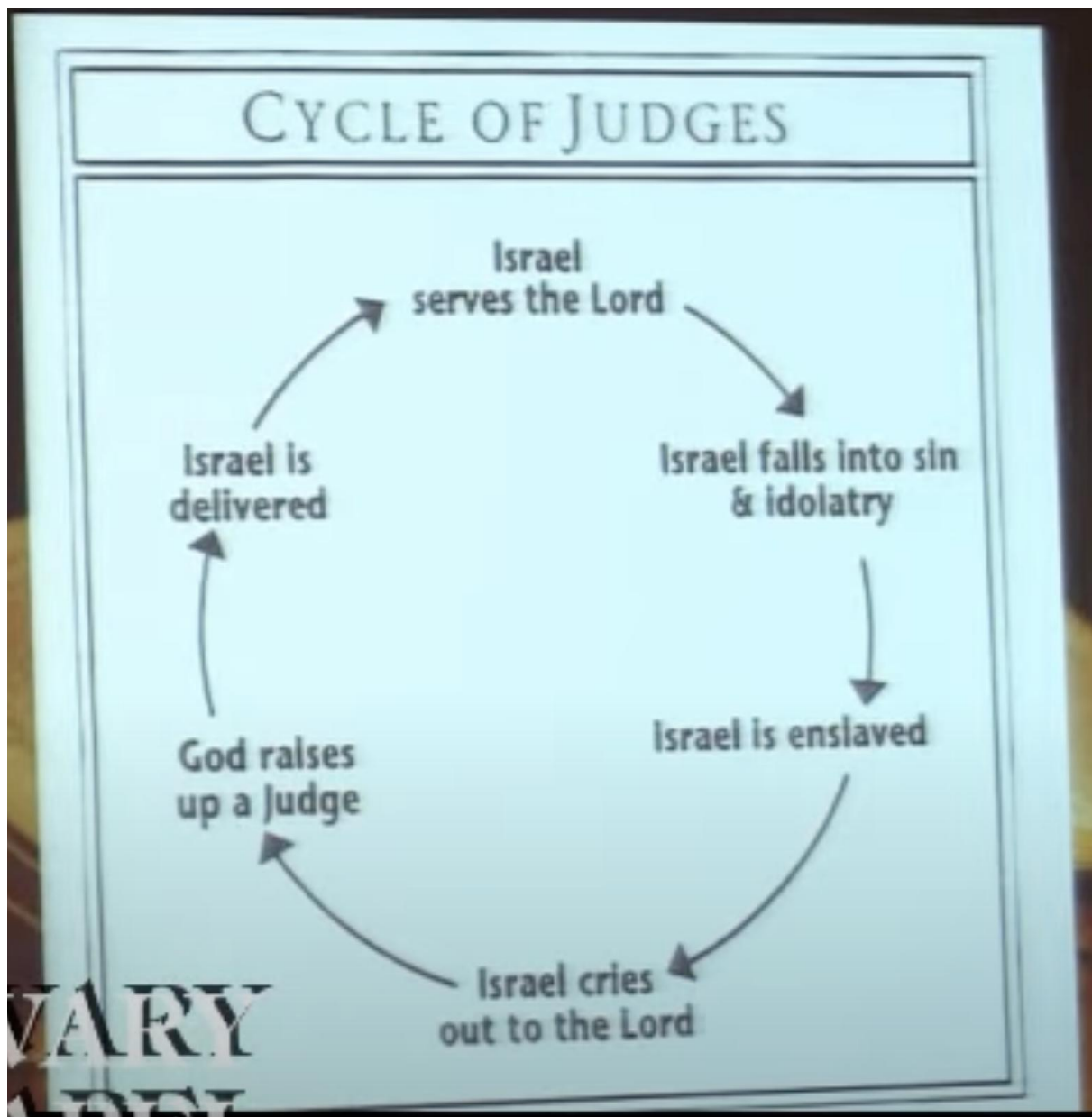


# Judges 15-16 • Samson (Part 2)

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And we're going to get into the Book of Judges and do the second part of our study of the Judge, Samson. And before we actually get into the text, I'm going to put a graphic up on the screen here for you that gives, I think, a good picture of what we've seen here in the Book of Judges over, and over, and over again.



And this is obviously the cycle of sin that we see here in the Book of Judges. And it begins with the blessing of the Lord. When Israel would serve the Lord,

God promised them that He would bless them. But don't you know that when we are being blessed by the Lord, we are probably in one of the most dangerous places when we're walking in blessing.

It's when we're going through difficulty that we're on our knees, we're crying out to God, we're seeking His face, we're getting into the Word, we're reading Scripture. Have you ever noticed that when you're going through a hard time, you're just hanging on to Scripture, with all your worth.

And then things settle down and they lighten up a little bit. And what do we do? We just start to cruise, don't we? And we're not reading the Word quite as much as we did before. We're not hanging on as closely as we were before. And it is very easy to begin to slip. And that's the cycle that we've seen here in the Book of Judges so many times as they begin to slip. Israel falls into the sin of idolatry. And they begin to take upon them the worship practices of the nations, or the peoples that were around them.

And we do, too. Think about it. At what altars does the world worship at? Okay, the altar of money, the altar of pleasure, the altar... I mean, you go on and on about all the things that people live for in the world. And we begin to worship at those same altars. It's really no different than what Israel was doing. Absolutely no different.

Well, then what happens? Well, we know that when we engage in sin, we become enslaved to sin. And that's exactly what we see in the cycle of the Book of Judges: They would become enslaved; God would raise up one of the nations to come against them; and they would cruelly oppress the people of Israel, who would then cry out to the Lord; God would raise up a judge who would deliver them from their afflictions; they would be delivered in some gracious, wonderful, exciting sort of a thing. And then eventually they would start to serve the Lord, and walk in His blessing. And the cycle would begin over and over again.

Here's the one thing though that we've noticed about the Book of Judges, as it has gone on. The judges - themselves - now have become increasingly immoral. And we find that to be certainly the case here in Samson. Let's just quickly review what we dealt with in the previous two chapters - 13 and 14 - regarding Samson.

You'll remember that the angel of the Lord, appeared to Samson's parents. And foretold that they would have a very special son, who from birth would be a Nazirite, meaning that he would take a vow of consecration or separation. And

it would be seen by several things: he would never partake of fermented beverage; he would not touch an unclean thing - like a dead body; and a razor would never touch his head - his hair would never be cut.

Now a Nazirite vow, as we brought out last time, was something that people would do usually for a short period of time. Might be a month, might be six weeks, or however long. But Samson, was to be a Nazirite from birth. He was to maintain that level of consecration for his lifetime.

But we find out very quickly, as we read the Book here of Judges, and learn about Samson, that he is a man who is of unbridled passions - very, very passionate man. And God, has truly gifted him. And God has gifted him with great strength. But instead of using it for the LORD, he uses it for himself - for his own pleasures to do what he wants; to take hold of what he wants. And he's very self-centered. He ignores the Word of God, as it relates to the commandments of God. And he ignores the vow for the most part. In fact, he really broke every aspect of his Nazirite vow during his lifetime.

And you'll remember that in the last couple of chapters, Samson, went among the Philistine people and saw a woman that he liked. Didn't even talk to her. Saw her, went back home, told his mom and dad, I want that woman. Go and get her for me. Because remember, parents had to make those arrangements.

Well, they tried talking him out of it. But Samson was a pigheaded, stubborn, young man who was motivated by his passions. I mean, this guy thinks with his glands. Okay. And he says, no, I want her. She's the one for me. And his dad's, okay. But it's a Philistine. She's a Philistine woman which means she's a pagan. She's involved in all kinds of pagan things like this.

What is Samson doing? Rather than living out his Nazirite vow of consecration to the Lord, which is basically, the idea that, I belong to God. I am His, and I am going to devote myself to a focused service to the Lord my God. What is he doing? Exactly the opposite. He is going to the enemy and seeking out a wife among the Philistines.

Well, he begins the marriage process. We saw this in the last couple of chapters. But before they get to the end of the wedding feast, when they would actually consummate the relationship, you'll remember he loses a bet with his companions. His thirty companions who'd been given to him.

He told them a riddle. He knew that they wouldn't be able to get it. But his fiancée nagged him so bitterly, that he told her the meaning of the riddle. She, in

turn, told the companions, who exposed the answer to the riddle right before the end of the wedding feast, you'll remember. And Samson got angry and left in a huff. And he was tricked by the Philistines. He takes revenge on the Philistines. And he goes off to pout.

And this is where we pick up the story here in chapter 15. Let's begin reading there. It says, *"After some days, (and we're not told exactly here, but) at the time of the wheat harvest, Samson went to visit his wife with a young goat."* (ESV)

Now stop there for just a moment. Some of you might be confused. You say, well, it refers to her as his wife. Well, that's the way they did things. Even though they hadn't consummated the relationship, she was his wife. And she wasn't his wife. It was a technicality. Because they considered the woman to be his wife from the time of the betrothal. And then they consummated the relationship at the end of the seven day wedding feast. But they hadn't gotten that far because he got angry and left. They never actually came together - he and this woman. But he still calls this woman his wife and now he wants her.

He's cooled off now. He's gone away, pouted, whatever else. And now he wants this woman. And he goes with a young goat to visit her. *"And he said, 'I will go in to my wife in the chamber.'"* And what he's talking about is obviously having physical relations with the woman. *"But (it says) her father would not allow him to go in. (And then we find out why.) 2 And her father said, 'I really thought that you utterly hated her, so I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister more beautiful than she? Please take her instead.'"*

This man when he saw Samson get angry, and run off after almost the seven day wedding feast was completed, he figured, well, we're not going to see him again. That's the last we've probably seen of Samson. So, he gave his daughter to the best man. Welcome to Philistine weddings, I guess. Or, something like that. But when Samson comes back, the father tries to pass off a younger daughter saying, well, she's even better looking. Why don't you take her?

But notice in verse 3, it says, *"And Samson said to them, 'This time I shall be innocent in regard to the Philistines, when I do them harm.'"* 4 So Samson went and caught 300 foxes." Did you catch that? He caught 300 foxes. I've never caught one fox. So, I can't necessarily... I can't relate to this sort of thing. Can you? I can just imagine 300 foxes. He caught 300. Okay? We're just... Well, I want to know what we're talking here.

Then he *"...took torches. And he turned them tail to tail and put (the) torches between each pair of tails. 5 And when he had set fire to the torches, he let the*

*foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines and set fire to the stacked grain and the standing grain, as well as the olive orchards."*

This is crazy, isn't it? I mean, you set your tail on fire and you're probably going to cover some territory. Right? And that's exactly what happens. He's doing this to get back at the Philistines. He gathers up 300 foxes, ties them together - tail to tail - ties a torch to each one of their tails, and then sets them free among their standing grain. And obviously, it's just going to set everything on fire.

Well, it says, *"6 Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?" And they said, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." And the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire."*

And that's the kind of people they were. To get back at Samson, they begin by murdering the woman that he was engaged to and almost completed the marriage ceremony with, along with her father. You can see why God had told the Jews when they came into the land, get rid of these people, get rid of these people. You are to utterly destroy them. And this is the kind of stuff that went on.

*"7 And Samson said to them, "If this is what you do, I swear I will be avenged on you, and after that I will quit." 8 And he struck them hip and thigh (And we're not sure exactly what that means, except that it speaks of how he overwhelmed them with strength.) with a great blow, and he went down and stayed in the cleft of the rock of Etam.*

*9 Then the Philistines came up and encamped in Judah and made a raid on Lehi. 10 And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" (And) They said, "We have come up to bind Samson, to do to him as he did to us."*

The Philistines now are... They're on the lookout for Samson. They want to find him. They want to defeat him. They want to get rid of him. He is more than a burr under their saddle and they want to eliminate him.

And they go to the people of Judah, and how much... How many of them in this particular case, we're not really sure. But I want you to notice how many of the men of Judah went out looking for Samson.

It says in verse 11, *"Then 3,000 men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers*

*over us? What then is this that you have done to us?"* This tells us a lot right here about a couple of things.

First of all, the Philistines were rulers at this time over Israel. And Israel felt like there was nothing that they could do about it. And they go to Samson and they say, don't you realize that the Philistines are masters or rulers over us? And now, you've poked them in the eye and made them mad. And now they're coming after us. Don't you realize what you're doing is actually making life more difficult for us by what you're doing?

But I want you to notice also, how many men that they got together to go talk to Samson - 3,000. Now that tells you something about how they appreciated and even feared the physical prowess that this man had been given by the Lord. This man could overwhelm an army single-handed. I mean Rambo's got nothing on this guy. Although I don't think they looked at all similar. And we'll actually talk about that in just a little bit.

The point is, they knew and understood just how dangerous this man could be. When you realize somebody is dangerous, you go in force. And they went with 3,000 men. I think that's just amazing. They go to him and they say, "What are you doing here? Don't you realize that these guys are rulers over us... and so forth. And then I want you to notice the response that Samson gives them. He basically, says, *"And he said, "As they did to me, so (I have) done to them."* And that's Samson's response.

This man doesn't fear anybody. He's not afraid of the Philistines. He's not afraid of their armies. They can come at him with however many they want. He's not going to get upset. And he basically responds and says, hey, the way they did to me, I did to them. They did this. I did it in return.

Well, *"<sup>12</sup> And they said to him, (Well listen) "We have come down to bind you, that we may give you into the hands of the Philistines." And Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not attack me yourselves." (And) <sup>13</sup> They said to him, "No; we will only bind you and give you into their hands. We will surely not kill you."* Of course, they had to know that's what the Philistines wanted to do. But they themselves are promising that they're not going to harm him in any way. *"So they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.*

*<sup>14</sup> When he came to Lehi, the Philistines (Obviously seeing Samson bound and standing before them. And notice how it says, they) came shouting to meet him."* So as soon as they see Samson, they just kind of turn into a rage, and they get all excited, and they start yelling, and shouting and so forth.

And it says, *"Then the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, and the ropes that were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands."* It was absolutely nothing to him to break these two new ropes and become free.

*"<sup>15</sup> And (it says) he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and..."* That's, I suppose it's significant that it would determine for us that it was fresh. If it were old, it would probably be brittle and wouldn't stand up very much as the form of a weapon. But since it was fairly recent, it would be of stronger, whatever.

And it says, that he *"put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men."* With the jawbone of a donkey, he literally overcame a thousand Philistine men. *"<sup>16</sup> And Samson said, 'With the jawbone of a donkey, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of a donkey, have I struck down a thousand men.'"*

Not only is Samson a really strong man, he's a bit of a poet here. Comes up with a little, quick, limerick about his defeat of the men of the Philistines. *"<sup>17</sup> As soon as he had finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone out of his hand. And that place was called Ramath-lehi."*

*<sup>18</sup> And he was very thirsty, and he called upon the LORD and said, 'You have granted this great salvation by the hand of your servant, and shall I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?' <sup>19</sup> And God split open the hollow place that is at Lehi, and water came out from it. And when he drank, his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore the name of it was called En-hakkore; it is at Lehi to this day." <sup>20</sup> And (we're told that) he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years."*

Judges chapter 16 goes on now and begins the end, if you will, or the downfall of this man. It says that, *"<sup>1</sup> Samson went to Gaza, and there he saw a prostitute, and he went in to her."*

I want you to stop there for just a moment. Because we've already made a point of the fact that Samson is a man who is governed by his passions. And that's the way he rolls. And I mean, I think to some degree all of us can relate to the idea that our passions can become very, very strong indeed. And they can move us to do things that we may not do otherwise. We might think of it as our own personal weaknesses, maybe even besetting sins.

This obviously, Samson is not concerned at all about this, although he should be. But he's already gotten in trouble with the Philistines. He's already been

nagged to pieces by a woman to the point where he lost his bet, became enraged, and killed a bunch of people. And it has just gone from bad to worse.

And you'll notice here again, as chapter 16 opens, it's like Samson hasn't learned a thing. It says, "*Samson went to Gaza,...*" And you think this guy is just... Here's the point; I don't think Samson was stupid. I really don't. I think what he did was stupid. But I don't think he himself was unintelligent by any means.

I think he really, truly saw himself as bulletproof. I mean he feared no man. The fact is he feared neither God as well. But he feared no man. He didn't care. He knew that whatever came... I mean, this is a man who, when he was attacked by a lion, reached out with his bare hands and tore this animal in pieces. I mean, the ability that God gave him was absolutely amazing. His gift from the LORD, was his physical prowess. That was something God decided to give him.

But I want you to notice here that Samson uses it for his own purposes. He goes where he wants. He does what he wants. He does his own thing. Listen, this is an important thing that you and I recognize this. It's an important thing that you and I see this. But it's even more of an important thing to understand that we can do the same thing. We can do the very same thing. We can take...

Have you ever thought what are your gifts? What are your giftings? What's God given you to do? And I know some of you may not know. And that actually is fairly common. People will say to me, pastor Paul I don't know what my gift is. I'm not really sure. Well, sometimes we're looking for... We're always looking for super spiritual, miraculous things. And many times the LORD, wants to work through you and I, in the everyday.

And God may have given you various gifts. You may have a gift of compassion. You may have the gift of just wisdom - the application of knowledge. And maybe you have been given the gift of persuasion, which goes along with being a teacher. And who knows whatever your gift is.

Here's the question that you and I need to take from the Book of Judges. And particularly the story of Samson: Are you using your gift for God or are you using it for you? Is it for you or is it for the Lord? That's an important question that we all have to ask ourselves. And we can take whatever gift God has given us. And we can use it for selfish reasons. I can use it for me.

I've told you guys about how years ago, many years ago... And I think it was... I'm trying to remember if it was when I was ordained, or a different time. But it was... We were up in Montana and I was being... That's the church where I was



originally ordained. And I was a young man. I mean, I was in my twenties. I was probably in my early twenties, or mid-twenties.

And Sue and I were getting prayed over by the elders of the church. And, you know, I've always known that my wife had certain, well, she's just, she's a brainiac. I can say that about her. She's not here. She flew to Minnesota today so I can talk about her all I want. Of course, she could listen to it. Anyway, we'll just...

Anyway, I've always known that she was just really smart person. All school math award two years running and that sort of smart. This stuff where I completely failed. And I also knew that she was really good with money. She just was always a good money manager. I mean, from the earliest days of our marriage. And I married her when she was 17 years old. And she was always good with money, always good. I was horrible with money but she was excellent with it.

Well, I didn't realize that God had gifted her that way. I just thought, well, she's smart." And I think there's a lot of people who think that, this is just something... Okay, I have a... I'm good at this. But they don't really see it as something God gave. But when I was ordained, and the Lord used the elders of that church to speak prophetically over us, I've told you guys this before. The Lord spoke to my wife and said, I've given you the ability to make a lot of money. And then He said to her, see that you don't do it. That's what He said. In other words, what God was saying is, I've given you a gift. Do not use it for you.

And this is something that Samson never understood. God gave him amazing abilities. But he always, only, used them for himself; to get what he wanted. Here's a woman, I want her. I can intimidate people. I can get what I want. I can eat wherever I want. People are going to be afraid of me. They'll give me what I want. He used the gifts of the Lord, selfishly, you see.

And we can do the same thing. Whatever gifting we have, we can use it for ourselves, or some selfish sort of a purpose. And when we do that, even though we may be Christians, it's like we're living our lives like... We talk about God. We talk about serving God. But when it comes down to our day-to-day, the way we live, we're living a life of a practical atheist.

And what I mean by that... And this is the way Samson was. He was a man who took this Nazirite vow... Not very, many people took Nazirite vows. And his

was for life. I mean, that's like, wow! A lifetime Nazirite vow? Are you kidding me? That's amazing. You'd think, wow, what a holy man. Anything but.

This man is a carnal man who prays when he's thirsty. Oh God, I'm thirsty. You're going to kill me now? And God, gives him water. But when he's out living his life, he lives like there is no God. He lives like there's no judgment. He lives like there's no accountability for the things that God has given me. He just lives his life. He lives like an atheist, even though he's a man who believes in God.

Do you know the type? Ever met the type? Ever seen him? That person in the mirror? We can all do that, you guys. We can live just like Samson. That's what we call a practical atheist. Somebody who lives their life as if God didn't exist, while being a theoretical Christian. And a theoretical Christian is someone who intellectually believes in God, talks about God, prays to God. Notice Samson wasn't... He prayed. When he was thirsty, he cried out to God. But it didn't govern his passions. It didn't govern his life. It was all theoretical, nothing practical about it, you see.

And listen, that is not uncommon in the body of Christ today, let me tell you. There's a lot of people and you can see... Let me tell you something, you want to find out how deep someone's faith goes? See how they react when they get into trouble. I mean, when life really heats up and they get it. Maybe they get into financial trouble. Maybe they get into legal trouble. Maybe their marriage gets into trouble, or their children get into trouble. Or at business in some business sort of thing they get into some difficulty. Or they go through physical afflictions or something like that. Boy, that's when you find out if it's all theoretical. Or if there's something that has made its way into the heart that begins to play out in the daily life.

For Samson, there was nothing practical about his relationship with God. It was all theoretical. It was all surface, as far as how he lived his life, It's to please me. I live it for me, okay? He goes to Gaza; he sees a prostitute, he sleeps with her, eh, no big deal. This is a man who has a Nazirite vow on his life - for life. He's ruined his witness, his reputation. He is seen as a carnal, ungodly, man.

And it says that, *"2 The Gazites were told, "Samson has come here." And they surrounded the place (And I'm sure Samson knew this. They were gunning for him.) and (they) set an ambush for him all night at the gate of the city. (And they wanted to keep it quiet.) They kept quiet all night saying, ..."* Okay, we're just going to bide our time. We're going to wait here till the light of the

morning. And then we're going to jump on him. And then we're going to kill him.

*"3 But Samson lay till midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts, and pulled them up, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that is in front of Hebron."*

This is a man who's just living his carnal existence, and serving, and using the gift of the Lord for himself. And he's going to make a demonstration. He's not only going to get away. He could have just snuck out. But he's not just going to get away. He's going to make a statement. He's going to tell them, you can't touch me.

And I... And you remember something about the gates of a city. The gates of a city signify the strength of the city. You know how Jesus said how, the gates of hell will not prevail against the church. (Matthew 16:18) That's an... It means, the strength of hell, the power of hell will not prevail against the church. To pick up the gates of the city and pull them up out of the ground single-handedly, and then carry them. And it blows me away. It just absolutely blows me away. In fact, he carried them to the top of a hill.

I'll never forget when Sue and I, were just newly married. We were back in Montana. And somehow, some friend of mine convinced me to go up into the mountains and cut down a Christmas tree. I did that, one-time. And I will never do it again. Because we... First of all, we packed into this area where the snow was well above my waist. And then we finally found a tree. We had to dig down to even get to the base of the tree. And then I cut it down. And then I stupidly, didn't think about how I was going to get it back to the car. And it was uphill all the way. I thought I was going to die. And I was in my twenties.

I carried that tree all the way up the hill. And when I got to the top, going through snow that was like... And that's hard trudging through the snow. And I'm carrying this tree. And of course I wanted a good sized tree. You don't go all that way to get this... (Pastor Paul uses his hands to simulate short) And I got to the top of the hill. And I laid down on the ground for like a half hour. And it took me that long to just catch my breath and get my heart to stop pounding. I thought I was going to die. And it was a tree. It was a Christmas tree. And this guy pulls the gates of the city out single-handedly and carries them up the hill. And he's probably laughing all the way.

Verse 4. There you go. He made his statement - little punctuation mark, you can't touch me. I'm bulletproof. Get out of my face. Well, *"After this he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah."* And we're assuming here, because the lords of the Philistines came to her and tried to make arrangements with her, that she was - herself - a Philistine.

*"5 And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Seduce him, and see where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to humble him. And we will each give you 1,100 pieces of silver."*

Stop there for just a moment. Remember I said earlier, that I don't think Samson looked like Rambo? That's the picture you get. You look at every children's Bible where they got pictures of Samson, this guy has muscles on his muscles. And that's the way we picture him.

But I don't think that's what he looked like. I think he looked like an average guy. Why else would the lords of the Philistines come to Delilah and say, would you please seduce the man so that we can find out where his strength comes from? If he looked like Rambo, they'd say, oh, that's where his strength comes from, right? They didn't know! They didn't know where Samson..., where's he get this?

Where does a man that looks like Pee Wee Herman, get that kind of strength to pick up the gates of a city? I don't know if that's what he looked like. Let's hope not. Right? That... I probably just ruined it for everybody right there. Now you got a mental picture you'll never get out of your head - like Veggie Tales. Anyway, but it's obvious that he didn't look like this bodybuilder. They want to know why.

And *"So (in verse 6, we're told that) Delilah (then) said to Samson,"* Now here - this is great. Ladies... And take notes here on just how to nag. Because this is classic. *"Please tell me where your great strength lies, and how you might be bound, that one could subdue you."*

That's got to be the stupidest question you could ever hear from someone in the world. It's like, how can we get one up on you here? Why don't you tell us? And so forth.

You'd think that Samson would just look at her and say, I'm going to go. Because it's obvious what she's out for. But remember, sin makes fools of us for one thing. We become foolish when we're engaged in sin. And this man was so

blinded by his sin, he believed he was bulletproof. And even though he knows he's having this relationship with Delilah.

And he knows that she doesn't care a snit for him, that's okay. It's all right. It doesn't matter. You know what? I'm going to stay here and take what I want. And at the end of the day, when I'm done taking what I want, I'm going to be able to go and no one can stop me. And you know what, Delilah, I really don't care if you like me or not. What I get from you, I get from you. You serve a purpose in my life. And that's really all you are to me. I'll play with you. I'll play my little mind-games with you, and I'll tease you, and I'll mock you. And that's all right, because you know what? I'm Samson, and nobody can touch me."

She says, tell us how we can do this. In verse 7, *"Samson said to her, (Well) 'If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.'"* (And) *8 Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings that had not been dried, and she bound him with them. 9 Now (she had been) she had men lying in ambush in an inner chamber. (So they're in the house) And she said to him, 'The Philistines are upon you, Samson!' But he snapped the bowstrings, as a thread of flax snaps when it touches the fire. So the secret of his strength was not known."*

You think Samson would leave after finding out that she was against him. No, he's playing games. This is fun. See, you can see here, can't you, that Samson is not taking anything related to what God has given him seriously. His gifting from the Lord, is for his own personal enjoyment, for my own personal pleasure. I'm not here to serve God. I'm here to have fun. And that's what we're going to do.

And *"10 Then Delilah said to Samson, 'Behold, you have mocked me and (you) told me lies. Please tell me how you might be bound,'"* So that we can hurt you. That's really what she's saying. And he knows it. *"11 And he said to her, (well, you know what) 'If they bind me with new ropes (We already heard them do that. The Jews tried that one) that have not been used, (well) then I shall become weak and be like any other man.'"* What did Delilah do? *"12 So (she) took new ropes and bound him with them and said to him, 'The Philistines are upon you, Samson! And the men lying in ambush were in an inner chamber. But he snapped the ropes off his arms like a thread.'"* I wouldn't have wanted to be those men in the inner chamber when he snapped those ropes off, by the way.

And *"13 Then Delilah said to Samson, 'Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. (How can you say you love me? Isn't that crazy?) Tell me how you*

*might be bound." And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my head with the web and fasten it tight with a pin, then I shall become weak and be like any other man."*

You see, he's breaking down. Do you see that? He's actually talking about his hair, which is part of the vow of his Nazirite vow. And *"<sup>14</sup> So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his head and wove them into the web. And she made them tight with the pin (and he) and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson! But he awoke from his sleep and pulled away the pin, the loom and the web."*

And I love this. *"<sup>15</sup> And she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and you have not told me where your great strength lies."*

And look at verse 16, *"And when she pressed him hard (with her what? Her words; her words. That's amazing. This is a man who fought off a thousand men with a donkey jawbone. Nobody was strong enough. But when this woman went after him) with her words day after day, urging him, (nagging him, talking to him. Look what it says) his soul was vexed to death."*

Obviously that's a statement that just speaks of just, he became so tired of this constant nagging. He still didn't think he, that he... I mean, anybody could do anything to him. He still felt that he was untouchable.

*"And (in verse 17, it says) he told her all his heart, and said to her, (well) "A razor has never come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak... like any other man."*

And this is the last of the elements of his Nazirite vow that Samson has kept. He's broken every other aspect of this Nazirite vow. And that's an important thing to remember, guys.

Please remember, Samson's strength was not in his hair. His hair was a symbol of the vow that he took before God. And every time that Samson did something amazing, did you notice that it said, *"and the Spirit of the LORD came upon him"* or as the ESV says, *"rushed upon him."*

It speaks of the empowering work of the Holy Spirit, by which Samson was physically empowered to do what he did. Remember the hair was simply a symbol of the vow, which God was still honoring as a... And it was the last

visible symbol. Because he had broken everything else. Lived a life of total debauchery and sin and carnality. And, that's just, that's... This is the last thing,

And *"18 When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, (She just knew that this is it, "I finally got it.") she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up again, for he has told me all his heart." Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought (her) the money in their hands. (And they were convinced, too) 19 She made him sleep on her knees. And she called a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. (And) Then (look at this) she began to torment him, (Did you ever catch that? Delilah woke him up and just started to torment him. That's how much she cared, which is not. She tormented him) and his strength left him. 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 left him."*

Did you catch that? He did not... It doesn't say, but because his hair was cut... Again, that was the visible sign of the vow. But the Lord left him and that's why he was weak. All right? Very important.

*"21 And the Philistines seized him (What's the first thing they did?) and (they) gouged (his eyes out) and brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles. And he ground at the mill in the prison. 22 But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved." And what that basically means is the visible sign of the Nazirite vow slowly began to return.*

But where is Samson? He is now in total slavery. And that is what happens when we give in to sin and we live a life of just total debauchery and sin. We're enslaved by our sin. Right? And that's just what happens. And here's a man who is physically enslaved, grinding out grain in this prison. And he has no ability to change his circumstances because he's a slave.

*"23 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." (They are crediting their god) 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." (That means they were drunk) So they called Samson out of the prison, and he entertained them. (We don't know how, but...) They made him stand between the pillars. 26 And Samson said to the young (boy) who held him by the hand, (remember he's blind) "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."*

Once again, despite all of the advantages that God had given Samson, which were: godly parents, remember? His parents were godly people; a calling on his life to live his life for God. Despite all of those things, Samson was a man who ignored God. Who simply lived to please himself. And as a result, he ended up blind and enslaved to his enemies.

And if only Samson would have paused long enough to ask: What is God's intended purpose for my life? What is... Have you ever done that? Have you ever stopped and simply said, God, what is... Why did you put me here on this earth? Is it just to eat, drink and be merry? Did you put me here to make money so I could just buy things? Why am I here? What is my purpose? Why do you have me here? What would you have me to do?

Why are you here? Samson never asked the question. We can't miss the lesson from this story and fail to ask the question, or we fail like Samson. We must, in our own hearts and minds, turn this thing back to the Lord, and say, Father, what is the purpose for which you created me? I know it's not just to take up space, and breathe the air, and use the resources of this planet. I know I'm here for a reason. And I believe God... And this is something people might have a hard time saying. But I believe that there is not one person whom you have overlooked as it relates to giving gifts and talents. Do you believe that?

I've had people say to me, and I, wondering out loud, if maybe God did overlook them. I assure you He did not. I think we're the ones who have not looked in deeply enough to figure out what our calling is, or, why God has put us here on this earth.



But let me just say something, if your life has been anything like Samson's... And I can remember my days before walking with the Lord. And there are some things I can relate to here. I think it's an important secondary lesson to get from this, that whatever you may feel that you have abused, or ignored, or neglected, or frittered away, or ruined in your life, from things that God gave you, I want you to know - and I think God wants you to know - that He wants you to give those things to Him.

Don't just give him back the... Don't say, God, You've given me these gifts. I want to give them back... Give him back, even the frittered away time. Give Him the neglected years. Give Him the time that you've wasted, the time that you've taken your gifting and used it for your own purposes. Give it to God.

And it's, I think it would please the Lord if we came to Him and said, Lord, please don't let any of these failures in my life be the final word. And that's the thing I love about the way the story of Samson ends. He was... He knew that he had lived a life of failure and reckless passion. But he cried out to the Lord. And just said, Lord, don't let that be the final word. Don't let the way I live, the stupid way...

How many times do you think a blind Samson, who did nothing but grind out the grain all day long, monotonous all day long? How many times do you think he regretted his life? All day long as he worked, God, please don't let this be the final word. Don't let this be the last thing. You know what? Samson is in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews chapter 11. When we talk about the heroes of the faith, Samson's name appears there. Crazy as it might seem. Our God, is a God of second chances, and redeeming the lost, and ruined opportunities.