

TOPIC: SHORN, SHAMED, SHACKLED, SHAKING

When we pray, though shorn, shamed and shackled, we can still shake things.

KEY POINTS

- ▶ Our Father is the God of all mercy and all power, who will show His strength on earth through His children,
- ▶ A study of the story of Samson will show us that when we pray, shorn, shamed and shackled, we can still shake things.
- ▶ Samson was born based on a promise from God to a barren woman. He was blessed from birth and set apart to do God’s work on earth, to be an example and a champion of God’s people. God took special note of every incident of his life and was present in a powerful way, anytime this man needed help. And he needed help a lot. (Read his story in Judges 13-16.)
- ▶ What have been your experiences in life? What has been your relationship with God? Where are you now? Maybe there was a time that you knew you were special. Maybe that feels like a very long time ago. Maybe today you feel like that strength is gone, that special status is over.
- ▶ Maybe, like Samson, the power of God working in your life is a distant memory, if in fact it was ever real. (Yet you know it was.) But today you feel like that relationship is over with. You’ve broken the covenant. There’s nothing left but the daily grind. You’re blindly pushing that millstone around and around (cf. Judges 16:21).
- ▶ We can feel downright depressed sometimes. If you feel that way you’re not alone. You have company in the Bible.
- ▶ James 5:17:
 - Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. (KJV)
 - Elijah was a man with a nature like ours [with the same physical, mental, and spiritual limitations and shortcomings], and he prayed intensely for it not to rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and the sky gave rain and the land produced its crops [as usual]. (Amplified)
- ▶ It’s not over. You are in the presence of God. Something has been happening. Something has been growing, Samson. It’s not just hair. Its something called hope.
- ▶ You might have been shorn. You might have been shamed. You might have been shackled. But you can still shake things.
- ▶ It’s time to start pushing on some pillars in your life, some things that have imprisoned you. It’s time to feel strength again. It’s time to call on God again. You’re not so shorn any more. You’re beyond being ashamed. You’re not so shackled that you can’t do some pushing. Pray. Something will move. Something will shake. Feel unworthy? That’s all of us. We may be shorn, shamed, and shackled. But we can still do some shaking.
- ▶ Let’s start to pray. Let’s shake something.

**Key Scriptures:
Judges 13-16; James 5:17**

Discussion Tools

1. How do you refresh your relationship with God at times when you feel far from him?
2. How do you gain the strength to pray until change happens, when you feel shorn, shamed, and shackled?
3. What scriptures do you use for encouragement?
4. Share some struggles you’re experiencing and take some time to pray and shake things.

Discipleship Project Family Connection

During a family devotion this week, discuss:

- What does it mean that God is “in the details” of our lives?
- Share examples of when, as a family or as individuals, you have seen God work on your behalf.
- How do/should we respond once we understand that the all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere-present God cares about each of us individually, and sees the details of our lives?

Notes

Prayer Time

Lord, I thank You for showing Your strength on earth through Your children, and giving power to my prayer.

**WEEK OF SUNDAY, MAY 22, 2016
PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS/COMMENTS:**

Life Group icebreaker: Is there a time when you felt helpless? Was it a serious or a comical event? Share with the group.

