



## Rocking Three "S" Ranch Series:

- Super Heroes
- Super Champions
- Super Powers

### Overview:

- Five Age Level Groups available
  - Ages 4s & 5s
  - Ages 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> grades
  - Ages 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grades
  - Ages 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades
  - Adult Bible Study
- Six week study Series OR any lesson usable as a stand-alone.

**Theme:** The Rocking Three "S" Ranch Series conveys the humanness, the mistakes, the victories, and the challenges people of faith met from the early Old Testament, through the New Testament, and that we meet today.

### **Adult Bible Study**

Six Lessons with Discussion Questions

#### **Lessons:**

- Lesson One: Abraham, the Wandering Herdsman/Cowboy
- Lesson Two: Joseph, Resume of a World Champion
- Lesson Three: Samuel, Circuit Riding Preacher
- Lesson Four: Samson, Maverick with Super Powers
- Lesson Five: Three Hebrew Boys, Cowboys that Stood their Ground
- Lesson Six: You can be a Super Hero

## Rocking Three "S" Ranch Series:

- Super Heroes
- Super Champions
- Super Powers



## Lesson One/ Abraham: The Wandering Cowboy

If you have your Bible with you, we are going to be in the Book of Hebrews 11: 6, 8-12 and we are going to concentrate on verses 8 and 10. You guys can follow along or listen.

*Hebrews 11: 6, 8-12*

*6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

*8-12 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.*

**Abraham was one of the first cowboys.**

Abraham was a wealthy rancher who lived about 1950 years before Jesus came to earth in human form. Abraham owned herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, and managed pasture land. He had ranch hands/servants and ran a full-time ranch that covered many acres.

He is most likely the first recorded cowboy that had to herd his cattle across open range for a long distance probably further and definitely over a longer period of time than the early trail drives took the Texas cowboys.

**He was a cowboy in the way he approached life**

He thought for himself. He didn't just "go with the crowd" in their social structure.

He didn't fit into the main stream of thinking. In fact, he lived in a culture of people that were idol worshipers, but **he was not**. He didn't worship like all the people around him did. He stayed faithful to the ONE true God.

Do you know what people around Abraham did for church time? History tells us that some would sacrifice their own kids to try to get blessings from their false gods. They built idols then bowed to them. Talk about selfish ignorant people!

But did you know, if you aren't careful you will be worshiping an idol, too.....only just a little bit differently....it might look more like....

"I don't want to go to church today, we stayed up too late at the ranch rodeo Saturday night; I'm tired!" That's idol worship in a different form. More like worship of "myself" and what "I WANT" instead of what God wants.

You will find that many times the people you know at work, maybe some of your family members even, will not follow God. This has nothing to do with what YOU need to do.

In fact, my mom used to tell me that "just because everyone else is running and jumping into the creek, does not mean that you have to!" Good advice. Simply put: Just because everyone else is doing something, does not make it right. Think for yourself, even if that means you are the only one not "doing what everyone else is doing." The majority could be wrong. In fact, this is usually the case.

### **Abraham obeyed God no matter what other people thought about it.**

Let's see what made him, an ordinary person, become a Super Hero in God's eyes.

*Hebrews 11:8*

*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

Abraham obeyed God.

- Didn't question
- Didn't push back against God
- Didn't DELAY
- Didn't make EXCUSES
- AND didn't ask **WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?**

Abraham starts off with the same situation as any born-again man or woman.

- He makes choices.
- He either takes a stand when others don't or he goes along with the crowd.
- He faces that one decisive day when God calls on him & he must be ready.
- You can either go with God or not.

If you obey God, then He has something to work with. If you don't obey God, that is, you decide to do things YOUR WAY, then you may miss His purpose and blessing on your entire life.

Abraham became a Super Hero for God because God asked him to do something hard and he did it. If you read the entire life of Abraham in **Genesis 11:27-Genesis 25:8** you see he was asked to do several HARD things. He not only had to go against a sinful family culture, he had to battle an army of four kingdoms at once with just his ranch hands in order to get his nephew, Lot, out of a bind; and later on he was asked to even sacrifice his son, Isaac. Good news, that was just a test to see if he would obey. God "provided Himself" a lamb for the alter instead of Isaac, but it was probably the most heart wrenching dramatic thing he ever had to do.

**It all started with that FIRST TIME God called on him. He obeyed.**

God told Abraham to pack up his wife and move.

That's it. That sounds easy enough. But it wasn't. Sara, his wife, asked him where they were moving to. His answer: I DON'T KNOW; we are just moving.

Do what?! She just got the garden planted, her family lives HERE, she knows the neighbors; what do you mean move? And you don't know where? We just put up a new barn last summer! She's involved in the local ladies' club; and what about your Thursday night roping event with the guys? And ALL OF OUR FRIENDS live HERE! Grandma is buried here! The kids have their sports programs going and we made a commitment to that; we need to keep our commitments!

Well, it was a LITTLE bit different than that, you see, they didn't have any kids yet.

Abraham said, "None of that matters, Sara. God told us to pack up and move; so let's pack up." So they loaded everything up on the horses and wagons and camels and donkeys. And Sara goes with him, too.

He was a super hero with God because He obeyed!

His family [other than Sara] thought he was nuts! Heading out with all those cattle, sheep, tents, and chickens and you don't know WHERE you are going; but GOD told you to go! And remember, his parents were idol worshipers, also. Family ties can be strong influences! But to obey God was far more important to him.

**Because he obeyed God no matter what other people thought, he was greatly blessed.**

You never see Abraham asking God: If I obey You, what's in it for me? What will you give me for it? What's in it for me?

No, you never see that from Abraham.

**He just obeys God out of respect, trust, and faith in God. He did what was right because it was right.**

Everything should go GREAT, right? Well, there was this little problem of PARTIAL OBEDIENCE that enters into the story.

*Genesis 12:1 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred and from thy fathers' house unto a land that I will show thee.*

*Genesis 12:4 So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him and Lot went with him: .....*

Nephew Lot, decides to tag along. Not only that, his own Dad tags along. The Dad gets ill, so they stay in Haran until his Dad passes away. This trek that God has sent Abraham on gets delayed for several months near the beginning of the trip. So this journey God has sent Abraham on has been side-tracked/side-lined because of PARTIAL OBEDIENCE or more like: Partial disobedience. Dad passes away; journey ready to continue, right? Not quite, there's still this little problem of Partial Obedience.

**Anytime you partially obey, that is not obedience.**

Next problem: Nephew Lot is still with him. So Abraham realizes he needs to get things straightened out and back on track because Lot's ranch hands are fussing with Abraham's ranch hands about whose cattle gets to which pasture available first and when.

It gets ugly. So they part ways. Lot heads down to greener pastures, he thinks, and Abraham finally gets the next part of God's instructions right; the part about separating out his immediate family from the rest of the extended family.

**As a result, God's power, HIS SUPER POWER, shows up for Abraham.**

Not just once, but several times throughout the rest of his life. He's on track; he's on target.

**When we fail, do what Abraham did. Get back in the saddle, learn from the mistake, take God at His Word and ride again.**

Lot, in the meantime, gets into a jam after he has left Abraham. He gets captured by the four mightiest Kings in the land. Lot and his family and his ranch hands and families are all tied up. Their cattle is about to be branded with the 4K brand and he is in need of the **3S** Ranch Hands to save them.

**Note: 3S being the Super Hero, Super Champion, & Super Powered: Abraham.**

Abraham and his cattlemen, shepherds, and helpers go into battle against the Four King's Armies. Armies that have shields, swords, and the latest armor, men trained in warfare techniques. Men that work out on a regular basis and train to wage war have captured Lot.

**But Abraham has God on his side. So he takes a bunch of cowboys and although his enemies were great, God is greater.**

Remember, Abraham had learned from his side-lined mistake of taking family on his journey of partial disobedience, and now was taking God directly at His Word.

Abraham and the **35** cowboys wipe out the 4K armies. Lot is freed and goes back to his town. Abraham moves onward on his journey that God has for him.

**So as a result you see Abraham blessed in his lifetime and long after he has passed on to Heaven.**

In fact, he had so many great great great great great grandchildren that you can't even count them today!

**Bible says that even Jesus' family tree goes back to Abraham.** Bible says in *Genesis 12:3* *"...in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."*

Thing is, **you** can be a Super Hero in God's eyes, too.

Here's how: **OBEY GOD**. Then you can hear Him when He speaks to your heart. He is not keeping secrets from you. If you are not hearing from Him, then you may be the one with the knot in your rope.

But before you can be used of God in a mighty way, you have to first be born again/saved. That simply means that you must:

1. Realize that you are not perfect, that you have sinned.
2. Repent of your sin. Ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins;
3. Invite Him into your heart.
4. Do you need to start there?

Prayer.

## **Discussion:**

Discuss aspects/traits of Abraham's life that are common with our own lives.

- Family Pressure/Friend Pressure
- Self-Interests
- Choices
- Able or unable to hear the Holy Spirit's direction either because of not being saved or because of disobedience in our lives.

## Rocking Three "S" Ranch Series:

- Super Heroes
- Super Champions
- Super Powers



## Lesson Two/Joseph World Champion

### Joseph's Resume to become a World Leader and Savior of a Nation

If you have your Bible with you, we are going to be in the Book of Genesis 45:7.

*Genesis 45:7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*

[Write on a white board as you list these traits.]

So what does the resume of a World Leader look like?

- Prestigious colleges?
- Honor societies?
- Experience?
- Clean criminal record? Clean background check?
- Good "connections" with the "right people"?

Here's Joseph's:

- At 17 years old, God tells him in a series of dreams about his future that will give him super power, authority, and control. He's a dreamer.
- His Brothers HATE him. [Either because of his arrogance or their jealousy perhaps.]
- He becomes a Slave, not a leader.
- He ends up in prison for a crime he did not commit.

But it's what you don't see between the lines that make him the man God gives Super Powers to.

[Pray and begin.]

Joseph is probably best known for his "coat of many colors". You may have had a Bible story about him already that referred to his bright multi-colored coat. In fact, you may have colored pictures of this coat in class when you were young.

But today we are going to talk about WHO Joseph was and the things about him, that made him a Grand Champion. He became a world leader/champion and saved his family and his whole nation from starving to death.

He was chosen by God for a job. But it took a LOT of getting prepared to do that job before he was able to save their lives.

If you are going to be a Grand Champion at any event, then you have to be trained, prepare, and accept some hardship along the way.

You can't even enter the dummy roping event and expect to win first place without ever throwing a rope before. You might get "lucky" and hit the first try, but you won't be able to compete in the World Finals. You just won't have the skills needed to outlast the competition and win the Championship.

Joseph had a Grand Championship Event coming. He didn't know it! But it would mean the survival of the nation of Israel.

### Joseph had a LOT of troubles first.

Joseph was one of his father Jacob's favorites. He had made a "coat of many colors" for Joseph to wear. This was a symbol of how important Joseph was to his dad. There were 10 other brothers older than Joseph. Family tradition dictated that the eldest brother would run/rule the family after Jacob passed on to Heaven. But he had decided to not go with tradition and instead picked a favorite, Joseph. This made the other brothers very jealous of him.

The older brothers were all working out in the fields one day and Jacob, the father, asked Joseph aged 17 to go check on them. My question here is: Why wasn't he out in the fields working at age 17? Something to do with "favorite son" comes to mind.

Along comes a caravan of slave traders on their way to Egypt to buy/sell. So the brothers SOLD him to them.

To cover up their evil deed they covered the multi-colored coat in goat's blood and took it back to their Dad, Jacob, and told him that Joseph must have died by a wild animal.

Joseph has to realize that his Dad thinks he's dead; so no one is coming to look for him. Just imagine how that felt.

He is sold as a slave into a foreign country where he must learn a new language by himself; how strange that must have been.

What good could possibly come out of all of this?

**But he is in training for the big event and he doesn't know it yet.**

Dysfunctional does not begin to describe this family.

Take some time and read the whole story beginning in Genesis 37. It's well worth the time it takes to read his entire life. It reads better than any book you have read; for one, it's true and for another it was preserved by God for you to read. Worth the read!

### In Training for the Championship from behind Prison Walls

Time passes and Joseph grows up into young adulthood. Thirteen years will pass before Joseph is even ready to take the position God is preparing him for.

While we might think he needs to be getting honors, accolades, winning competitions, and "getting his name out there" so he is noticed, none of that is happening. In fact, the very OPPOSITE is happening.

He ends up working for a fellow named Potiphar. Joseph is in charge of the man's estate. He takes care of all the business. So he has learned to manage money, his horses, his cattle, & his household.

### Sounds like he might be in training for something?

The Bible tells us that EVERYTHING that JOSEPH did turned out successful.

Every time he invested money for his master, it turned out to be a winner. Every time he decided what they should plant this year, the crop turned out great. He brought success to people wherever he served.

*Genesis 39:2 And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.*

One day Potiphar's wife decides that she is going to seriously flirt with Joseph. She's a married lady. And she's married to his employer. He tells her No Ma'am, not interested. So she gets mad! She accuses Joseph of trying to rape her and gets him put into prison. He doesn't get a trial, doesn't get a lawyer, and just gets tossed into prison for several years.

Have you ever been accused of something you did NOT do? And you pay the consequences for the it even though you did not do the deed! You can imagine how Joseph felt!

But he is in training for the BIG EVENT; he just doesn't recognize this as training nor does he know an EVENT is coming.

**EVERYTHING that happens along the way is preparing him to handle the crisis, the event, the enormous magnitude of the event that is coming. He has no idea he is going to be "saving civilization" from starvation and his own nation Israel, which he has not been a part of since his teen years, from annihilation.**

Things just don't look much like he's ever going to be a Super Champion at this point. After all, he's a Hebrew slave in an Egyptian nation and he is in prison!

**Sometimes when things look the worst; they really aren't all that bad.**

MANY times, God is just preparing you for a very particular job he has picked out for JUST YOU.

Joseph ends up in the prison for years. The Bible tells us that in all of his troubles he still worshiped God! He still trusted God! He wasn't bitter, he wasn't mad. He just trusted God. I am sure there were days he was depressed or discouraged but he did not give up on God at all.

In fact, the warden saw that everything Joseph did prospered and so he put him in charge of the prisoners.

*Genesis 39:21-22 But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.*

He had a reputation in the prison of being a man that could interpret dreams. Whatever he said, it would happen. Remember how he had a dream that his brothers would bow down to him someday in the future? He had a gift from God.

In time, the Pharaoh had several dreams of his own. Nobody can interpret them. Word gets to Pharaoh that Joseph could. He was called out of the prison. Joseph told what the dream of the Pharaoh meant. Joseph was put in charge!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

**In ONE day Joseph went from prison stripes to right hand ruler in Egypt. Now, only GOD can do that.**

The dream was that there was going to be 7 years when the crops grew really good. Then the following 7 years the crops were going to fail. So God had made sure that Joseph and the Pharaoh knew this in advance. Joseph put lots of food in storage.

The entire region of the world had to come to Egypt to find food. SO when the "famine" hit, his family had to come to Egypt to buy food or starve to death.

So when they come to buy food, who do they have to buy it from?

Yes, Joseph. The family gets back together; the brothers repent. The Joseph's dream has come true. His brothers had to come to Egypt to bow down to him to buy food.

And God used ALL of that to save the entire nation of Israel from starvation.

**Joseph turns out to be a Super Champion. He was sent by God to preserve Israel on the earth.**

All Israel prospers because of Joseph. They didn't just survive, they prospered.

God likes to work that way IF you will be obedient. Sometimes the problems we have will be turned into great blessing.

*Genesis 45:7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*

- God wants to use you to make a difference too.
- Is God sending you to preserve posterity in the earth?
- God does want to use you to make a difference in this world.
- Question is: Will you let him?

Discussion:

**What made Joseph a Super Hero?**

## Rocking Three "S" Ranch Series:

- Super Heroes
- Super Champions
- Super Powers



## Lesson Three/Samuel, Circuit Riding Preacher

### Superhero Samuel had a Destiny

Samuel had a Destiny. He was chosen to do something important before he was born.

Superheroes are chosen by God, trust God and did so with a humble heart. They are servants that do something spectacular for the Lord and realize that it is all done for His glory not their own glory.

Did you know that you have a Destiny, too? Sometimes we refer to it as "the will of God." You can choose to do what God wants and fulfill that destiny or not; it's about the choices you make.

### Samuel's Name meant "Asked of God"

Hannah named her son Samuel which means "Asked of God." She had prayed that she would have a child. In fact, she wanted him so badly that she had pleaded with God and promised God that if He would give her a child she would give him back to God.

*1 Samuel 1: 11.....then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life...*

### Samuel's Birthday Not a Mistake

The timing of Samuel's birth is not a mistake. The Bible says the lamp in the Temple had gone out. Eli, the priest that was in charge of keeping it lit, was lazy, backslidden, raising two sons that were supposed to inherit the job of priest but they were wicked and he had not corrected them.

As soon as Samuel was weaned the Bible tells us that Hannah took him to the Temple to be raised and learn how to serve God. God had to do a work in this young man's heart because he is raised by this backslidden priest, Eli.

Samuel could have used his upbringing for an excuse. Mom left him to be raised in the Temple with this half-baked priest; the sons of Eli were wild as bucks; where was his example of character and godly living?

*But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. I Samuel 2:18*

Evil times had come on Israel. It was TIME for a Superhero.

### Samuel's Super Moment: He was ready!

Samuel was asleep at the priest Eli's young prophet's boarding school, when he hears: "Samuel."

Samuel responds by running to Eli's room. "Yes, Mr. Eli?! Here am I!"

Eli, wakes up startled and says "What?!" Samuel says, "You called me." Eli says, "You are dreaming, kid, so just go back to bed!"

So Samuel settles down and goes back to sleep. Samuel is sleeping and he hears: "Samuel." And Samuel runs over to Eli's doorway and he says, "Yes, Mr. Eli?! Here am I!"

Eli wakes up startled and says with a little bit of "put out" in his voice: "What?!" Samuel says, "Here am I!" Eli says, "You are dreaming, please just go back to bed!"

Now as a side note here, the Bible tells us that: *Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him. I Samuel 3: 7.*

That means that Samuel had not ever had a personal conversation with God yet, himself. He had not even understood to be listening for that time in his life that God would make it clear to Samuel that he would need a PERSONAL one on one relationship with God, not just serve in the Temple. However, he was about to understand!

Now a THIRD TIME, Samuel settles down, goes back to sleep. Samuel is sleeping and he hears: "Samuel."

Maybe this time, he just wanted to pull up his covers over his head? Maybe he was thinking: This poor old Priest Eli is LOOSING HIS MIND; he just keeps calling my name in HIS sleep. Maybe he was thinking: THIS IS GETTING OLD! That old guy is just talking in his sleep! MAYBE he thought those things.

MAYBE he didn't.

But he OBEYED ANYWAY!! And he goes to see what Eli wants and he says: Here am I.

No hateful attitude about having to get up a THIRD time to answer to this old man that just keeps on calling his name in the middle of the night and then denying it; nope, we see simply: **Here am I.**

### Samuel's Surrender

Eli realizes God is calling Samuel by name. He instructs him how to answer God. We don't know if Samuel went back to bed eager and excited that God was calling him out by name; we don't know if Samuel went back to bed scared to death!

We do know he went back to bed willingly without being pulled, pushed, coerced or threatened. And he waited. This time when the Lord called Samuel, the Bible tells us that God came and STOOD by Samuel and called him by name.

The Lord gives Samuel explicit instructions to tell Eli. He was to tell Eli how bad a priest he had been! That judgment was coming because of Eli's sins.

Now that seems like a LOT to put on a little kid! But God Himself asked this of Samuel. And do you know what Samuel said: **Here am I!**

### Samuel's Superhero Life: Circuit Riding Preacher

Samuel's entire life is a VERY exciting story in the Old Testament. ALL of his life it seemed he had superpowers.

He traveled all over the Region telling people what God wanted done in their country and in their lives. He was a Circuit Riding Preacher!

Do you know how he got those Superpowers?

*And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed forever. I Samuel 2:35*

He got these Superpowers because he understood God and did what God wanted.

### Samuel's Testimony and Greatest Weapon

*1 Samuel 3:19 And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.*

What a testimony!

He listened to every word from God. He was careful to speak the truth and to live by everything God said.

Samuel lived long enough to anoint the first two kings of Israel. [Saul and David.]

He was not afraid to tell the King when he had sinned. What a bold and influential man this Samuel!

*1 Samuel 13:13-14 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord*

*hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee.*

He took his position/job seriously.

*1 Samuel 12:23 Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:*

### **Want to be a Superhero for God?**

Then LISTEN to Him and Do what He wants.

You won't hear God call your name out loud like He talked to people many times in the Bible. But you will know when He talks to your heart.

When Jesus went back to Heaven after He arose from the dead as He was leaving He told us that He would send the Holy Spirit to the earth. This is Who [not an it] will speak to your heart and you will know it's time to accept Jesus as your Savior that is, be "saved."

When He does, will you respond with Here am I Lord?

### **Activity:**

- Discuss what made Samuel a SuperHero
- Discuss how you KNOW when the Holy Spirit is speaking to you.
- Does the Holy Spirit only speak to your heart about salvation or other matters as well?

## Adult Bible Study

# Rocking Three "S" Ranch Series:

- Super Heroes
- Super Champions
- Super Powers



## Lesson Four/Samson, Maverick with Superpowers

### Superhero Samson had an opportunity.

Samson had a great opportunity to have a tremendous life.

As a child/young person he had not yet “messed up” life. As a youth he had not had a bad marriage; or such a BAD PAST that he carried a lot of baggage around. His slate was still fairly clear of the heavy stuff that leaves permanent consequences.

The choices he made however, led to the results he had to wade through. There were losses in his life, unfinished plans, and heartbroken people.

We are a lot like him in those respects: We can make the right choice or we can make some of the ones Samson made and get weighted down with a load of guilt and consequences resulting from bad choices.

Today we are going to look at the life of a Superhero Samson that was not always a Superhero.

Samson was born after an angel of God made the announcement to his parents that Samson was coming and that he would be a Nazarite [a special type of super-Christian] from his birth onwards and that he would *"...begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."* *Judges 13:5.*

One of the symbols of being a Nazarite was to never cut your hair.

*Judges 13:5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: ....*

### Samson's Strength

How did he get his strength? Did he work-out? Did he do weight training?

The Bible says: *1 Timothy 4: 7b-8... and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

Nope, didn't get it that way. It was purely a gift from God.

He did nothing to deserve it. God had a plan and He gave the gift to Samson to use to begin to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines.

### Samson had a Weakness

In fantasy stories characters like Superman had kryptonite. Batman was nothing without his armor and the Hulk was nothing without his strength.

But Samson had a weakness. In fact, his strength, that is, the symbol of his strength was his weakness as well. Or was it?

In the TRUE stories from the Bible we saw that Abraham's weakness was his family; Joseph's weakness was youthful pride and Samuel was limited by Israel's faith also. Samson's weakness, was it his hair? Or something else? Lack of spiritual discernment?

*Judges 16:20 And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him.*

### Samson's Maverick Years

People who train horses will tell you that not all horses are trainable. And if you have ever owned cattle, then you know there is always one in the herd that tries to lead all the others a direction other than the rest of the herd.

Ever watch a Cutting and Sorting Event? Now there is a prime example of trying to get that last calf or two to respond to the horse and rider's instructions. Seems like there is always a "maverick" in the bunch; that one calf that will cut and run.

### That was Samson; he cut and ran.

Samson had super physical strength and could have had super spiritual strength; but alas he chose not to walk with God.

Samson's strength caused him to become arrogant about power that was not his to begin with and thus he failed to fear the power giver, God. He knew that as long as he kept his hair uncut, God had told him that he would keep his physical strength.

But Samson met a girl; a not so nice girl. She was getting money from the enemy, the Philistines, to try to find out how he stayed physically strong.

He gave into her asking and pleading to know how he was so strong. He finally told her.

God had given him these special strong powers as long as he did not cut his hair, the symbol of his Nazarite vow. He fell asleep and she cut his hair. The enemy, the Philistines, captured him and put him in prison for many years. They even put out his eyes, making him blind.

The Superhero that Israel had hoped would deliver them from the Philistines, he had “cut and run” like a Maverick. Everyone suffered loss.

### Samson is a Superhero at the End of His Story

What if Samson had not been a Maverick? But he was. He could even be described with this New Testament verse.

*2 Timothy 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

Good news: he got another chance; it didn't end well for him personally, but it was another chance.

Several years after Samson had been captured and imprisoned by the Philistines, these enemies of Israel were having a big feast and party. They went down to the prison and took Samson out to make fun of him. They put him between two big columns that held up the stadium that these enemies of God were in. Let me read it to you.

*Judges 16: 27-30*

*27 Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.*

*28 And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.*

*29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left.*

*30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.*

What more could he have accomplished had he just yielded to God early on instead of “just at the end?” why wait until the end? Wonder what he'd personally tell you today if he could stand here and tell you how to live your life. Let's pray.

### Discussion:

- What made Samson weak?
- How did his own choices decide his fate?
- What made him a superhero in the end?

## Rocking Three "S" Ranch Series:

- Super Heroes
- Super Champions
- Super Powers



## Lesson Five/3 Hebrew Boys Stand their Ground

### Superheroes Secret Identities

Superheroes in make-believe often have a secret identity. The REAL superheroes, that is, superheroes for God, did not stand out in a crowd but were more often than not background sort of people.

Today we are going to talk about 3 Hebrew boys who had been living normal lives until the King of Babylon conquered their land, Israel, and took them captive along with most of their nation including their friend, Daniel.

They had no idea they would have to “cowboy up” in the near future. They didn’t even know what a “cowboy” was. Even today the movies, the general population, and especially non-cowboy cultures think that the term “cowboy up” means something rash, empty-headed, and careless.

Folks in the culture know that description is the opposite of a real cowboy. To “cowboy up” simply means to stand for something right, take the heat if need be, and get the job done no matter the pain or trouble involved.

I was raised in Southwest Oklahoma and this was instilled into us as young folks. But nonetheless, these Hebrew boys are about to become Cowboys.

Sometimes people get nicknames. For example since you are someone’s brother, your family might call you “Bo.” Or if you are the youngest in the household, you might be called “Shorty”, for example. King Nebuchadnezzar couldn’t pronounce the Hebrew names very well so he changed these young men’s names.

So King Nebuchadnezzar changed their names as did he their friend Daniel’s:

- Hananiah became Shadrach
- Mishael became Meshach
- Azariah became Abednego
- Daniel became Belteshazzar

### From Ordinary to Extraordinary

Ordinary boys carried into captivity to be slaves to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon; no one special, but they were able to walk into the fiery furnace. Why?

Daniel Chapter 3 has the whole story. *[Read the story and comment along as you are led.]*

### *Daniel 3*

*3 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.*

*2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.*

*3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.*

*4 Then a herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,*

*5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:*

*6 And whoso falleth not down and worshipping shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.*

*7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.*

*8 Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews.*

*9 They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever.*

*10 Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image:*

*11 And whoso falleth not down and worshipping, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.*

*12 There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*

*13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.*

*14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?*

15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flames of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

28 Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

*29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.*

*30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.*

Briefly, this is what happened.

These three young men were smart, sharp, well respected. The King had noticed they were exceptional. And even though they were slaves or captives, he had put them in charge as overseers in much of the government programs. He respected their decisions and their opinions.

Naturally, there were “enemies” and people that did not like what these Hebrews, these foreigners, these slaves, were in positions of authority. So these Chaldeans watched and waited for an opportunity to “bring them down.” They actually “set up” the scenario that resulted in this event.

King Nebuchadnezzar had a big ego. He built a statue and made a proclamation that everyone had to bow down and worship this gigantic statue that he had put up in the town square. Needless, to say the Chaldeans were watching these three cowboys, these troublemakers, these rebels from Israel. And sure enough, they didn’t bow.

The King sends for them, and then tells them they MUST bow to his god or they will burn. But the Superheroes [who didn’t even know they would be Superheroes] answered the King:

*Daniel 3: 17-18...our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*

So by proclamation the furnace is heated up seven times hotter than normal, the guards that threw these cowboys into the fire, the guards, mind you, they died from the heat of the fire.

But something happened to these cowboys. They walked around inside of the fire. And when the King peered in to see this miracle, what did he see? He saw a fourth person walking in the fire with them and he looked like GOD Himself!

Needless to say, the young men are brought out of the furnace and the God of Israel is exalted and proclaimed as God.

**What made them Extraordinary can make you Special too.**

They believed God. They knew that God is really alive and He is in charge!

God wants to use YOU.

You will have to make a choice of whether to believe God and serve Him, or go with the world’s philosophy.

*Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

*John 12:26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*

*Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

## **Discussion:**

- What made these three cowboys so special that they could walk around in the furnace and not even so much as smell like smoke?
- What did they understand about God that we don't always "get"?
- Would you be willing to lay your life on the line in order to take a stand for God?

## Rocking Three "S" Ranch Series:

- Super Heroes
- Super Champions
- Super Powers



## Lesson Six/Super Champion You

### God says You can be a Super Champion.

Superheroes are not just born; they are developed. While many of the Superheroes we have studied started out with something special about them from early childhood or even before they were born like Samuel or Samson, most do not.

*Hebrews 11* in the Bible is often called the "Hall of Faith" because it lists many people that God recognizes by name as having lived by faith.

He makes no mistakes, so these are listed for us to study and think about. He is telling us that these were people, not perfect people, but people just like you and me, but something made them so special and different that He, that is God, is listing their names for us to look at their lives.

God lists a number of His superheroes: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sara, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthae, David, Samuel, the prophets. And every one of them is prefaced with the phrase "By Faith."

God wants us to understand that power and a victorious life are available to only those who depend on God.

*Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

God is telling us that we must trust Him, follow Him, and depend upon Him.

### How can we do that?

*Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

*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.*

God says that you have to want to please Him in order to do great things for Him.

God says that the prophet Elijah was a human being with the same kind of problems, thoughts, aches and pains, fears, and doubts that all people go through yet; he was able to have miracles happen at his request.

Can you imagine having that kind of power, that is, to withhold rain or make rain just at your request? The Bible just told you that if your motives were right, if you were directed by the Lord, you can do just that. Don't be a Samson, be an Abraham.

Use God's power to do His will, not your own. That's the place we go wrong.

Power corrupts, people say. And for the most part, there is truth in that statement. But if it's God's power at work and not yours, there is no corruption at all.

### **God says, you can be a Super Champion.**

When you watch a cowboy/cowgirl compete at an event you can usually tell if their heart and mind and soul are into the event.

Sometimes things go wrong, but you can still tell if their head was in the trying.

If a cowboy shows up to a roping without his rope, you'd say he wasn't serious about his roping event today.

If a cowgirl shows up to a barrel race to compete and she's left half the horse tack back at the barn, you'd say she wasn't all that "into" the race wouldn't you?

Yet, we decide to live for God and go out halfway prepared for the event [life] and expect God to give us the victory.

### **You have to ask.**

*James 4:3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

This verse describes Samson's situation. Most of the time we ask God for things or situations it is with the wrong motives or reasons. That is one of the main reasons we don't get answers to specific prayers.

*1 John 5:14-15 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

This describes Abraham as well as many others in the Bible AND in our lifetime. Does it describe you?

If you want to be a Super Champion for Jesus, then you have to ask. Then you have to be willing to depend upon Him and follow through.

The only thing separating you from a powerful Christian life is the desire to do God's will and the faith to trust Him to empower you to do what He want you to do.

*Matthew 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

### **Discussion:**

- What can you do TODAY that will make a difference in your personal walk with God?
- What can you do tomorrow to insure that you continue to walk in the path God has offered you?
- How can you hear from God?
- How do you know when it is HIM that is speaking to you?
- How can you be a Superhero in God's eyes?