Am I ready?

We ask ourselves that all the time. We must decide if we are ready to commit to something, can we afford it, whether the timing is right, etc.

There are just some things that we cannot know if we are ready for it or not. We just should know that we are here because maybe we are the right person for that moment.

Think about all the mothers in the Bible who spent years waiting to have children, yet with no success. Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, Elizabeth. And then, when they least expect it, they get what they’ve waited for all those years. Were they ready then? I would imagine Rachel and Hannah were more prepared for children than Sarah and Elizabeth were, because they were still in that season of life and the older women were not.

What about being ready for a baby, getting one, but then having an entire lifestyle thrust upon you to maintain until that child’s adulthood?

That’s what happened to Samson’s mother.

Israel was at it again. After over 30 years of being protected by judges, they did evil in the sight of the Lord and God gave them over to the Philistines for 40 years.

We are told in Judges 13 the lengths God went through to bring up another judge to deliver the people from the Philistines.
Manoah is of the tribe of Dan and he is married to a woman, but she has not borne him any children.

One day an angel of the Lord appears to her and tells her she is going to have a son. Not only is she going to have a son, she has some strict rules she needs to follow regarding her pregnancy and his upbringing.

- She needs to avoid wine and strong drink
- She needs to not eat any unclean meat
- The child’s hair is to never be cut
- The child would also need to avoid wine, strong drink, and unclean meats.

Numbers 6 goes into greater detail about the Nazirite vow. This was something that any man or woman could do if they wanted to dedicate themselves to God for a period of time. In Samson’s case, God was dedicating him from birth and for life (Judg. 13:5).

There are some elements of this that may have been easy. If Manoah and his wife were at all obedient, they were likely avoiding unclean meat already (Lev. 11). But avoiding the grape all together, when this was a primary source of refreshment, may have been harder.

Regardless – it wasn’t something they were prepared for when they considered having a family. When she tells Manoah about the visit from the angel, Manoah’s immediate response is to pray for God to send the angel AGAIN so that he might teach them “what to do for the boy” (Judg. 13:8).

God sends the angel again. Manoah inquires as to what this boy’s life is going to be like (Judg. 13:12). The angel tells Manoah that the information he gave to Manoah’s wife is sufficient.

The angel leaves them via the flame from the altar – making Manoah realize that this was an angel of the Lord. Manoah is afraid they are going to die because they have seen God and he gets a little emotional.

I love this part – his practical wife replies that if God had wanted to kill them He would not have accepted their offerings and he would not have told them they have this son to raise in this way (Judg. 13:23).

“Then the woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson; and the child grew up and the Lord blessed him” (Judg. 13:24).
This woman shows a great deal of faith. When the angel first arrived, she didn’t feel compelled to ask who he was or where he came from. She just took the information, processed it, and told Manoah about it.

With all of these happenings, this woman still didn’t know all that Samson was born to do. When he made the choice for a wife from among the daughters of the Philistines, she and Manoah were rightly concerned. God had told Israel repeatedly not to marry among the nations around them.

She didn’t know that God was using Samson’s life in this way to destroy the Philistines (Judg. 14:4). But we know from Judges 16:17 that Samson’s mother had been faithful to all the angel had told her to do. She had never cut Samson’s hair. The fact that Samson had not cut it once he was of age indicates that she had also taught him why he wasn’t to cut it.

She would not have had this conversation with him once. This would have been a diligent effort on her part. After all, keeping his hair long was unnatural (1 Cor. 11:14). Keeping the vow for a child was unusual. As Numbers 6 shows, this was something an adult man or woman would have chosen to do on their own. Keeping the vow for all his life was unusual as well. We are told of no one else who kept this vow in this way.

How well do you with keeping yourself or children attached to certain habits for long periods of time? Teaching them to brush their teeth – what a nightmare that can be! Eating a certain diet, that may be easier if that’s all they have ever known. Manoah and his wife were not under any obligation to maintain the same diet as Samson once he was born. They were not Nazirites for life. So, they didn’t need to eat this diet, yet they trained Samson so that he could tell Delilah that he was a Nazirite “from the womb”. That’s a pretty impressive influence that his parents had on him.

So, what about us?

God doesn’t ask us to take a Nazirite vow for ourselves or for our children.

He has, however, given us a path to follow if we are His children. He has also given parents the responsibility of training their children in those ways (Eph.6:1-4).

Samson’s mother shows us how a faithful wife and mother can influence her family (1 Pet. 3:1-6). She shows us how obedience trained.

Samson’s mother was given an unusual situation and an unusual child. She didn’t hesitate.
She didn’t look at God’s demands and ask why she had to – she just agreed to do it.

Our own personal lives – whether single or married, with children or without – are going to be filled with circumstances that are unlike those of anyone else.

We are each called to do what we can within the circumstances in which we are placed.

Choices must be made. Is this situation sinful? If yes, then get away from it (2 Cor. 6:14-18; 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Cor. 10:14).

Is new circumstance going to be hard? Often, yes. But HARD doesn’t mean impossible, if you have faith (Heb. 11:6).

Where are you going to put your faith? In your own abilities or in the One who is able to do “far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20)?

Samson’s mother met this challenge head on.

No, she said, “If the Lord had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these things, nor would He have let us hear things like this at this time.”

Like Mordecai told Esther – maybe Samson’s mother was right where she needed to be “for such a time as this” (Esther 4:14).

Maybe YOU are right where you need to be. What will you do about it? Are you ready for anything?

Enjoy!