



Key Focus: Samson – Judges 13-16

Hook

Hey students! Welcome to _____! If we haven't met, my name is _____ and I would love a chance to get to know you so please come say hi after youth group.

[Leader Note: Start off your message by pranking a student. Don't have your tech team put up the title of your message until after this part is over. Below is an example of one I was pranked with at my first youth ministry internship. (I have included a video of me being pranked back when I was a college student interning in youth ministry for reference), but feel free to use your own if you have a better one. Make sure you try it out early in the week so you know it will work.

Pick someone that you know would be fairly gullible and not too science- or math-brained. For this prank you will need a place where the ceiling is regular height: 8-10 feet high or it won't work. You will need a small bucket full of water, a pole with a flat edge on it (like a wooden closet bar or something similar), and a sturdy chair or stool). Say something like this, "I need a volunteer! Somebody willing to try out this new trick I saw on Tik Tok this week." Bring them up on stage or wherever the ceiling is the right height and get up on top of the chair before explaining. Do it quick so they don't have time to think about it. Hand them the pole and tell them that you read a trick that if you push the right sized bucket of water up against the ceiling with a pole, it will "stick." Have them put the pole under the bucket you are holding and when they are ready get down and take the chair away. Be aware that the person may decide to drop the bucket of water so make sure electronics are far away. Hold the bucket to the ceiling for them while they get the pole in place. Once they are set, get down and then leave them there. They will obviously figure out right away that they can't get away without dropping the water so they will be "stuck there." Tell them you will be back to help them in a couple of minutes. Continue on with the intro of the message while leaving them there. Rescue them after your introduction is done.]

How many of you in this room like to prank people? How many of you in this room like to be pranked? Turn to your neighbor and tell them your favorite prank.

[Leader Note: Tell a quick story of a time you were pranked.] One time someone pranked me and now that I've lived that experience, if someone tries to get me, I AIN'T FALLIN' FOR IT! Say it with me, "I ain't fallin' for it!"

This year is going to be a great year. Even if you don't have a relationship with God yet, I know God is going to show Himself to you this year and I am so excited for what He is going to do in and through each one of your lives.

But catch this, there's going to be a lot of things vying for your attention this year...saying, "hey, these 5 AP classes are your top priority. Hey, I know you want to go to the fall retreat but if you want to be a part of this basketball team, you can't miss a practice. Hey, girl you cute. Hey, don't forget clubs you need those for college applications. Hey, you need to keep your snap streaks up. Hey, hustle. Then there are those blessed algorithms whispering: hey, scroll, scroll, scroll."

Guys, everyone and everything is going to want your attention this year. It's exciting right now because it's a fresh start with new sneakers and pencils, but I'm about to take it into the deep end: the only thing that will satisfy your heart and make you whole this year is a relationship with Jesus. He will quickly be pulling up the caboose to all the other things in your life if you don't set your **eyes** on Him. You need a laser focused vision for this year. This vision isn't focused on doing what is right in your friend's **eyes**, your teachers' **eyes**, or even your own **eyes**. You don't want to get pranked by the devil by making *good* things into *ultimate* things. That's what the Bible calls "worshipping idols." If you set your own identity and let it be formed and shaped by things and people other than God, I can promise you that you won't experience peace, joy, hope, adventure, and rest this year. It's not going to go well for you if you get pranked by the devil. So, everybody say, "I ain't fallin' for it!"

[Leader Note: Help the student get down if they are still standing there.]

Book

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