

Calling All Heroes!

Lesson 05 of the series "Heroes"

1. A man named Micah compromised his faith through syncretism.

"Syncretism" = a fusing of different religious beliefs or practices.

"There was a man named Micah, who lived in the hill country of Ephraim. One day he said to his mother, "I heard you place a curse on the person who stole 1,100 pieces of silver from you. Well, I have the money. I was the one who took it." "The LORD bless you for admitting it," his mother replied. He returned the money to her, and she said, "I now dedicate these silver coins to the LORD. In honor of my son, I will have an image carved and an idol cast." So when he returned the money to his mother, she took 200 silver coins and gave them to a silversmith, who made them into an image and an idol. And these were placed in Micah's house. Micah set up a shrine for the idol, and he made a sacred ephod and some household idols. Then he installed one of his sons as his personal priest. In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes." Judges 17:1-6 (NLT)

Note: Micah and his mom broke many commandments while claiming to honor the Lord.

Life Application: The Bible must be our guide in all matters of faith and practice.

"When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild. But whoever obeys the law is joyful."

Proverbs 29:18 (NLT)

"Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path." Psalm 119:105 (NLT)

2. Micah's sin spread to a Levite who compromised his faith through greed.

One day a young Levite, who had been living in Bethlehem in Judah, arrived in that area. He had left Bethlehem in search of another place to live, and as he traveled, he came to the hill country of Ephraim. He happened to stop at Micah's house as he was traveling through. "Where are you from?" Micah asked him. He replied, "I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am looking for a place to live." "Stay here with me," Micah said, "and you can be a father and priest to me. I will give you ten pieces of silver a year, plus a change of clothes and your food." The Levite agreed to this, and the young man became like one of Micah's sons. So Micah installed the Levite as his personal priest, and he lived in Micah's house. "I know the LORD will bless me now," Micah said, "because I have a Levite serving as my priest." Judges 17:7-13 (NLT)

Note: Levites were full-time ministers set apart by God to be priests and teachers for the rest of the nation.

Moses saw that Aaron had let the people get completely out of control, much to the amusement of their enemies. So he stood at the entrance to the camp and shouted, "All of you who are on the LORD's side, come here and join me." And all the Levites gathered around him... Then Moses told the Levites, "Today you have ordained yourselves for the service of the LORD, for you obeyed him even though it meant killing your own sons and brothers. Today you have earned a blessing." Exodus 32:25, 26, 29 (NLT)

"...the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the Ark of the LORD's Covenant, and to stand before the LORD as his ministers, and to pronounce blessings in his name. These are their duties to this day. That is why the Levites have no share of property or possession of land among the other Israelite tribes. The LORD himself is their special possession, as the LORD your God told them.) Deuteronomy 10:8-9 (NLT)

"...forty-eight towns with the surrounding pastureland will be given to the Levites." Numbers 35:7 (NLT)

Life Application: God has set us apart to priests and teachers in our culture.

"...you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. "Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy." Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world." 1 Peter 2:9-12 (NLT)

3. The sins of Micah & the Levite spread to the tribe of Dan who compromised their faith through syncretism and greed.

“Now in those days Israel had no king. And the tribe of Dan was trying to find a place where they could settle, for they had not yet moved into the land assigned to them when the land was divided among the tribes of Israel. So the men of Dan chose from their clans five capable warriors... to scout out a land for them to settle in. When these warriors arrived in the hill country of Ephraim, they came to Micah’s house and spent the night there. While at Micah’s house, they recognized the young Levite’s accent, so they went over and asked him, “Who brought you here, and what are you doing in this place? Why are you here?” He told them about his agreement with Micah and that he had been hired as Micah’s personal priest. Then they said, “Ask God whether or not our journey will be successful.” “Go in peace,” the priest replied. “For the LORD is watching over your journey.” Judges 18:1-6 (NLT)

Life Application: We must teach God’s Word NOT simply what people want to hear.

“Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching. For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. They will reject the truth and chase after myths. But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don’t be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you.” 2 Timothy 4:2-5 (NLT)

“...the five scouts entered the shrine and removed the carved image, the sacred ephod, the household idols, and the cast idol... When the priest saw the men carrying all the sacred objects out of Micah’s shrine, he said, “What are you doing?” “Be quiet and come with us,” they said. “Be a father and priest to all of us. Isn’t it better to be a priest for an entire tribe and clan of Israel than for the household of just one man?” The young priest was quite happy to go with them, so he took along the sacred ephod, the household idols, and the carved image... they set up the carved image, and they appointed Jonathan son of Gershom, son of Moses, as their priest. This family continued as priests for the tribe of Dan until the Exile. So Micah’s carved image was worshiped by the tribe of Dan as long as the Tabernacle of God remained at Shiloh.

Judges 18:17-20, 30-31 (NLT)

Life Application: It doesn’t take long for sin in our lives to spread to others.

“Your flip and callous arrogance in these things bothers me. You pass it off as a small thing, but it’s anything but that. Yeast, too, is a “small thing,” but it works its way through a whole batch of bread dough pretty fast.” 1 Corinthians 5:6 (MSG)

Life Application: God doesn’t have grandchildren.

Life Application: God is calling us to be lights in our culture.

“Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.” Philippians 2:15 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Looking back at your notes from this week's lesson, "Calling all heroes!" was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?
2. Read Judges 17:1-6. How many commandments can you spot being broken by people claiming they are honoring the Lord? How is this possible? What clear teachings in the Bible do we disregard in our culture? Why?
3. Read 1 Peter 2:9-12. Who is Peter writing to? Have you ever thought of yourself as a priest or Christian role model? Why? Why not? Now read Ephesians 4:11-12. How does Paul describe the role of pastors and teachers in the church? Why are many people who attend church confused about this?
4. At Centerpoint we often say, "God doesn't have grandchildren." What does this mean? Why doesn't a godly heritage guarantee a godly family tree? (see Judges 18:30-31 & 1 Samuel 8:1-3 for examples)
5. Read Judges 17:7-13, Deuteronomy 10:8-9 & 17:2-5. Why did the Levite in this story agree to do something forbidden by God under penalty of death? Have you ever been tempted to compromise your Christian values or convictions? If so, what happened? How did you respond?
6. Discuss the following quotations:

"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father." Jesus in Matthew 5:14-16

"For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear." Paul in 2 Timothy 4:3