

## When a Youngster Loses It . . .

The saying goes, “Small children step on your lap, but bigger children step on your heart.” Samson’s parents, like many other parents, experienced the pain of a child who lost the way.

### Judges 14 (story)

*Tension: Samson is surprised by a lion*

<sup>5</sup>. . . As they approached the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion came roaring toward him.

*Relief of tension: The Spirit makes him strong*

<sup>6</sup>The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat.

*Result: Samson is silent about his deeds*

But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done. <sup>7</sup> Then he went down and talked with the woman, and he liked her.

<sup>8</sup>Some time later, when he went back to marry her, he turned aside to look at the lion’s carcass. In it was a swarm of bees and some honey, <sup>9</sup>which he scooped out with his hands and ate as he went along. When he rejoined his parents, he gave them some, and they too ate it. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey from the lion’s carcass. (NIV)

On his way to his wedding feast, Samson attacked a lion with his bare hands. He did this with great ease, as if it were a young goat. Now, we would think that someone who had just killed a lion with his bare hands would be proud of his achievement and boast about it. Samson, however, did not say a word about it to his parents, for if he had, they would have known that he (as Nazirite) was unclean because he had touched a dead animal.

This episode with the lion has a sequel. Samson later returns to the carcass and discovers honey in it. He gives his parents some of the honey to eat, but still does not tell them about the dead lion. It is sad to think that Samson kept on deceiving his parents. As a Nazirite, Samson knew exactly what was expected of him. He had to abstain from drinking hard liquor, was not allowed to shave or cut his hair, and was not allowed to touch the dead.

Samson gradually turned his back on being a Nazirite. His parents watched helplessly while their only son went completely off the rails. I once asked a friend of mine what he thought parents should do if this happened to their children. His answer was, “Weather the storm with them. If you choose differently, you take the risk of losing them along the way.” Fortunately, Samson’s parents did not leave him but weathered the storm with him.



Lord, I pray that You will give me the strength and forbearance to weather the storms of life.

*Children need your presence more than your presents.*

—Jesse Jackson (b. 1941), American politician, civil rights activist and Baptist minister