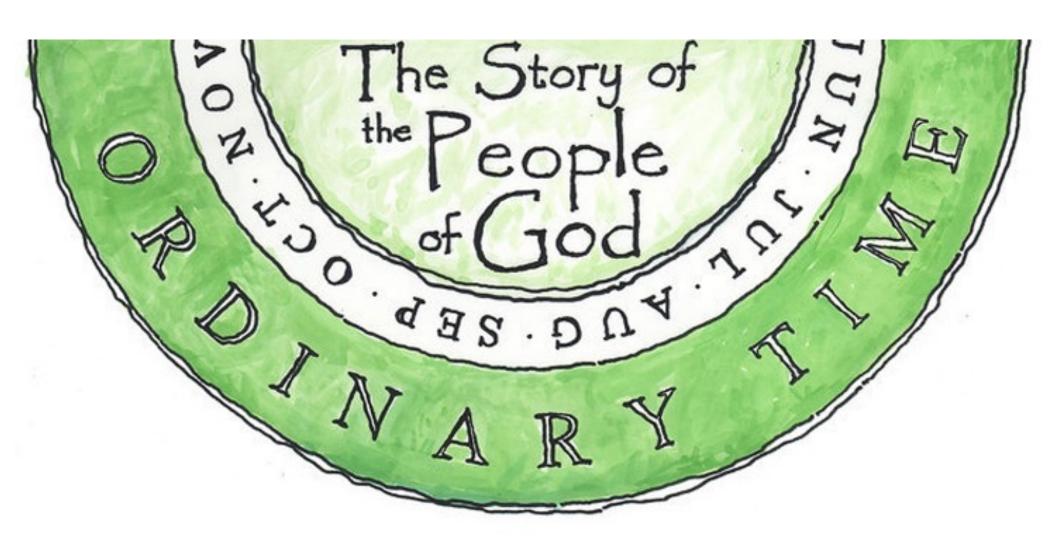
Faithful God, throughout the ages you have made known your love and power in unexpected ways and places. Help us to daily perceive the joy and wonder of your abiding presence, and give us grace to offer our lives in gratitude for for your love. Amen.

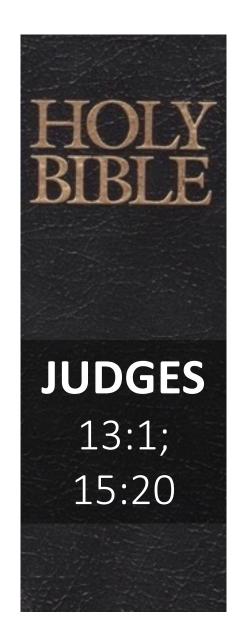






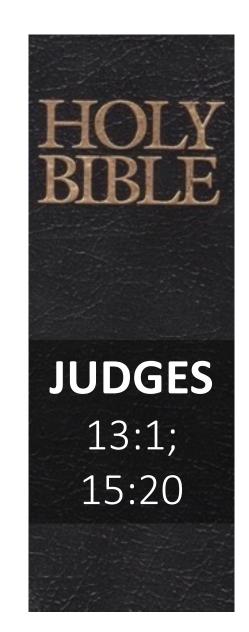


Again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, so the LORD delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.

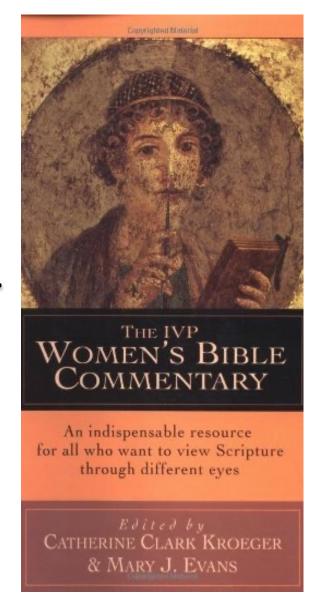


Again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, so the LORD delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.

Samson led Israel for twenty years in the days of the Philistines.



Samson is a maverick fighter who failed to make much of an impact on the enemy, a person of childish tantrums and sadistic instincts harnessed to misused physical powers. He is a hulk of a man, yet a man to laugh at...not a type of Christ, but a parable of Israelite history: chosen and destined to rule...yet consistently wasting his strength.

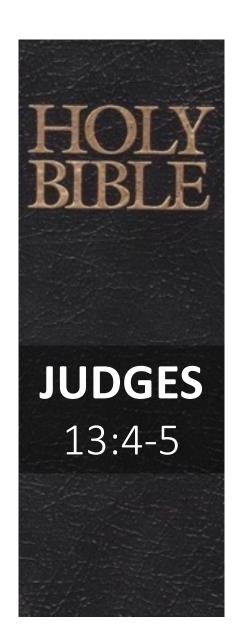




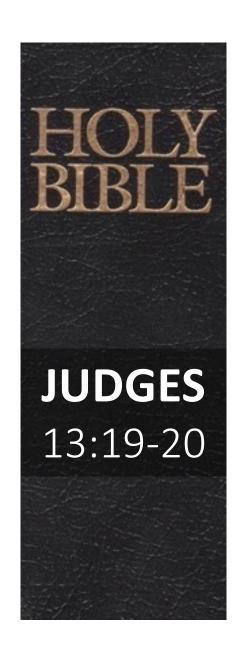
A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was childless, unable to give birth. The angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, "You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son."



"Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean. You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead ("begin") in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines."



Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to the LORD. And the LORD did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched: As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame.



...Only here does the bringer of the annunciation disappear into the heavens in a column of flame. That pyrotechnic exit, of course, points to the supernatural character of the child to be born, but even more, it announces the motif of fire that will occur in Samson's story. At the end... Samson the hero will blindly sow destruction, like fire.





The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat.

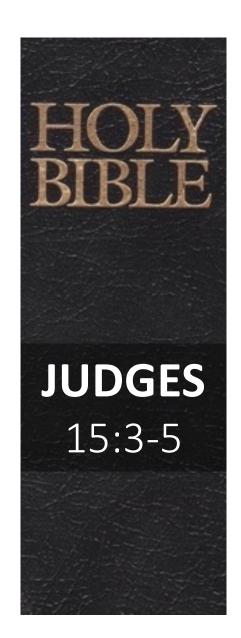


Then the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of everything and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. Burning with anger, he returned to his father's home. And Samson's wife was given to one of his companions who had attended him at the feast.

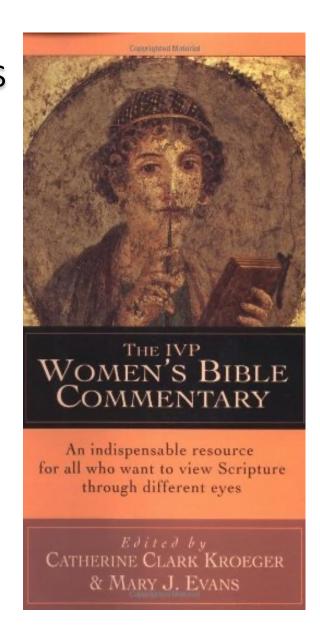




"This time I have a right to get even with the Philistines; I will really harm them." So, he went out and caught three hundred foxes and tied them tail to tail in pairs. He then fastened a torch to every pair of tails, lit the torches and let the foxes loose in the standing grain of the Philistines. He burned up the shocks and standing grain, together with the vineyards and olive groves.



Contemporary Western susceptibilities about cruelty to animals may blind us to the reality that...the writers intend us to imagine the harvest destroyed and the prospect of empty stomachs for Timnah's people in the coming months. So, they react with the vicious, illogical burning of Samson's ex-wife and her family. They are alike, these Philistines and Samson.



The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him. The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands. Finding a fresh jawbone of a donkey, he grabbed it and struck down a thousand men.



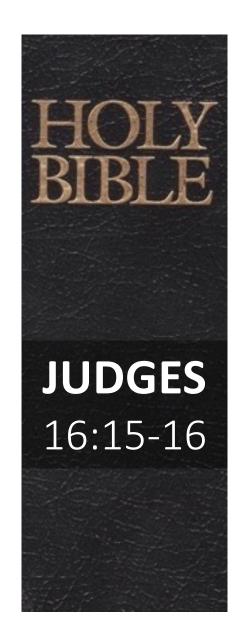


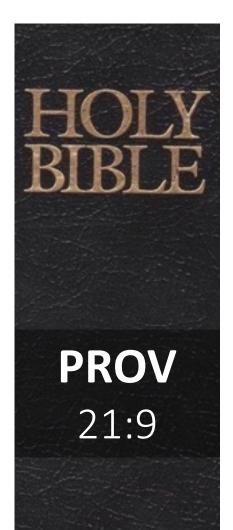
Because he was very thirsty, he cried out to the Lord, "You have given your servant this great victory. Must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" Then God opened up the hollow place in Lehi, and water came out of it. When Samson drank, his strength returned and he revived. So the spring was called "Caller's Spring" and it is still there in Lehi.





Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength."
With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was sick to death of it.





Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

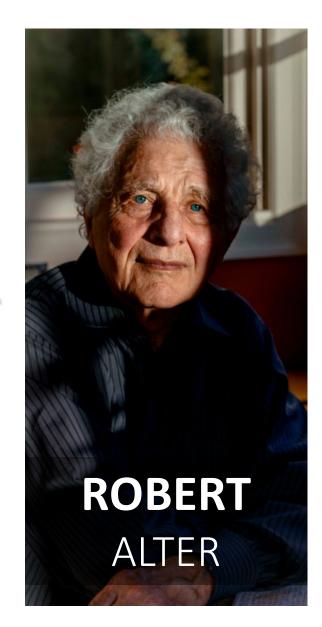
Then Samson prayed to the LORD, "Sovereign LORD, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other...



...Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus, he killed many more when he died than while he lived.



Samson's career as an Israelite champion ends in an act of wholesale destruction in which he, too, dies, like fire that consumes everything in its path and eventually itself as well.





 The idea that women are the ones too emotional to lead is just untrue, as seen in Samson, Abraham, David...



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- Not every failure of the child is due to failures of the parents



- The idea that women are the ones too emotional to lead is just untrue, as seen in Samson, Abraham, David...
- Not every failure of the child is due to failures of the parents
- Just because violence is ascribed to God doesn't mean God is guilty of it



 The wanton use of a man's strength/ virility are not traits to admire, celebrate, or seek to emulate

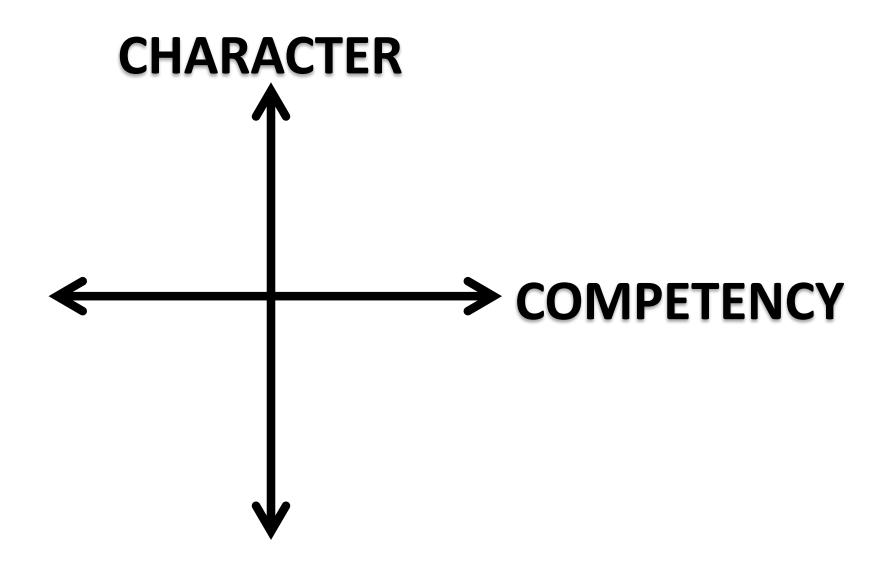


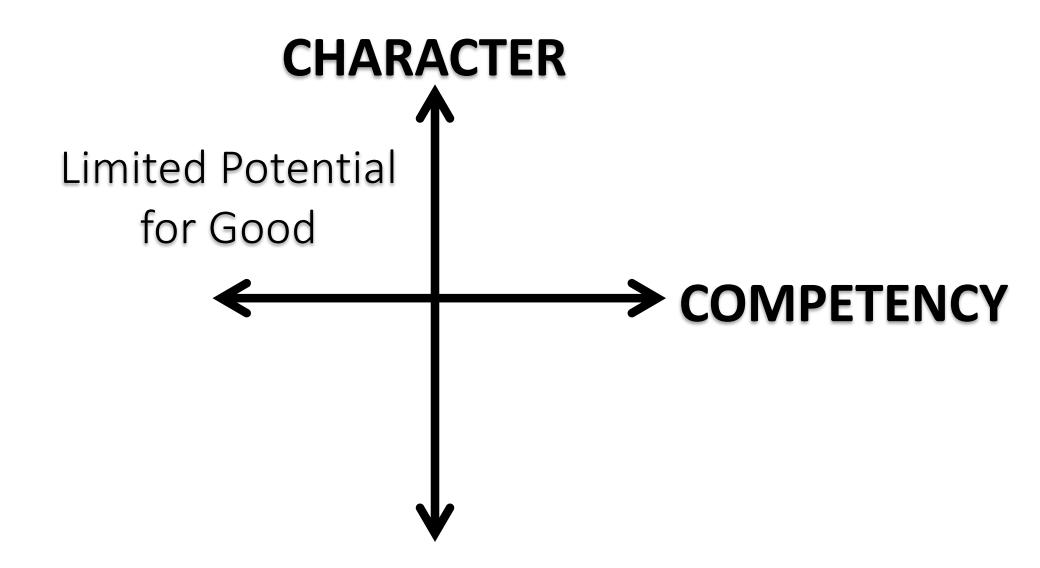
- The wanton use of a man's strength/ virility are not traits to admire, celebrate, or seek to emulate
- "Man cards" or "Alpha males" are not a thing; they don't exist

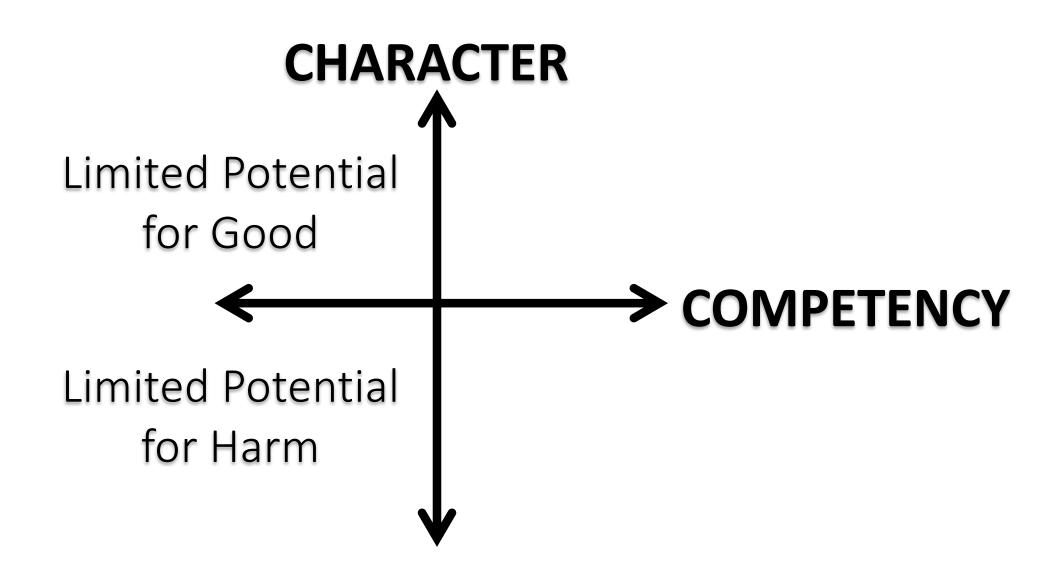


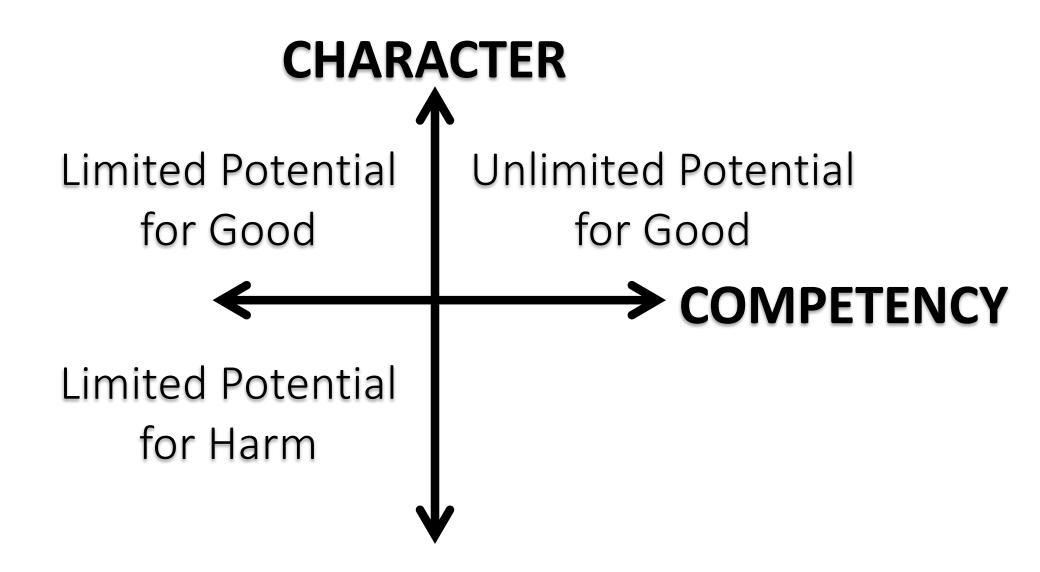
- The wanton use of a man's strength/ virility are not traits to admire, celebrate, or seek to emulate
- "Man cards" or "Alpha males" are not a thing; they don't exist
- Competency without character is inherently dangerous











CHARACTER

Limited Potential for Good

Unlimited Potential for Good

Limited Potential for Harm

Unlimited Potential for Harm

COMPETENCY

CHARACTER

Tested by power...

Limited Potential for Good

Unlimited Potential for Good



COMPETENCY

Unlimited Potential for Harm

Multiplies w/power

God of life, we praise you for your abiding presence from generation to generation, blessing your people, strengthening us to lives of service; grant that, as we serve you now on earth, we may one day rejoice with all of creation in your kingdom of light and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

