

What You Need to Know About GIDEON & SAMSON:

“The Dangers of Losing the Final Lap”

Study Number Eight – Judges 16:1-31

In this final episode we watch as Samson, with three out of the four parts of his vow broken, follows Delilah towards his tragic end.

And the part of the vow that is still intact is that he's not had a haircut yet. We're going to see that in this passage.

We can't say that Samson ever really did go all out for the Lord. He's almost tripping through life having a good time, thinking that he's got it all together. And the evidence is to the contrary.

Now Samson grew up in a very godly home. Mr. and Mrs. Manoah were really special people—godly folks. He had every advantage going his direction. In fact he had too many advantages. He'd probably been spoiled to the point where nothing was ever done about his defiant, stubborn, resistant spirit.

He has never sought counsel from anyone and he's always told and announced to everybody what he's going to be and what he's going to do.

The defiant spirit is manifested through both the second and third episodes of our story. At 19 he immediately goes to Timnah, the land of the Philistines—he's supposed to be liberating the nation from them—and he finds a young lady that looks good to him. So he tells his folks what he wants. And they go—not willingly at all—but they go.

And it ends up being a very tragic and bitter experience for him. And then in our last episode it was not much better. Instead of really being God's man, liberating the people by mustering an army, he by himself tries to accomplish a single-handed deliverance. In fact he finally does kill a thousand Philistines.

And the study ended with this statement that he ruled for “twenty years in the days of the Philistines.” That's a very important statement because he never liberated Israel from the Philistines. He was only allowed to rule because the Philistines were afraid of him and he was a mighty man.

Now if the twenty years—which we don't know anything about—fall into line with the prior years that we do know something about, which is probably a pretty good prediction, he has become more and more of a flamboyant playboy.

If we want a parallel between his life and what we know about Solomon, we have a really good picture. With all of the strength and with all of this potential residing in this man, he dissipated away, probably through moral experiences.

Because when the scene of the study opens, we've got a whole different guy on our hands.

Instead of trying to marry a young lady to satisfy his desires—we saw him trying to go back to her—he's given up that bit all together. And over the process of these twenty years, the undisciplined side of Samson has come to the surface.

He probably began to use his power and privilege for personal advantage. He's focusing now on his desires rather than on God's desires.

An undisciplined, defiant man cannot capably handle authority.

When we have an undisciplined, defiant spirit, we cannot effectively handle authority when it's delegated. And Samson really didn't know how to lead. He didn't care to be a leader, other than just a figure-head over the fact that he was so strong and he was a military hero, period.

So as the story opens, we're on a downhill slide and it's fast. It looks fast in the story but just as a reminder, he's probably in his early 40s right now.

We think by now he should have known. But realize that most of our marriages are busted up in the early and middle 40s by guys who are trying to prove that they're still virile and that they're still very capable of carrying on a relationship with younger women.

And so it's not out of character that we see Samson at this age doing some of the dumb stuff he's doing in this study.

Let's begin at verse 1.

v. 1 Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her.

“Now Samson went to Gaza and he saw a harlot there, and went in to her.”

We've seen a deterioration from Timnah back to Timnah and now he's going to pay for his pleasure. When someone pays for pleasure they pay in more ways than one.

In the gradual deterioration now it is just to satisfy his desires.

Proverbs 4:23-27

Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put devious lips far from you. Let your eyes look directly ahead and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. Watch the path of your feet, and all your ways will be established. Do not turn to the right nor to the left. Turn your foot from evil.

Notice once again the emphasis in that verse is on the word “saw.” Because throughout every one of the studies, it's always

that which looks good. He's got his eyeballs in the wrong place again. And when we're ruled by our eyes, it's awfully easy to make a decision, because if it looks good, enjoy it.

And such is the case with him in this situation. We're living in a day when people really think it's exciting to have lots of women in their life, especially for men. And to be able to do pretty well what they want when they want to do it.

Charles Swindoll quotes a little experience from Joyce Landorf's book called *Tough and Tender*:

(Tough and Tender by Joyce Landorf)

A man I will call George used to work at my husband's bank. George had recently been divorced and was now establishing himself as the most eligible bachelor about town. Each day the bank tellers excitedly gossiped about his latest word, and the male officers crowded about him at lunch to hear about his most recent sexual escapade. Months went by and George seemed to be living a hysterically marvelous, enviable life. He had taken up residence in a swinging singles apartment at the beach and boasted about having sex every night and twice on Sundays with glorious gorgeous girls! As one married banker marveled, George really has it made!

Phase 2:

One afternoon George came up to my husband's desk and haltingly said, "Uhh, Dick, could I talk to you about something?" Then as nearly as Dick can remember, this is what George related. "You know, Dick. I've really got it made.

I'm free from the attachments and hassles of marriage. I've got this great pad at the beach. I go to bed with one gal after another. Come and go as I please. I do my own thing. But something's really bothering me. I can't figure it out. Every morning as I get dressed for work I look into the mirror and I think, what was last night's little game all about anyway? Sure, the girl was good looking. She was good in bed. She left this morning without bugging me, but is that all there is to life? I asked myself. If this lifestyle is what every guy thinks he wants, why am I so depressed? Why do I feel a cold nothingness all the time?"

He stopped and leaned closer to Dick and quietly continued, "I know the guys here think it would be fantastic to have this kind of liberated freedom, but honestly, Dick, honest to God, I hate this life." And then wistfully he added, "You know what I would really like? I would really like to go home tonight, smell supper cooking, hug my wife hello, spend an evening telling her and showing her how much I love her. I would like to go to bed with her and not have to prove my virility, not have to sexually perform above the call of duty, but just give her love, my life, and go to sleep knowing she'd be there in the morning.

(source unknown)

Deep down inside guys will tell us that. And it's when we violate biblical principles like this to experience the loneliness of a guy like George. Never developing any deep and enduring relationships, coupling it with respect and responsibility for one another in a marital relationship. We've got some tragic scars, many of whom will never really know the joy of the

relationship that He talks about in this experience.

Samson's at that point now. He's really messing around. And it didn't happen all at once. It's been a gradual thing. We need to see that.

v. 2 When it was told to the Gazites, saying, “Samson has come here,” they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. And they kept silent all night, saying, “Let us wait until the morning light, then we will kill him.”

“When it was told to the Gazites, saying, ‘Samson has come here,’ they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. And they kept silent all night, saying, ‘Let us wait until the morning light, then we will kill him.’”

And so wherever Samson went, people knew it. They watched for him. When he came in they were aware that he was there. And the news circulated around town. Several of the guys said this was the time to get him.

v. 3 Now Samson lay until midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the city gate and the two posts and pulled them up along with the bars; then he put them on his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the mountain which is opposite Hebron.

“Now Samson lay until midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the city gate and the two posts and pulled them up along with the bars; then he put them on his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the mountain which is opposite Hebron.”

Talk about an incredible hulk, this guy could probably hold the world records of weight lifting by what he did at that point.

He picked up the gate, left the city defenseless, took it over to the hill facing toward Hebron and deposited them there, just to let those guys know they weren't messing around.

v. 4 After this it came about that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.

“After this”—meaning Gaza—“it came about that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.”

This guy has a girl in every port. That little word “love” has nothing to do with real love.

What he's talking about here is living with somebody and expressing love. He's given up on marriage all together, went to the harlot in Gaza. And now he's just going to live with Delilah, as long as she sees things his way and she's attractive to him.

So “he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek,”

Part of the land of the Philistines, “whose name was Delilah.”

v. 5 And the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and said to her, “Entice him, and see where his great strength lies and how we may overpower him that we may bind him to afflict him. Then we will each give you eleven hundred pieces of silver.”

“And the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and said to her, ‘Entice him, and see where his great strength lies and how we may overpower him that we may bind him to afflict him. Then we will each give you eleven hundred pieces of silver.’”

These guys are so eager to get ahold of Samson, they’re going to really pay. Notice that the little word “entice” is the same word that we had back in Timnah earlier.

Remember the men when they came and said, “Listen Miss Philistine, if you don’t get the answer to that riddle by the seventh day, we’ll burn your house with you and your household.” And it says, “entice him.”

Now these Philistines knew where his weakness was. They just didn’t know where his strength was.

He’s a he-man with she troubles. They knew he had a weakness for women and they’re going to use the only tool at their disposal to bring about his downfall.

v. 6 So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me where your great strength is and how you may be bound to afflict you.”

“So Delilah said to Samson, ‘Please tell me where your great strength is and how you may be bound to afflict you.’”

Talk about a frontal attack. He has to be stupid not to see what she’s trying to say!

“Hey sweetie, tell me what the secret of your strength is so we can kill you.” She’s just coming right straight on with it.

And he’s just oblivious! He’s intoxicated with this woman. There are no chains that are stronger than the chains woven by illicit love.

Guys will even give up their wives and families for something like this. It’s tragic to have to say it, but a lot of men will give up their ministry for it too. It’s a sad, sad day in which we live. Can’t see through it! See the futility of it, how ridiculous, how much it brings disgrace to the Lord!

When we face moral temptation the scripture teaches us to flee. Samson violates that right away. He’s going to play around. It’s time now to leave.

v. 7 And Samson said to her, “If they bind me with seven fresh cords that have not been dried, then I

shall become weak and be like any other man.”

“And Samson said to her, ‘If they bind me with seven fresh cords that have not been dried, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.’”

“We’re going to play a little game of cat and mouse here now honey.”

v. 8 Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh cords that had not been dried, and she bound him with them.

“Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh cords that had not been dried, and she bound him with them.”

v. 9 Now she had men lying in wait in an inner room. And she said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” But he snapped the cords as a string of tow snaps when it touches fire. So his strength was not discovered.

“Now she had these men lying in wait in an inner room. And she said to him, ‘The Philistines are upon you, Samson!’ But he snapped the cords as a string of tow snaps when it touches fire. So his strength was not discovered.”

Just pop go the chords, and he’s ready for anything that’s going to come. Just totally able to handle the whole situation,

thank you!

v. 10 Then Delilah said to Samson, “Behold, you have deceived me and told me lies; now please tell me, how you may be bound.”

“Then Delilah said to Samson, ‘Behold, you have deceived me and told me lies; now please tell me, how you may be bound.’”

Look who’s talking! Talk about somebody deceiving and telling lies. She’s telling as many as he is.

“tell me how you may be bound.”

“Samson, you’re going to get hurt. You’re messing around. You better make an exit!”

v. 11 And he said to her, “If they bind me tightly with new ropes which have not been used, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.”

“And he said to her, ‘If they bind me tightly with new ropes which have not been used, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.’”

v. 12 So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them and said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” For the men were lying in wait in the inner room. But he snapped the ropes from his arms like a thread.

“So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them and said to him, ‘The Philistines are upon you, Samson!’ For the men were lying in wait in the inner room. But he snapped the ropes from his arms like a thread.”

Now that is like what we saw in episode #2 in this prolonged drama to bring about the termination of Samson’s effectiveness and he still hasn’t learned a lesson. In fact, look at verse 13.

v. 13 Then Delilah said to Samson, “Up to now you have deceived me and told me lies; tell me how you may be bound.” And he said to her, “If you weave the seven locks of my hair with the web and fasten it with a pin, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.”

“Then Delilah said to Samson, ‘Up to now you have deceived me and you’ve told me lies; tell me how you may be bound.’ And he said to her, ‘If you weave the seven locks of my hair with the web and fasten it with a pin, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.’”

“Samson, you’re getting too close for comfort! You’re in trouble.”

v. 14 So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his hair and wove them into the web. And she fastened it with the pin, and said to him, “The

Philistines are upon you, Samson!” But he awoke from his sleep and pulled out the pin of the loom and the web.

“So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his hair and wove them into the web. And she fastened it with the pin, and said to him, ‘The Philistines are upon you, Samson!’ But he awoke from his sleep and pulled out the pin of the loom and the web.”

Now she really comes right down to the personal. This is where he got it in Timnah, and here’s where he’s going to get it now.

v. 15 Then she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with me? You have deceived me these three times and have not told me where your great strength is.”

“Then she said to him, ‘How can you say, “I love you,” when your heart is not with me? You have deceived me these three times and have not told me where your great strength is.”’

And he cannot stand a bawling woman so we’re in trouble.

This is a great verse to use in marriage counseling because it’s a great verse on communication, and the conflict between the man and the woman—as far as communication is concerned.

“How can you say that ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with

me?”

The man is a physical creature and he will use the words “I love you” very glibly for physical advantage. Oftentimes to say, “I really love me and want to use you.”

A woman detects that insincerity and has difficulty responding in the relationship. It’s got to be more than “I love you!” Your heart has to be in it. The only way that can be in it is by communication openness in the marriage relationship. And that’s something that men just flat have to get over.

We talk and talk and talk in the relationship. That’s communication. We reveal all of our heart and there are no secrets. We tell the whole story.

Delilah’s very upset. She’s been lied to three times and so she makes it personal and she questions his love.

“You have deceived me these three times and you have not told me where your strength is.”

v. 16 And it came about when she pressed him daily with her words and urged him, that his soul was annoyed to death.

“And it came about when she pressed him daily with her words and urged him, that his soul was annoyed to death.”

Many times we become very vulnerable when we have a

victory in our lives over temptation. We win one and then we lose six. We really get the big head when we're victorious one time. And then BOOM! the undisciplined part of us blows to the surface and we get knocked out of the water and we wonder what in the world happened.

We have to watch that. Eve bit the dust after a couple of these encounters in the garden.

Joseph is the coolest guy of all though. When Mrs. Potiphar wants a relationship in Genesis 39, it says that “when she pressed him daily he did not consent to be with her or to lie by her.” (ref. Genesis 39:10)

On a daily basis Joseph manifested the steel quality of his character in moral matters by avoiding it. Thankfully when she finally came right down to it and the chips were down, he left his coat and got out of that situation.

It's better to lose our coat and keep our character. And man he flat moved out, following scriptural principles on how to handle moral temptation.

Now it doesn't say here that she cried or did a lot of whining, but that had to be in it.

“She pressed him daily,” she could see all those dollars and cents that were waiting for her from these Philistine lords—1,100 pieces of silver from each one.

And now the situation where he's living with her, she pushes him on a daily basis. And like in chapter 13, when the women of Timnah wept before him seven days while their feast lasted, it came about on the seventh day that he told her because she pressed him so hard! He's "annoyed to death."

It's like having a baby. The crying and squealing and carrying on. Put them up over your shoulder, and pat away like crazy, waiting for that expectant burp. And then all of a sudden it comes out, and sometimes it's liquid and running down our back. Immediately there is total relaxation in our arms. And that little baby is just saying, "Oh, thanks so much" with great appreciation.

She begged and begged until he burped. We can just feel the relaxation in verse 17. It's like, "I just can't take it any longer! This is it!" And he just dumps it all out.

v. 17 So he told her all that was in his heart and said to her, "A razor has never come on my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaved, then my strength will leave me and I shall become weak and be like any other man."

"So he told her all that was in his heart and said to her, 'A razor has not come on my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb.'"

Right there he realizes that what he's telling her is bringing a termination to his Nazirite vow. He knows it himself. He says:

“I have been a Nazaritie to God from my mother’s womb. If I am shaved, then my strength will leave me and I shall become weak and be like any other man.”

Wearied by her ceaseless chidings, questioning of his love and devotion—it’s just like Timnah—he tells her his whole heart.

Solomon said, “I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets; in her hands are bands. Whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be taken by her.” (ref. Ecclesiastes 7:26)

v. 18 When Delilah saw that he had told her all that was in his heart, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, “Come up once more, for he has told me all that is in his heart.” Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and brought the money in their hands.

“When Delilah saw that he had told her all that was in his heart,”—she could tell that he was totally relaxed and was telling the truth.

“she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, ‘Come up once more, for he has told me all that is in his heart.’ Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and brought the money in their hands.”

At this point he has taken his heart away from the Lord and

given it to this woman.

Luke 12:34

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Till this fateful night Samson's heart belonged to the Lord. And as this awful step is taken, he's now given his heart to this evil woman.

They brought the money they promised.

v. 19 And she made him sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his hair. Then she began to afflict him, and his strength left him.

“And she made him sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his hair. Then she began to afflict him, and his strength left him.”

Having violated the conditions of the Nazirite vow, he's now just like everybody else. That's a tragedy, isn't it?

One commentator said:

Samson, when he was strong and brave, strangled the lion. But he could not strangle his own lust. He burst the fetters of his foes, but not the cords of his own passions. He burned up the crops of others, and lost the fruit of his own virtues. When

burning with the flame enkindled by a single woman, like a moth fluttering around a candle flame, though already scorched by it, Samson, unwarned by his narrow escape from one danger, which he incurred by lust, rushes into another.
(source unknown)

v. 20 And she said, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” And he awoke from his sleep and said, “I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him.

“And she said, ‘The Philistines are upon you, Samson!’ And he awoke from his sleep and said, ‘I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.’ But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him.”

He thought he was invincible. He thought he still had everything under control. And a lot of people are troubled by that last statement that “he did not know the Lord had departed from him.”

A lot of guys in ministry bite the dust and often they are fooling themselves. Before the truth is ever known, or ever out, the effect on their ministry is apparent.

We can see more and more the struggle to try to have a ministry while living in sin. But we see God’s hand of blessing off of it and the only guy who really feels he’s fooling everybody is the guy involved in the situation. There’s a

deterioration of ministry. The lack of blessing, the lack of people coming and feeling that the Spirit of God is speaking through the Word of God. That the guy who's speaking is living immorally, they are living in sin.

Samson, Lord's departed, even though you don't know it.

He finds out very quickly.

v. 21 Then the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze chains, and he was a grinder in the prison.

“Then the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze chains, and he was a grinder in the prison.”

The first thing they did was grab him and gouge out his eyes. That's been the offending member ever since he went to Timnah. He's always been looking in the wrong place.

When God allows His chastening hand to fall upon the offending member, at least he'll never look at another Philistine woman. And the execution is made by Philistine men.

They brought him down to Gaza, the place of that first sin as this chapter opened, and he became a grinder in the prison.

They took his eyes, the chastening hand of God upon the offending member, because that's what got him into all this trouble.

v. 22 However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it was shaved off.

“However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it was shaved off.”

We almost expect it has. Maybe there's another possibility that something good might happen.

v. 23 Now the lords of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice, for they said, “Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hands.”

“Now the lords of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice, for they said, ‘Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hands.’”

What's wrong with that? Dagon didn't do it, Samson did it by himself. He whipped himself in the moral and the personal areas and God had no alternative but to honor the Nazirite vow that had been broken and his strength was gone.

Verse 24—a great big crowd gathers to celebrate. Remember that happened in our last study, but the Spirit of God came mightily upon him and he slew a thousand of them and then

they disbursed.

v. 24 When the people saw him, they praised their god, for they said, “Our god has given our enemy into our hands, even the destroyer of our country, who has slain many of us.”

“When the people saw him, they praised their god, for they said, ‘Our god has given our enemy into our hands, even the destroyer of our country, who has slain many of us.’”

v. 25 It so happened when they were in high spirits, that they said, “Call for Samson, that he may amuse us.” So they called for Samson from the prison, and he entertained them. And they made him stand between the pillars.

“It so happened when they were in high spirits,”—and we could say high on the spirits—“that they said, ‘Call for Samson, that he may amuse us.’ So they called for Samson from the prison, and he entertained them.”

How? By tripping around, stumbling and falling, acting like a spectacle. We learn by that that the person who’s out of fellowship with God plays around with sin and becomes a laughing stock to the world.

We saw that in Timnah. When the guys came in the room and said, “We know what’s sweeter than honey and what’s stronger than a lion!” And they start laughing at Samson. He

gets mad, calls her a heifer and heads to the house.

We always find that the world will laugh at Christians who sin and say, “Well, that’s just another excuse for why I am never becoming a Christian.” Oh the damage that’s done.

They asked “that he may amuse us” and they brought him out and “he entertained them.”

“And they made him stand between the pillars.”

This next verse verifies his temperament.

v. 26 Then Samson said to the boy who was holding his hand, “Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them.”

“Then Samson said to the boy who was holding his hand,”

Another pure sanguine in the New Testament was Andrew. Seen with a little lad, sanguines would make perfect youth leaders, developing in-depth relationships with kids.

Samson loved having fun. He enjoyed being around kids. Here a little guy from the Philistines has taken up with him. He’s leading him all around. He’s his sidekick, his buddy.

“Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them.”

v. 27 Now the house was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there. And about 3,000 men and women were on the roof looking on while Samson was amusing them.

“Now the house was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there. And about 3,000 men and women were on the roof looking on while Samson was amusing them.”

v. 28 Then Samson called to the Lord and said, “O Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.”

“Then Samson called to the Lord and said, ‘O Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.’”

In our last study he cried for water. This time he pleads with the Lord in brokenness and submission. Oh if he would have learned this a long time ago and said, “Please Lord, use me as a liberator against these Philistines! Strengthen me!”

“When you call upon the Lord, He will deliver us.” (Psalm 50:15)

He cries to be remembered, to be strengthened. “Just this time only Lord!”

v. 29 And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and braced himself against them, the one with his right hand and the other with his left.

“And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and braced himself against them, the one with his right hand and the other with his left.”

v. 30 And Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” And he bent with all his might so that the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he killed in his life.

“And Samson said, ‘Let me die with the Philistines!’ And he bent with all his might so that the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he killed in his life.”

Samson’s final act were arms outstretched in revenge and vengeance against the Philistines. Christ’s arms were outstretched in forgiveness, purchasing redemption for a lost and dying world.

“Samson said, ‘Let me die with the Philistines!’”

There’s a principle here and that is, when we live too long in sin we’ve lost the right to live.

Samson realizes he doesn't have any future so he requests that he can die with them.

“the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he killed in his life.”

Let's put that in other terminology:

He did more in dying to liberate the children of Israel from the Philistines than he did during his whole lifetime.

That's a sad commentary.

Samson has words of repentance, no words of regret, only burning passion for revenge.

Delilah probably also died in this mess. She certainly had to be there along with another vast host of people and priests. More is done in that moment to liberate Israel than he did in his whole lifetime.

Now there's one more tragic note, as if we haven't had enough already.

v. 31 Then his brothers and all his father's household came down, took him, brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. Thus he had judged Israel twenty years.

“Then his brothers and all his father’s household came down, took him, brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. Thus he had judged Israel for twenty years.”

The tragedy is that during these twenty years of judgeship, this very righteous and godly man by the name of Manoah went to be with the Lord.

Let’s look at a verse in Genesis. Jacob is already feeling like Joseph is dead, Simeon has been apprehended and kept in Egypt by Joseph, unbeknownst to Jacob, as a ransom until the boys come back and get Benjamin and take him down there. And the boys have just come home and they’ve asked for Benjamin. And this is what daddy says:

Genesis 42:38

My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead and he alone is left. If harm should befall him on the journey you’re taking, then you will bring my gray hair down to sheol in sorry.

There is a vow, he can’t take any more. Manoah, because of the broken heart and the disappointment over the way Samson lived and acted with his defiant spirit, and the tragic things that happened in his life, brought this daddy to an early grave.

That's not unrealistic, because that dad's life was bound up in that son. It's his only son, the only child he'd ever had. To see him go wayward and live such a selfish life, dissipating all the possibilities that could have been his. Probably really hurt that father in a way that we'll never know.

Alright the lessons that come out of this study are:

Lesson #1: Moral deterioration is a process of time.

Many times we see moral situations happen and we say, "Oh man, I can't believe that. It just happened all of a sudden." It doesn't. There's a process of time.

Lesson #2: Samson is defeated because he didn't learn his lesson at Timnah.

It's one thing to fail one time and deal with it before the Lord. The Lord is very gracious and forgiving on first offenders like that. We see it in Jonah refusing to go to Nineveh. We see it over and over again.

The God of the second lap, the God of the second mile, second chance—we learn from the lesson and go on from there.

Lesson #3: The only way to victory in moral temptation is to flee it.

Someone has said:

We've got an internal, external and infernal enemy and you handle them all differently.
(source unknown)

The internal enemy is the flesh—our old nature—and it responds and we need to flee when it is coming alive. Secondly, our external enemy is the world around us. And the scripture teaches us not to be conformed to it. And our infernal enemy is the evil one and he will always nail us in the spiritual. And if he has whipped us today it's because we have not had time to be in the Word and in prayer.

Lesson #4: Sin blinds and it binds and it grinds.

He was blinded, he was bound, and then he became a grinder in the prison.

Lesson #5: We see the faithfulness of the Lord to answer his last prayer.

“You know, just remember one more time Lord. Just strengthen me.”

Lesson #6: A man walking out of fellowship with God becomes a laughing-stock to the world.

We saw that at the celebration, the fun they made of him.

Lesson #7: Samson, like the Lord Jesus, destroyed the enemies in his death. For Samson it was the Philistines, and

for the Lord Jesus it was the forces of evil and the satanic kingdom.

Lesson #8: Playing with temptation will destroy you and it is our responsibility to meet temptation with the Word of God, like the Lord Jesus did in Matthew 4 and Luke 4.

1 Corinthians 10:13

There is no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will look at temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear.

As we conclude this series of studies, we've looked at the life of Samson and the life of Gideon. As we wrap up, our hope is that each one knows Jesus Christ personally.

And as Christians, hang tough, okay? Don't be a quitter. Don't compromise with society. Live by biblical principle. We'll never miss. We'll be becoming more Christlike, and the fruit that's borne through our life will make up for any denial that we've made of the flesh when it goes on a rampage.

But when we try to head off in directions that look so dramatic like George's, listen to him. His desire ultimately is just to have somebody be there when he wakes up in the morning.

Father, we thank You for this study. We thank You for the fact that out of the lives of these men in the Old Testament we

can learn so many lessons. You certainly didn't clothe the wrongs and cover them up, You've let us see them. We can realize that we can relate from the principles that are taught as a result of seeing real life in action. We ask now that You'll dismiss us with Your blessing and benediction. May the Spirit of God speak to each of us as a result of our time. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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What You Need to Know About GIDEON & SAMSON:

“The Dangers of Losing the Final Lap”

Study Number Eight – Judges 16:1-31

NOTES

v. 1 Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her.

v. 2 When it was told to the Gazites, saying, “Samson has come here,” they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. And they kept silent all night, saying, “Let us wait until the morning light, then we will kill him.”

v. 3 Now Samson lay until midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the city gate and the two posts and pulled them up along with the bars; then he put them on his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the mountain which is opposite Hebron.

v. 4 After this it came about that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.

v. 5 And the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and said to her, “Entice him, and see where his great strength lies and how we may overpower him that we may bind him to afflict him. Then we will each give you eleven hundred pieces of silver.”

v. 6 So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me where your great strength is and how you may be bound to afflict you.”

v. 7 And Samson said to her, “If they bind me with seven fresh cords that have not been dried, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.”

v. 8 Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh cords that had not been dried, and she bound him with them.

v. 9 Now she had men lying in wait in an inner room. And she said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” But he snapped the cords as a string of tow snaps when it touches fire. So his strength was not discovered.

v. 10 Then Delilah said to Samson, “Behold, you have deceived me and told me lies; now please tell me, how you may be bound.”

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v. 11 And he said to her, “If they bind me tightly with new ropes which have not been used, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.”

v. 12 So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them and said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” For the men were lying in wait in the inner room. But he snapped the ropes from his arms like a thread.

v. 13 Then Delilah said to Samson, “Up to now you have deceived me and told me lies; tell me how you may be bound.” And he said to her, “If you weave the seven locks of my hair with the web and fasten it with a pin, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.”

v. 14 So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his hair and wove them into the web. And she fastened it with the pin, and said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” But he awoke from his sleep and pulled out the pin of the loom and the web.

v. 15 Then she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with me? You have deceived me these three times and have not told me where your great strength is.”

v. 16 And it came about when she pressed him daily with her words and urged him, that his soul was annoyed to death.

v. 17 So he told her all that was in his heart and said to her, “A razor has never come on my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb. If I am shaved, then my strength will leave me and I shall become weak and be like any other man.”

v. 18 When Delilah saw that he had told her all that was in his heart, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, “Come up once more, for he has told me all that is in his heart.” Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and brought the money in their hands.

v. 19 And she made him sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his hair. Then she began to afflict him, and his strength left him.

v. 20 And she said, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” And he awoke from his sleep and said, “I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him.

v. 21 Then the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze chains, and he was a grinder in the prison.

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v. 22 However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it was shaved off.

v. 23 Now the lords of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice, for they said, “Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hands.”

v. 24 When the people saw him, they praised their god, for they said, “Our god has given our enemy into our hands, even the destroyer of our country, who has slain many of us.”

v. 25 It so happened when they were in high spirits, that they said, “Call for Samson, that he may amuse us.” So they called for Samson from the prison, and he entertained them. And they made him stand between the pillars.

v. 26 Then Samson said to the boy who was holding his hand, “Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them.”

v. 27 Now the house was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there. And about 3,000 men and women were on the roof looking on while Samson was amusing them.

v. 28 Then Samson called to the Lord and said, “O Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.”

v. 29 And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and braced himself against them, the one with his right hand and the other with his left.

v. 30 And Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” And he bent with all his might so that the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he killed in his life.

v. 31 Then his brothers and all his father’s household came down, took him, brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. Thus he had judged Israel twenty years.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Judges 16:1-31 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What does Samson do in verse 3?

3. What do the Philistines ask of Delilah, according to verse 5?

4. What is Delilah's question in verse 15?

5. What tactic does Delilah use to get Samson to reveal his heart?

6. What transpired in verse 20?

7. What did the Philistines do to Samson, according to verse 21?

8. What is Samson's final prayer and act, according to verses 28-30?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Moral deterioration is a process of time. We see this in his relationship with the harlot at Gaza and his relationship with Delilah.

LESSON #2: Samson is defeated because he did not learn his lesson at Timnah.

LESSON #3: The only way to victory in moral temptation is to flee it.

LESSON #4: Sin blinds, sin binds, and sin grinds.

LESSON #5: How faithful the Lord is to answer his final prayer.

LESSON #6: A man walking out of fellowship with God becomes a laughing-stock to the world.

LESSON #7: Samson, like the Lord Jesus, destroyed the enemies in his death. For Samson it was the Philistines, and for the Lord Jesus, it was all the forces of evil and Satan's kingdom.

LESSON #8: Playing with temptation will destroy you.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

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