

Jephtha's Daughter:

My Father Ruined My Life
(Judges 11)

I. **THE CHARACTER OF JEPHTHAH**

A. **Family of Origin** (11:1-3)

1. **Son of a Prostitute**—vulnerability of women
2. **Son without an Inheritance**—vulnerability of orphans

B. **Gifting and Ability**

1. **Mighty Warrior** (11:1)—earned a reputation for his skill
2. **Natural Leader** (11:3)—attracted a following, gave men a place and a purpose
3. **Great Man** (11:12, 29)—chosen by God to deliver Israel

C. **Man of His Word**—*respected, reliable*

1. **The Fear of God**
2. **The Respect of Men**

II. **THE NATURE OF A VOW** (Num 30; Prov 20:25; Ecc 5:4-6; Mat 5:33)

A. **Act of Worship** (Deut 6:13)—*sacred, made to or before a deity*

B. **Binding Obligation** (Num 30:2; Deut 23:21-23; Ps 15:4;)—*even when it hurts*

C. **Ill-advised** (1 Sam 14:24, 29-30)—*in a rage, on a whim, against better judgment, without giving it careful thought*

D. **Personal, Unofficial Vows**

III. **THE NATURE OF A SACRIFICE** (31; Jud 10:6; 17:6; 21:25)

A. **An Act of Worship**—*offered to a deity* (or one you rely upon in place of God)

B. **An Ordering of Priorities** (Deut 15:21; 1 Chron 21:24)

1. Something valuable given up
2. Something more valuable received

IV. **THE NATURE OF A FAMILY**

A. **The Authority of a Father**

1. To **speak for his family** (Josh 24:15)—*they are obligated by his word*
2. To **determine the fate of his children** (Isa 45:9-11)—*life and death*
 - a. To negate her vow (Num 30:3-5)
 - b. To choose her husband
 - c. To sell her (Ex 21:7; Lev 19:29)
 - d. To sacrifice her (Deut 18:10; Ezek 16:20-21)
3. To **bless and to curse** (Num 12:14)—*officially and unofficially*
 - a. Formal Prophetic (Gen 27:33; 49:1)—authority of the patriarchs
 - b. Everyday Emotional—power of every parent; words, actions, choices, values
4. To provide **identity and inheritance**

B. **The Obedience of a Daughter** (11:34-36)

1. **A Special Bond**—only child
2. **Empathy**—rejoices at his victory, sorrow for his sorrow
3. **Loyalty** (36)—upholds the obligation of his word

C. **The Consequences of our Sins** (Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:22)

1. **Our Self-centered Perspective**
2. **Our Ways of Coping with Life**
3. **Our Legacy to our Children**

V. **THE FATHERHOOD OF JESUS** (Isa 9:6; Isa 53:8, 10)—the Fatherhood of Adam vs. the Fatherhood of God

A. **Adopts Adam's Orphans** (Ex 20:5-6; Ps 27:10)

B. **Sacrifices Himself for His children** (Rom 8:32; Heb 12:2)

C. **Provides Our Inheritance** (Prov 10:16; Rom 4:25; 5:14, 19; 7:24; 8:2; 1 Pet 2:24) – righteousness and eternal life

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Lesson 5: Jephthah's Daughter

Read Judges 11

1. How much influence have your parents had on you? What are some things for which you either credit or blame them in setting the direction and tone of your life?
2. If you are a parent, are there personal choices you made that have negatively impacted the life of your child/children? If so, how does it feel to realize this?
3. From what you can tell from the story, what was the relationship between Jephthah and his daughter like?
4. Did Jephthah intend to harm or endanger his daughter?
5. In addition to ruining his daughter's life, how did Jephthah's foolish action harm his own self?
6. Adam was the first father to ruin the lives of his children by a foolish personal choice. Every one of his descendents has been born outside of Eden with some kind of deformity (spiritual, emotional, physical) that sets us up for pain, frustration and death. Is there a cure, a way to break the cycle? Where is our hope? (Romans 5:12-19)