

Dear Heavenly Father,

### *Praise*

Manoah and his wife asked you to show them how to care for their son, and you sent your Son to confirm your command for Samson to be a Nazirite (cf. Num 6:2–3). That’s the kind of God you are. You delight to answer those who seek to know your will. Praise the Lord!

### *Today in Your Word*

Today you told me about the judgeship of Jephthah and the birth of Samson. Israel once again left you for the Baals, and you sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites. They cried out to you for help, but you refused to listen to them: “Go and cry out to the gods whom you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress” (Jdg 10:14). Your rejection was designed to test their sincerity (cf. Matt 15:21–28). Would they genuinely repent and turn away from their idols? Sure enough, they did! The people “put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD; and He could bear the misery of Israel no longer” (Jdg 10:16 NASB). How great is your mercy! It was no coincidence that you used Jephthah to save your people and bring peace to the Transjordan. The man they had cast aside was the one who became their savior. Jephthah was not perfect; in fact, he is a sobering example of someone who made a rash vow (cf. Deut 23:21–23). His daughter, his one and only child, ended her life in either permanent service to the Tabernacle as a living sacrifice (cf. Num 3:12–13; Exod 38:8; 1 Sam 2:22) or in death as a burnt offering. While we aren’t certain of the girl’s fate, we *are* certain that Jephthah’s mistake stands as a warning to us against making foolish vows (cf. Ecc 5:4–6).

### *Reflection*

Jephthah’s vow shows me that people have a tendency to make long-term promises in order to realize short-term benefits. I need to watch out for this tendency in my own life.

### *Request*

Father, help me to be careful of what I say and to keep my promises. This is pleasing to you, for David said that a righteous man “swears to his own hurt and does not change” (Ps 15:4).

### *Thanksgiving*

Thank you for your patience and mercy. Story after story in the OT reminds me that I can always turn to you in repentance.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

*Suggested Hymn: “[O Happy Day](#)” – Philip Doddridge.*

*Meditation Verse: Judges 10:16.*