

DEVOTIONAL

SAMSON

See a Victory // March 6, 2022

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Discussion Starter: James 4:4 says, “friendship with the world is enmity with God.” Why do you think being a friend with the world makes one an enemy of God?

Key Text: “Now the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to rejoice, and they said, “Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hand.”²⁴ And when the people saw him, they praised their god. For they said, “Our god has given our enemy into our hand, the ravager of our country, who has killed many of us.”²⁵ And when their hearts were merry, they said, “Call Samson, that he may entertain us.” So they called Samson out of the prison, and he entertained them. They made him stand between the pillars.²⁶ And Samson said to the young man who held him by the hand, “Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them.”²⁷ Now the house was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there, and on the roof there were about 3,000 men and women, who looked on while Samson entertained.²⁸ Then Samson called to the LORD and said, “O Lord GOD, please remember me and please strengthen me only this once, O God, that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes.”²⁹ And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and he leaned his weight against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other.³⁰ And Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines.” Then he bowed with all his strength, and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he had killed during his life.³¹ Then his brothers and all his family came down and took him and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. He had judged Israel twenty years.” (Judges 16:23-31)

Samson’s life is both a warning and an encouragement to us who live by faith in God.

1. In Samson, we learn about favor through commitment.

Judges 13:24 tells us, “the woman bore a son and called his name Samson. And the young man grew, and the Lord blessed him.” But the blessing was conditional—as long as Samson remained a Nazirite to God (13:5). In Numbers 6:1-8, we learn that the Nazirite vow involved the following:

- **Separation from artificial attractions** – “He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink. He shall drink no vinegar made from wine or strong drink and shall not drink any juice of grapes or eat grapes, fresh or dried.” (Numbers 6:3)

Discuss: Why do you think the Bible often pictures alcohol as a symbol of the world’s stimulation and irresponsible living, a “mockery” (Proverbs 20:1) that “bites like a serpent and stings like an adder” (Proverbs 23:32)?

- **A willingness to bear reproach for commitment to God** – “All the days of his vow of separation, no razor shall touch his head. Until the time is completed for which he separates himself to the Lord, he shall be holy. He shall let the locks of hair of his head grow long.” (Numbers 6:5)

Discuss: Normally, long hair was a dishonor to a man (1 Corinthians 11:14), and so having long, uncut hair was a special, visible sign of Nazirite humility and obedience to God in order to fulfill His will. In what ways does the world notice that you are different because of your commitment to Christ?

- **An avoidance of anything unclean** – “All the days that he separates himself to the Lord he shall not go near a dead body.” (Numbers 6:6)

Discuss: Evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman had this rule that governed his life: “Anything that dims my vision of Christ, or takes away my taste for Bible study, or cramps my prayer life, or makes Christian work difficult, is wrong for me, and as a Christian I must turn away from it.” What are some things that can dim your vision of Christ? Take away your taste for Bible study? Cramp your prayer life? Make Christian work difficult for you?

2. In Samson, we learn about failure through compromise.

Although called by God to judge Israel, and endowed with miraculous power to accomplish his work, Samson ended up in captivity to his enemies because of his compromises. No longer could Samson serve God as a Nazirite; instead, he ground corn in a Philistine prison as a slave—ultimate humiliation!

Discuss: It has been said Samson experienced the “binding, blinding, grinding” effects of sin (16:21). How does sin blind us, then bind us, then grind us down?

3. In Samson, we learn about forgiveness through calling on God.

As the Nazirite sign returned (16:22), Samson’s strength was renewed, and his prayer life came alive again. Samson prayed, “O Lord God...remember me and...strengthen me...” (16:28). If only Samson had prayed this prayer before entering Delilah’s house, he would have kept his strength, sight, and service! But God heard Samson’s prayer. There is cleansing and restoration for the penitent (1 John 1:9). With one act of great strength, Samson brought a building down upon his enemies and himself “so the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he had killed during his life” (16:30). God was glorified through Samson’s last act of faith.

In ancient history, Julius Caesar had a friend to whom he gave a very generous gift. When he offered it, the friend said, “This is too much for me to receive.” The emperor replied, “But it is not too much for me to give.” Even after our sin and rebellion, God’s gift of forgiveness seems too much for us to receive, but the incomparable riches of His grace (Ephesians 2:6-7) are not too much for Him to give.

Discuss: Why do you think some people are reluctant to receive God’s grace?

For Further Study:

“How to Pursue Holiness in a World Full of Temptations” article at www.crosswalk.com

“The Book of Judges Commentary” at www.enduringword.com