

*Samson: A Promised Son
With A Promising Beginning*

The Samson Series - Week 1

Judges 13:1-25

Introduction: Even though we might know some of the highlight facts about Samson, we may not be familiar with his whole story. Why did God think it was important to include Samson's story in the Bible, and what lessons can we learn from his life? That's what we will be answering in our five-part series on the life of Samson. Samson's story is filled with lessons for us today about faithfulness, failure, and forgiveness.

Israel's relationship cycle with God

They trusted God – they strayed from God – they reaped the consequences of their choices – they turned from their sins and turned back to God – God delivered and restored them.

The pain of being childless

To appreciate the heavy hearts of Manoah and his wife, we need to understand childlessness at that time. Children were seen as a blessing from God and as being blessed by God.

The inability of a woman to have children would not only prevent her from providing her husband with a family, but it was also wrongly considered a divine punishment upon a woman. In this culture, there was a terrible stigma that went with being childless. The words “unable to give birth” were a lifetime burden for a husband, but especially a wife. But on an ordinary day, God was going to do something very extraordinary for Manoah and his wife.

Today's Takeaway Truths from God's Word

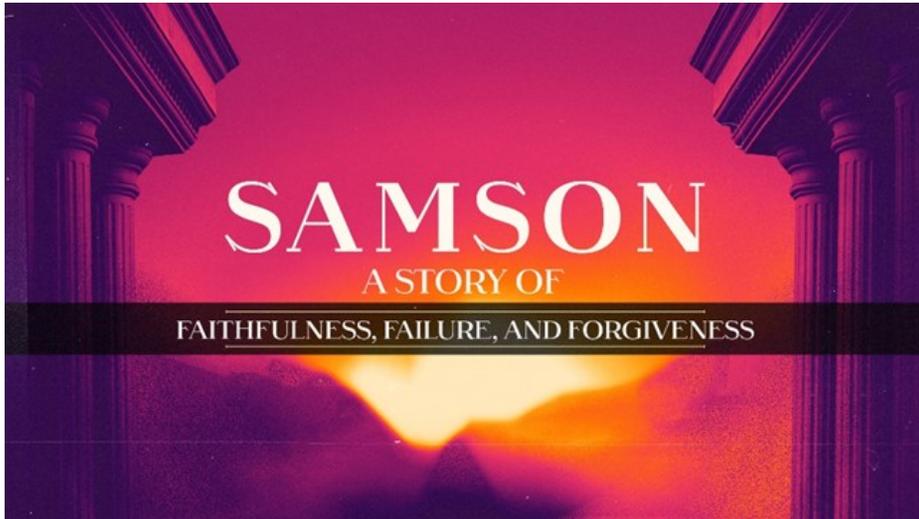
Truth #1 - God loves us as we are, but He loves us too much to leave us as we are. The Israelites sinned again, and God lovingly looked to get their attention so they would return to a right relationship with Him.

Truth #2 - Don't overlook what God will do on an ordinary day in your life.

Truth #3 - God gets the final say over the circumstances in life. According to circumstances, Manoah's wife was unable to have a baby. However, God said to start building a nursery and paint it blue for a boy!

Truth #4 - Just as Samson had guidelines to live by as a Nazirite, God has guidelines for us to follow in His Word as Christians. Disobedience results in consequences, but obedience leads to blessings.

Truth #5 - Manoah's wife understood that God didn't bring them this far to leave them. The same is true for us today. We can trust that where God will guide, He will provide.



Samson: The Struggle to Deal with a Weak Will

The Samson Series - Week 2

Judges 14

Introduction: Samson was a very strong man, but he had a very weak will. What was his biggest struggle with his weak will? Samson has been called a he-man with a she-weakness. Even though he was (1) born of godly parents, (2) set apart from birth to dedicate his life to God as a Nazirite, and (3) elevated to the privileged position of a judge in Israel, he never conquered his tendency toward his desire for women. On the contrary, his desires conquered him. Like Samson, we can have a strong walk with God, but at the same time be vulnerable to giving in to a secret sin when we have a weak will (Hebrews 12:1). God has placed the story of Samson in the Bible so that the errors of Samson are not repeated in our lives.

Six mistakes Samson made that we want to avoid

Mistake #1 - Samson went to the wrong place. (14:1)

Mistake #2 - Samson was looking for the wrong thing. (14:2)

Mistake #3 - Samson rejected godly counsel. (14:3-4)

Mistake #4 - Samson became more and more comfortable compromising his spiritual commitment to God. (14:5-10)

Mistake #5 - Samson continued in a wrong relationship. (14:7)

Mistake #6 - Samson ignored his weaknesses, which would only lead him into more trouble. The same remains true for us today. (14:11-20)

Attitudes that make strong people weak

Attitude #1 - I want it.

Attitude #2 - I deserve it.

Attitude #3 - I can handle it.

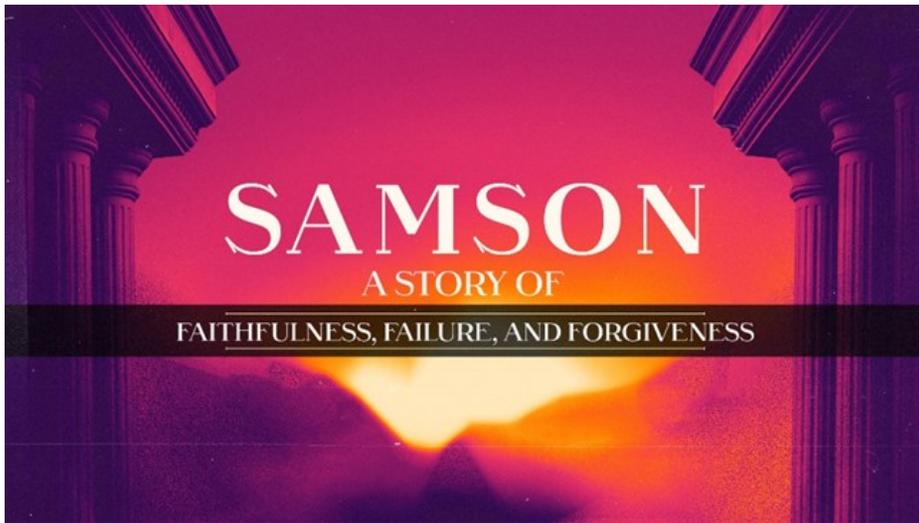
Don't miss this: When I think I can handle temptations on my own, before long, temptations will be handling me.

Attitudes that make weak people strong

Attitude #1 - I acknowledge I have weak areas.

Attitude #2 - I recognize that weak areas will win in my life if I try to be strong apart from relying on the power of God.

Attitude #3 - I know that Satan loves to make strong people weak, but I also know that God loves to make weak people strong!



Small Steps Toward a Big Fall

The Samson Series - Week 3

Judges 15:1-20

Introduction: Sometimes, we read in the Bible about people like Abraham who leave everything to follow God to a place he had never been. Or we read about David facing the giant Goliath, or Moses lifting his staff and leading the entire nation of Israel across the divided Red Sea. And we might think, "I could never be like them." It's almost as if we read about some of the truly great heroes of faith and believe they're in a special class of saints, while we know about ourselves that "a saint I ain't." One of the benefits of studying the lives of Bible characters like Samson is that there's no doubt that "a saint Samson ain't." He may have had special strength... but he also struggled with several weaknesses. Samson is like us in dealing with issues like anger, and sometimes... we're like Samson. By studying Samson's life, we can learn how to avoid costly mistakes and gain valuable life lessons about faithfulness, failure, and forgiveness.

Section #1 - Samson loses his wife and his temper. (15:1-3)

➔ **Notice this:** What Samson did to the Philistines next was not God's divine judgment at work but rather Samson's anger and revenge at work. Although God would not justify Samson's anger and actions, we see again how God

can and will use all things to accomplish His greater purposes.

Section #2 - Samson hits the Philistines hard by burning their crops. (15:4-5)

➔ **Notice this:** Some argue that Samson could not have captured 300 foxes. First, there is nothing that says Samson did this by himself. He may have had other Israelites help him capture 300 foxes. Two, there is nothing that says Samson did this all in one day - it just says Samson did it. He may have had other Israelites capture foxes for him over a certain period of time, which totaled 300 foxes. But also, it must be remembered that Samson was given supernatural strength. God could have given Samson the superhuman strength and speed to capture 300 foxes, set their 150 pairs of tails on fire, and destroy the crops of the Philistines.

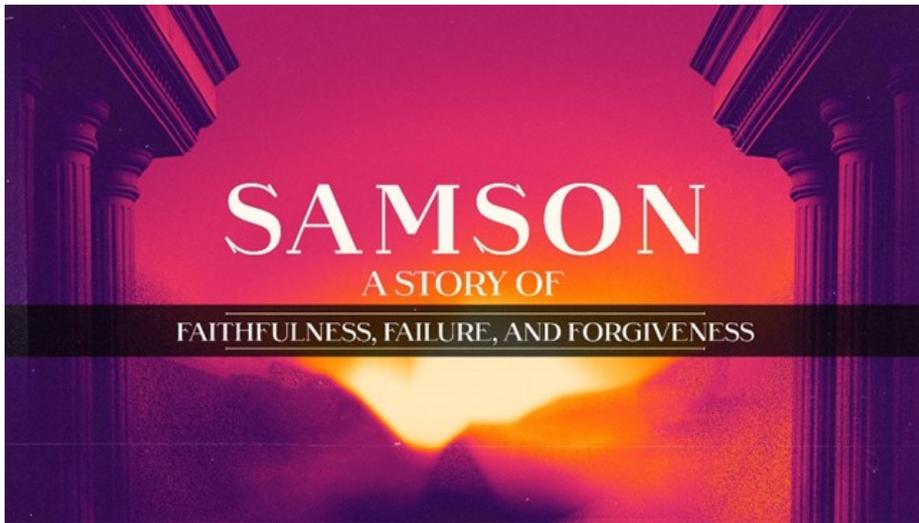
Section #3 - The story of revenge is one that never ends well and where everyone loses. (15:6-17)

➔ **Notice this:** Much of the deep-seated anger, hatred, and pain in our world stems from the toxic desire to retaliate and hurt those who have hurt us. Romans 12:19 tells Christians, "Never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, 'I will take revenge; I will pay them back,' says the LORD." Those who trust in God need to say, "Retaliation and revenge are the job of God, not me. I'll let Him settle the score."

Section #4 - Super Samson must still depend on God to meet his needs. (15:18-20)

➔ **Notice this:** Samson needed this thirst to remind himself of his own weakness apart from God, especially right after a great victory. To realize he needed God for even a drink of water should remind Samson to give credit for his victories to God only, and not to himself.

We are either emotion-driven or Spirit-led. Samson struggled with emotions such as anger, revenge, pride, and lust. We must not let our emotions be our decision makers. We need to pause, pray, and let God lead us.



Small Steps Toward a Big Fall - Part 2

The Samson Series - Week 4

Judges 15:1-20

Section #1 - Samson loses his wife and his temper. (15:1-3)

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What we need to know about anger. Anger is like the red light on the dashboard of our car, indicating that something is wrong under the hood. Anger is not the real problem; it is the warning light of a deeper issue. Bible teacher Chip Ingram writes that three main issues drive our anger: (1) unmet needs (hurt); (2) unmet expectations (frustration); and (3) insecurities (fear).

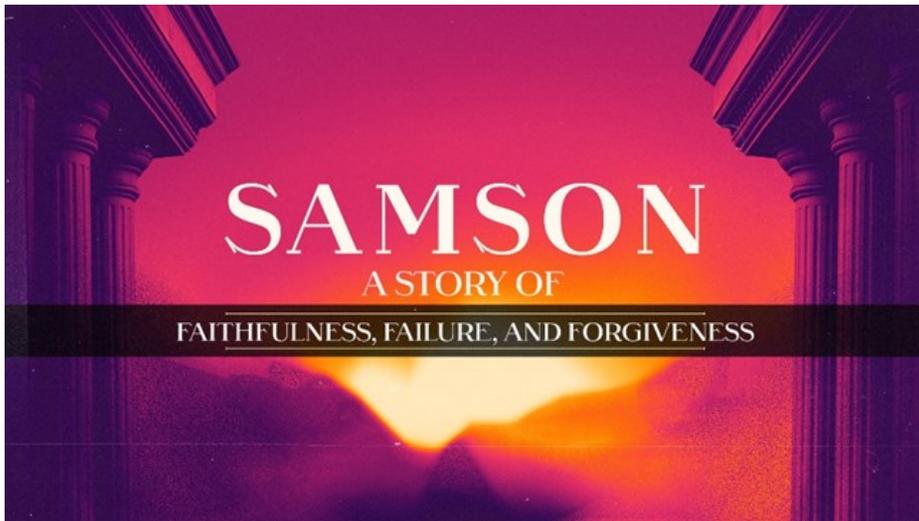
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Who would do this? We shake our heads at Samson and wonder, "Who would be so foolish as to risk so much for so little?" And the answer is that every day, people make those same kinds of bad decisions. They risk their marriage, integrity, the trust of others, and their testimony for God, over a decision they mistakenly believe has low risks and high rewards.

56,250 steps to Gaza. It has been estimated that Samson would take about 56,250 steps to travel 25 miles to Gaza. However, in reality, we know it only took one step to start heading in the wrong direction. One step on an ordinary day, in the wrong direction away from God.

We are either emotion-driven or Spirit-led. Samson struggled with emotions such as anger, revenge, pride, and lust. We must not let our emotions dictate our decisions. We need to pause, pray, and let God lead us.



Samson: A He-Man with a She-Weakness

The Samson Series - Week 5

Judges 16:1-22

Mistakes Samson made that we want to avoid

Mistake #1 - Samson seemed to put his life into categories wrongly and believed that some categories God cared about a lot, and some categories God did not care about so much. However, Samson had to know that God cares about how we live all parts of our lives. (16:1-3)

→ **Notice this:** One ordinary day, Samson is going to go where he shouldn't have gone and will end up doing what he shouldn't have been doing. It has been said that sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay. That statement proved to be exactly true for Samson. Temptation is clever at getting us to rationalize our reasons for giving in to sin.

Mistake #2 - Samson overestimated his ability to resist temptations and underestimated the strength of his temptations. (16:4-5)

→ **Notice this:** Samson fell in love again with the wrong woman again. Delilah was a Philistine woman, which meant she was outside of Israel's faith that worshipped only the one true God. This is another example of the pain and problems that came into Samson's life because he did not guard his heart.

Mistake #3 - Samson takes lightly what he should have been taking seriously. (16:6-15)

→ **Notice this:** The fact that Samson did not reveal the truth to Delilah about the secret of his strength showed that he knew she had manipulative intentions. If Samson's heart had been close to God, he would have saved himself from all kinds of hurt! The heart of the problem is a problem in the heart!

Mistake #4 - Samson thought he could "get away" with sin and escape its consequences. He misinterpreted the delay of God's correction for Samson to repent as a sign that God was okay with what he was doing. He presumed upon God's mercy and continued in his sin, making things far worse. (16:16-22)

Today's Takeaway Truths from God's Word

Truth #1 - No one is immune to temptations.

Truth #2 - If we don't conquer our wrong desires, they will conquer us.

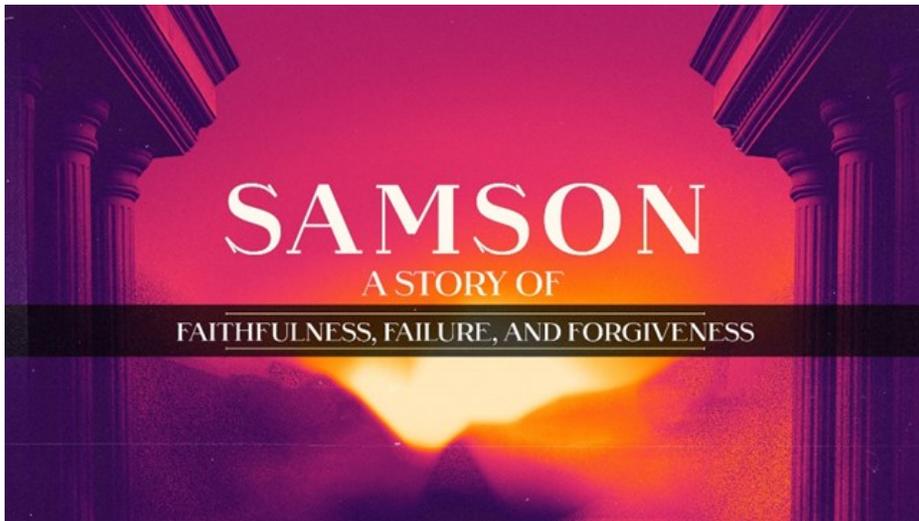
Truth #3 - Temptations are enticing and deceptive, which is how Delilah deceived Samson into sharing the secret of his strength.

Truth #4 - Pride comes before a fall. What is your Achilles heel? Where are you vulnerable to giving in to temptation? What sin easily trips you up? (Hebrews 12:1)

Truth #5 - Every action of the ordinary day makes or unmakes our character.

Truth #6 - Samson's biggest battles were not with others but from within.

Truth #7 - Although we will reap what we sow in life, God's mercy is always greater than our mistakes.



Samson: From Ruin to Redemption

The Samson Series - Week 6

Judges 16:23-31

Introduction: What do you do if you've experienced a failure in life? Does God put us on the proverbial shelf, and can we never find forgiveness or restoration? Or, like Samson, can we go from a ruin to redemption? Samson was a man who failed again and again, and it might seem like he failed so much that God wouldn't love him, much less forgive him and still use him. And yet, God still accomplished His purposes through a man who repeatedly failed. That shows us that by God's grace, we may be down sometimes in life, but we are never out. The godly may trip seven times, but they will get up again (Proverbs 24:16).

Section #1 - Samson the mighty is now mocked, and so is his God, as the Philistines dance before their god Dagon. (16:23-25)

→ **Notice this:** Often, the disobedience of God's people causes others to distrust that God is who He claims to be. This is why our trust must never be in imperfect people but only in our perfect God. Christians can fail us. Church leaders can fail us. But God will never fail us.

Section #2 - Samson begins to prepare his revenge and prays for his redemption. (16:26-28)

→ **Notice this:** It has been incorrectly suggested that since Samson was sure he would die with the others, he was committing suicide. Suicide is murder, and God said in the Ten Commandments, "You shall not murder," which includes self-murder (Exodus 20:13). Although suicide is a sin and can be forgiven, it never receives divine approval. However, Samson's death was not a suicide but a sacrifice. He didn't take his life; he sacrificed it for his people.

Section #3 - Samson's bittersweet death. (16:29-31)

→ **Notice this:** Samson's end was both bitter and sweet. God answered Samson's last prayer, and Samson achieved his greatest victory against the Philistines, but at the cost of his own life. Samson was a hero to Israel. But because of living a life of compromises, instead of dying a glorious hero, he died a tragic hero.

Today's Takeaway Truths from God's Word

Truth #1 - Samson was the great conqueror who never allowed God to conquer him fully.

Truth #2 - Samson is an example of a believer who lives in disobedience. God still loved him and used him, but it was a tragic loss of the great potential his life could have had.

Truth #3 - Never stop seeking God's forgiveness. By God's grace, Samson went from failure to forgiveness and from ruin to redemption. Samson was even mentioned among the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 (Hebrews 11:32).

Truth #4 - God's purposes are always fulfilled. They always have been and always will be (Isaiah 46:10).

Truth #5 - We all leave a legacy in life. What will be yours?