

A TRAGIC END TO A TRAGIC LIFE

Judges 13-16

Drunk on Skid Row Divorce party

Contentment is NOT based so much on what you want out of life as on the decisions you make each day.

Wrong choices today produce results that affect rest of your life!

Judges—“Everyone did what’s right in his own eyes”

They didn’t have a leader.

No one challenged them to follow God’s way!

So everyone did whatever felt good to them.

LIBERATION FROM PHILISTINES 13:1-16:31

When Israel again did evil, God sent Philistines to oppress them.

So God raised up a deliverer for His people.

SAMSON’S BIRTH AND PROMISE 13

Hebrews 11 mentions this deliverer among those included in its “hall of faith”—people who line up to testify that it’s worth it to trust God and follow Him, even when we can’t see where we’re going:

Many reasons to believe Samson would make a great leader:

1) Godly parents 13:4-8

2) Miraculous birth 13:2-3

3) Called to God’s service from birth 13:5

4) Godly training 13:8

5) God was with him 13:24-25

6) He was endowed with extraordinary strength

7) God delivered him repeatedly from physical dangers 14:5-6

8) God gave purpose for living from beginning: deliver Israel 13:5

He was unique in that his birth was prophesied by an angel and he was separated from others by a Nazirite vow from birth.

Judges 13:5 ... you will conceive and give birth to a son. No razor may be used on his head, because the boy is to be a Nazirite, set apart to God from birth, and he will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines.”

In this way Samson was set apart for God’s service from birth.

He was especially empowered by God’s Spirit

13:24 The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and **the LORD blessed him**, 25 and **the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him**

14:6 **The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power** so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. . . .

14:19 Then **the Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power**. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of their belongings and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle...

15:14 As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came toward him shouting. **The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power.** The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands.

It's possible to be used by God mightily and still live for yourself.

SAMSON'S CARNALITY 14-16:20a

Samson's parents demonstrate commitment to *what God wants*.

In spite of being taught God's ways—HE wanted to go *his own way*!

Even children with spiritual head start can plunge into carnality!

[This tendency observed in each phase of his life:]

Samson and his marriage 14-15:2

Samson and his conflicts with the Philistines 15:3-20

Samson and the prostitute 16:1-3

Samson and Delilah 16:4-20a

[Samson's life choices, warn us of traps we should avoid falling into:]

1. In spite of special circumstances of his birth and unique promise for his future, Samson wanted to be like everyone else.

God's plan for his life was that he should be "*set apart*," that he should be *different* from the crowd.

Samson's desire was to be *the same* as people around him.

2. Samson used his God-given talents for his own benefit and demonstrated greater interest in chasing beautiful women than in obeying God's will.

3. Samson's choice of women was based on external things--She was GOOD LOOKING!

14:1 Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman. 2 When he returned, he said to his father and mother, "***I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife.***" 3 His father and mother replied, "***Isn't there an acceptable woman among your relatives or among all our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?***" But Samson said to his father, "***Get her for me. She's the right one for me [NAS= "she looks good to me].***" 4 (His parents did not know that this was from the LORD, who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines; for at that time they were ruling over Israel.) ... 7 Then he went down and talked with the woman, and ***he liked her [=she looked good to him].***

This was love based on looks — it was *lust*!

Swindoll warns: "Lust is one flame you dare not fan. You'll get burned if you do."

Children, young people, how do YOU decide what kind of person YOU want to marry?

Samson decided by checking out the outside. ***How nice looking is she?***

3 times he refers to her outer beauty — her good looks.

Never mentions internal qualities! What was she like on the inside?

4) Samson's plan for the future ignored God's revealed will.

14:3 His father and mother replied, ***"Isn't there an acceptable woman among your relatives or among all our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?"*** But Samson said to his father, ***"Get her for me. She's the right one for me [= "she looks good to me]."***

Exod 34:16 And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.

Dt 7:3 Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons,

16:1 One day Samson went to **Gaza**, where **he saw a prostitute. He went in to spend the night with her.**

16:4 Some time later, **he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek** whose name was Delilah.

5) Samson used his gifts (gifts God had given) to satisfy his own desires and draw attention to himself.

14:19 Then **the Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power**. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of their belongings and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. **Burning with anger**, he went up to his father's house.

15:7 Samson said to them, "Since you've acted like this, **I won't stop until I get my revenge on you.**" **8 He attacked them viciously** and slaughtered many of them. . . . **11** Then three thousand men from Judah went down to the cave in the rock of Etam and said to Samson, "Don't you realize that the Philistines are rulers over us? What have you done to us?" He answered, "I merely **did to them what they did to me.**"

15:15 Finding a fresh jawbone of a donkey, he grabbed it and struck down a thousand men.

16 Then Samson said, "With a donkey's jawbone I have made donkeys of them. With a donkey's jawbone **I have killed a thousand men.**"

16:28 Then Samson prayed to the LORD, "O Sovereign LORD, remember me. O God, please strengthen me just once more, and **let me with one blow get revenge** on the Philistines for my two eyes."

God used him against Philistines, but it wasn't because Samson was seeking to be an instrument for God! *He was fighting his own battle!*

6) Samson traded the secrets of his walk with God to a pagan woman for momentary pleasure.

16:15 Then she said to him, ***"How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time*** you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength." **16** With such nagging **she prodded him day after day until he was tired to death.** **17** So **he told her everything.** "No razor has ever been used on my

head,” he said, “because I have been a Nazirite **set apart to God** since birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man.” 18 When Delilah saw that **he had told her everything**, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines,...

7) **Samson drifted so far from fellowship with God that he never knew when God left him.**

16:20 Then she called, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!” He awoke from his sleep and thought, “I’ll go out as before and shake myself free.” But **he did not know that the LORD had left him.**

SAMSON’S DEFEAT 16:20b-22

Samson’s carnality led to repeated frustration and dissatisfaction

14:16 Samson’s wife threw herself on him, sobbing, “You hate me! You don’t really love me. You’ve given my people a riddle, but you haven’t told me the answer.” “I haven’t even explained it to my father or mother,” he replied, “so why should I explain it to you?” 17 She cried the whole seven days of the feast. So on the seventh day he finally told her, because she continued to press him. She in turn explained the riddle to her people.

14:20 Samson’s wife was given to the friend who had attended him at his wedding.

After he took vengeance, the Philistines burned her and her father to death.

Later, the people of Gaza stayed up all night plotting to kill him at dawn.

He fell in love with Delilah and the people bribed her to find out his secrets, so she betrayed him for money

16:15 Then she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when you won’t confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven’t told me the secret of your great strength.” 16 With such nagging she prodded him day after day until **he was tired to death.**

Samson never learned. He kept falling into same trap.

Carnal tendencies eventually caused Samson’s defeat.

Thus Samson went down in defeat.

Tragic commentary: Samson wasn’t aware God had left him.

16:21 Then the Philistines (1) seized him (2) gouged out his eyes and (3) took him down to Gaza, (4) binding him with bronze shackles, (5) they set him to grinding in the prison.

Life committed to seeking pleasure and power exacts a huge price:

The choices we make today affect the rest of our lives!

=> **GRACE– 16:22** But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

SAMSON’S VICTORY 16:23-31

God wasn’t finished with Samson.

In their pride and self-confidence, Philistines made fun of Samson but forgot to assure his continued weakness by keeping his hair short.

Samson earned victory for God’s people; it cost him his life.

Samson provides warning concerning danger of carnal desires; teaches God's love & forgiveness for His people.

God still used Samson to liberate people, in spite of human weakness.

Samson learned hard way—His tragic story leaves graphic lesson of danger of living for self—pursuing success by the world's standards.

It's better to follow God's standards from the start!

His story is an object lesson of God's grace. *God used him anyway!*

What might he have accomplished if he'd been committed to follow God's way?