, but a judge in Israel in his mature years who had suffered bitter experiences. This makes his story much sadder. Delilah said to Samson: **“Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee”** (16:6).

So much is made today of athletic champions. But the strongest man is weaker than a lion or tiger, a fish swims better than the fastest swimmer, a mountain goat looks down at the greatest mountain climber. **“He [the Lord] delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy”** (Psalm 147:10, 11).

Moral and spiritual greatness is what the Lord appreciates. Many a physical giant is a moral pigmy. Samson should have been warned by Delilah’s question that the purpose of the Philistines was to afflict him. But under her fascinations he seemed to lose his reasoning powers and began to “show off” his physical strength like a teen-age boy, making merriment for her approval. **“Bind me with seven greens withs . . . then shall I be weak, and be as another man.”**

The lords of the Philistines were at her beck and call and soon brought her the best green withs they could find! She had men hiding in her home who were more than ready to afflict him when bound. She gave the signal, **“The Philistines be upon, thee, Samson”** (16:9). But he brake the bonds as if they had been a burned thread. Why didn’t he leave such a den of enemies? He surely saw the net spread to catch his feet. In Proverbs 1:17 we read, **“Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.”** But Samson hadn’t the sense off a bird.

**“And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes . . . then shall I be weak, and be as another man”** (16:10, 11).

How could he be so blind as to continue to be intimate with one who sought his confidence in order to accomplish his ruin? God did not mean him to be as other men. He meant him to be **“devoted to himself.”** Samson allowed Delilah to bind him again; the result was the same. She accused him of mocking her, and feigned injured innocence. When she begged him the third time to tell her the secret of his strength, he almost revealed it by telling her to weave the seven locks of his head with the web. While she did so, he fell asleep. When he was roused from his sleep, he went away with the pin of the beam and with the web.

When we trifle with the world, our sensibilities become dulled. For days she whined of unrequited love, injustice, and embarrassment. She was as persistent as a child. **“She pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death; that he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother’s womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man”** (16:16, 17).

The very mention of the Lord’s first claim on him and of his mother’s instructions should normally have brought him to his senses. Truly when a Christian’s relationship with God is broken, he becomes like other men. He is robbed of the secret of his strength.

The lords of the Philistines had despaired of her success, but she pleaded with them for another chance. She wanted their money—not Samson. She caressed him and stroked his locks till he fell asleep. She called in a man who cut off his hair. Thus the lifelong symbol of his consecration to God fell to the ground. Note the words, **“And she began to afflict him and his strength went from him.”**

The world afflicts the Christian who is not true to his Christianity. He awoke out of his sleep and said: **“I will go out as at other times and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord had departed from him”** (16:20).

Without the Lord we are as weak as water. The joy of the Lord is our strength. If we are not happy in the Lord, we are utterly inadequate to meet the temptations of the day. If the Christian puts his head in the world’s lap, they will soon shear him of his locks of godliness, self-control, and virtue, leaving him barren and unfruitful for God, blind and bound by sins of his own choosing. Our Lord was betrayed for filthy lucre by one who called Him Friend.

**“But the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and I brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass and he did grind in the prison house” (16:21).**

He found it **“an evil thing and bitter to forsake the Lord his God.”** His physical eyes were blinded but, as his outward man perished, we believe his inward man was renewed day by day. God has mentioned him in the eleventh of Hebrews among the men of faith.

**“Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again” (16: 22).** The Philistines made merry over his captivity and gathered to celebrate with a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god saying, **“Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand” (16:23),** yet they paid Delilah well for delivering him into their hand. Whenever they saw poor, blinded, grinding, humiliated Samson, they persecuted him and praised their god to insult him.

When they wanted some special entertainment at their parties, they called for Samson to make sport for them. As they saw him stumbling and blundering, they laughed uproariously. Perhaps they put stumbling blocks in his way. They placed him in a conspicuous place. But amid their burst of laughter he lifted his heart to God—and is this his only recorded prayer?

**“And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood . . . And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines” (16:28-30).**

Poor, blind man, grinding in the prison for his enemies, found that his life was not worth living. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords that had parted with their money for his capture, and upon all the people. He slew far more in his death than he did in his life. I wonder if Delilah was in a box seat in all her finery. What an ignominious death!

**“Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him in the burying place of Manoah his father” (16:31).**

I am glad his father was dead and was spared the humiliation of his son’s latter end. Can you see the sorrowful indignant relatives scrabbling among the rubble to recover their dishonored brother and judge? The time spent among the Philistines was lost time, for again it is recorded, **“And he judged Israel twenty years.”**

Let us not dally with the allurements of the world and lose precious days with nothing in them for God.

**~ end of chapter 9 ~**

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

\*\*\*