A Character Study

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IN SAMSON, WE FIND A LIFE THAT OUT OF STRENGTH WAS MADE WEAK AND OUT OF WEAKNESS WAS MADE STRONG.
INTRODUCTION

“And the children of __________ did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years” (Judges 13:1).

Before we are able to consider Samson’s life, it will be helpful to understand the time period in which he lived.

BACKGROUND: The Book of Judges is known as “the Dark Ages” of the nation of Israel, showing the folly of forgetting God.

As the chart below illustrates, the Book of Judges is a sad sequel to the Book of Joshua. Joshua rings with the shout of victory; Judges, echoes with the sobs of defeat. In Joshua the heavenlies are typified, in Judges the earthlies are typified (Proverbs 14:34).

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KEY PHRASE: The very last verse of the Book of Judges summarizes the Book by stating, “In those days there was ___ ______ in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25; it also occurs in Judges 17:6; 18:1 and 19:1).

FOUR-FOLD CYCLE: This cycle is repeated six times in Judges (Judges 3:1-11; 3:12-31; 4:1-5:31; 6:1-10:5; 10:6-12:15; 13-16). Each of the cycles is introduced with the expression: “And the children of Israel did evil _______ in the sight of the Lord.”

An alternative outline for this cycle of sin could be Rebellion – Retribution – Repentance – Restoration.

The story of Samson takes place during the sixth and final cycle of Judges. Once again, let’s review the four-fold cycle as it relates to Samson and the nation of Israel.

• **SIN** – “And the children of Israel did ______ again in the sight of the LORD...” (Judges 13:1a). Note that their sin was:

  1. **Repulsiveness** – “evil” (also see Judges 2:11-13).
  2. **Repetitive** – “Again” (see II Peter 2:22)
  3. **Revealed** – “In the sight of the Lord (see Genesis 16:13; I Peter 3:12; Jeremiah 16:17; Proverbs 5:21; Hebrews 4:13).
• **SUFFERING** – “...and the LORD delivered them ______ the hand of the Philistines forty years” (Judges 13:1b). As a result of their sin, there is suffering. There is always a payday for sin, when we break God’s commands they always break us.

• **SUPPLICATION** – In every other cycle we find that the children of Israel ”_______ unto the Lord” (Judges 3:9, 15; 4:3; 6:6; 10:10). **This cycle is the exception. God’s people had become callous and complacent** (Isaiah 59:16).

• **SALVATION** – God raises up a judge or deliverer to deliver the nation of Israel from captivity.

In the next lesson we will begin to look at Samson’s beginning which was filled with promise and potential. **Sadly, his potential turned into unrealized possibilities.**

Sport’s Commentator, Don Meredith once commented to Howard Cosell about a up and coming player in the NFL (American Gridiron), that “potential is the heaviest burden in life.”

“FOR ALL THE SAD WORDS OF TONGUE AND PEN, THE SADDEST ARE THESE, ‘IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.’”

John Greenleaf Whittier
"But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a ____; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death" (Judges 13:7)

There are ninety-six verses in the Book of Judges concerning the life of Samson, twenty-four of those verses deal with his birth. Why does the Bible say so much about the birth of Samson? Perhaps it is to emphasize that he was born to serve the Lord and to show that his life had a divine purpose. By the way, so do you.

THE DIVINE ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS BIRTH

“And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not. And the angel of the ______ appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son” (Judges 13:2-3).

The birth of Samson was announced by “the angel of the LORD.” This is also known as a Theophany “a visible manifestation of the invisible God” (Judges 13:6 cf 13:22). Notice that the words “secret” and “wonderful” come from the same Hebrew root (see Judges 13:18 and Isaiah 9:6).
**The Littleness of the Place** – Zorah, means “the place of wasps” or “hornets.” It was a small town thirteen miles west of Jerusalem. It is only mentioned eight times in the Bible. The Bible warns us of the danger of despising “the day of ________ things” (Zechariah 4:10).

Historically, the Welsh Revival, one of the greatest revivals in history, began in the small village of Loughor, Wales.

**Little is Much When God is in It** – Hymn writer, Kittie Louise Suffield and her husband, Frederick, laboured in a number of small churches in Canada, when she wrote this hymn in 1924.

Does the place you’re called to labor,
Seem too small and little known?
   It is great if God is in it,
   And He’ll not forget His own

   Little is much when God is in it!
   Labor not for wealth or fame;
   There’s a crown, and you can win it,
   If you go in Jesus’ name.
THE BARRENNESS OF THE PERSON – The husband, Manoah, means “rest;” he was of the family of the Danites. His wife, was both nameless and childless.

This woman who was rejected and scorned by society as being unworthy of God’s blessings, is first to hear the news of Samson’s birth.

God often chooses “foolish things” and “weak things” to “confound the wise” and the “mighty.” Someone once said, “God often uses small matches to light up great torches and no matter how small you feel in the world, He has something big in store for you.”

THE CERTAINNESS OF THE PROMISE – “…Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou ________ conceive, and bear a son” (Judges 13:3b). The verb, “shalt” indicates that this is more than a possibility, but a definite promise. “For all the __________ of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (II Corinthians 1:20).

THE DIVINE APPOINTMENT OF HIS BIRTH

A NAZARITE’S LIFE WAS TO BE SET APART FOR GOD ALONE.

“For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a __________ unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines” (Judges 13:5).
Samson’s birth was not only announced, but he was also appointed or commanded to be a Nazarite for life. As believers, we too are commanded to be holy or separated for life. Many of us, like Samson, fail; we know the code of separation, but we fail to grasp the concept of holiness.

John Wesley wrote: “The essential of Christian holiness is giving the heart wholly to God.”

“A LIFE OF SEPARATION” – The term Nazarite speaks of “a separated one.” In giving the regulations for a Nazarite in Numbers 6:2-8, Moses uses the words “separate,” “separation” and “separateth” eight times. Thus, a Nazarite was to be separate in his:

1. **Appearance** – No razor.
2. **Abstinence** – No strong drink.
3. **Avoidance** – No unclean thing.

In other words, stay away from the barber, the bottle and bodies that are dead.

Ordinarily, the Nazirite vow was a voluntary vow to dedicate your life to God for a specific period of time. In Samson’s case it was ordained for life.

“**BECAUSE IT IS WRITTEN,**
**BE YE HOLY; FOR I AM HOLY.”**

I Peter 1:16
DID JESUS HAVE LONG HAIR?

While most artistic portrayals of Jesus are of a Caucasian male with blue eyes and long, light-brown hair. It is important to remember that He was ethnically Jewish and most likely had light to dark brown skin, brown eyes, and dark brown or black hair.

Oftentimes, people make the mistake of thinking Jesus was a Nazarite when He was actually a Nazarene or “one who came from Nazareth.”

There is no indication from Scripture that Jesus had long hair. In fact, the Bible emphasizes this distinction of sexes, “Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?” (1 Corinthians 11:14).

From the context of 1 Corinthians eleven, “long hair” was a symbol of a woman’s submission to authority, likewise Samson’s long hair was a sign of his dependence and submission to God.

A LIFE OF CONSECRATION – “For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite ________ God from the womb...” (Judges 13:5a)

Separation is always twofold, it is both positive (to something) and negative (from something). “And he brought us ____ from thence, that he might bring us ____, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers” (Deuteronomy 6:23).

“It does not take great men to do great things; it only takes consecrated men.”

Phillips Brooks
THE DIVINE ASSIGNMENT OF HIS BIRTH

British pastor, Alan Redpath wrote: “There’s some task which the God of all the universe, the great Creator, your redeemer in Jesus Christ has for you to do, and which will remain undone and incomplete until by faith and obedience you step in the will of God.” God has a purpose for Samson. “...and he shall _______ to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines” (Judges 13:5b).

- **IT WAS AN IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT** – The most important thing we do in life is fulfilling God’s purposes for our lives. Winson Butler wrote: “Success lies not in achieving what you aim at but in aiming at what you ought to achieve.”

- **IT WAS AN INCOMPLETE ASSIGNMENT** – Samson would only “begin” to deliver Israel. The task would not be completed until the reign of David.

**Dr. Robert Clinton wrote that about one-third of all Bible leaders finish well.** Someone has said, “Starting well is beneficial. Staying the course is critical. But it’s the way you finish that becomes your legacy.”

In competing in the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City; John Stephen Akhwari, from Tanzania, fell, badly cutting his knee and dislocating the joint. Instead of quitting the race he continued running, finishing last among the
57 competitors who completed the race, over one hour behind the winner (75 had started).

When interviewed later and asked why he continued running, he said, “My country did not send me 10,000 miles just to start the race; they sent me to finish the race.”

“I HAVE Fought A GOOD FIGHT,
I HAVE FINISHED MY COURSE,
I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH.”

II Timothy 4:7
“Then Manoah intreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and _______ ___ what we shall do unto the child that shall be born...And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. ______ shall we order the child, and _____ shall we do unto him?” (Judges 13:8, 12).

As parents, the question we should ask ourselves is not “How can we produce a godly or successful child?” but “How can we be more godly parents?” The first question has to do with the end result over which we have no control, the second has to do with a process over which we do have control.

SURROUNDINGS

The little town of Zorah was located in the hills overlooking the plains of the Philistines. In verse one of chapter thirteen we are reminded that the children of Israel have been under the bondage of the Philistines for “forty years.” This is the longest period of oppression recorded in the Book of Judges.

While the Philistines were very strong militarily (primarily because of their ability to smelt iron and make better weapons); they were able to conquer the Israelites through business and pleasure.
If an Israelite wanted an axe or a plough, they had to go to the Philistines to get it (I Samuel 13:19-23). The Philistines also encouraged intermarriage with the Israelites (see Judges 14).

Remember, Satan is not only pictured as a “roaring lion”, but also as a “serpent” (I Peter 5:8 and II Corinthians 11:3).

- If satan is unable to **devour** you, he will seek to **deceive** you (Revelation 2:8-17).
- If satan cannot **curse** you, he will seek to **corrupt** you (Numbers 24-25).
- If satan cannot **murder** you, he will seek to **mix** you up so that you lose your effectiveness (Genesis 4-6).

**SITUATION**

Judges 13:2 tells us “**his wife was __________, and bare not.**” Barrenness often brought a stigma and reproach, it was viewed as a sign of God’s disfavour. Not only was it considered an affliction, but the woman herself would be afflicted (Genesis 29:32 cf I Samuel 1:2, 6).

Gordon MacDonald notes that: “The barren womb is often a starting place in the purpose of God. He calls life out of death and uses the things that “are not” to confound the things that are “(I Corinthians 1:26-31).
Yet, Manoah and his wife did not allow the situation that they faced to embitter them against God. As one preacher quaintly wrote, “when you get in hot water, you are either an egg or a potato, you will become either hard or soft”. Job wrote, "For God maketh my heart ______, and the Almighty troubleth me" (Job 23:16).

**SPIRITUAL**

We read “And the angel of the ______ appeared unto the woman, and said unto her...But he said unto me...And the angel of the ______ said unto Manoah” (Judges 13:3, 7, 13). Not only was God able to communicate or talk with this family, the parents also talked to God and “_____d hearkened to the voice of Manoah” (Judges 13:9).

We are all familiar with the marriage statistics that 1 out of 3 marriages end in divorce. Pastor David Dykes gives the additional statistics, “1 out of 105 marriages end in divorce if the couple attends church regularly and 1 out of 1,155 marriages end in divorce if the couple attends church regularly and prays together regularly”.

**PRENATAL CARE**

Even before his birth, Samson was called to be a Nazarite. Therefore, “the angel of the Lord” gave his mother some strict dietary and practical instructions in relation to that vow.

Likewise, research has shown that poor health choices, drugs, drinking and smoking can have a profound effect on you unborn child.
Do not neglect the spiritual dimension of your marriage!

SYMPOSIUM

One of the outstanding characteristics of Samson’s parents was their ability to communicate with one another (I Peter 1:7; Proverbs 1:8-9).

Manoah and his wife not only had the ability to share their concerns with one another (Judges 13:6, 10, 22), but they were willing to share their differences with each other and grow closer as a result (Judges 13:23 see Job 3:19).

STEWARDSHIP

A steward has been defined as “someone who takes care of the property of another.” In parenting, we must realize that our children are actually God’s. He has just loaned them to us for a little while (I Samuel 1:27-28).

• Recognize that our children are a gift from God (Psalm 127:3).
• Recognize that God’s way is the best way to raise children (Judges 13:13-14; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4).
• Recognize that God has a specific plan for each child (see Jeremiah 1:5).
• Recognize that child-rearing is a parental responsibility (Judges 13:12; Deuteronomy 6:6-7).
• Recognize that as parents we need God’s help (Proverbs 3:5-6; Psalm 127:1).

John Wilmot, who was the Earl of Rochester, said, “Before I was married I had three theories about raising children, now I have three children and no theories.”

**SACRIFICE**

It was when Manoah and his wife attempted to “honour” God with a meat offering or sacrifice their attention was fixed on heaven and they realized that God is God (Judges 13:17-22).

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**WHEN PARENTS CRY**

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). Most often this verse is interpreted from the context of a man’s home than from Scripture. I believe that it is more of a principle than a promise.

While as parents, God has given us the privilege, responsibility and accountability of raising our children; each child must make its own choice about God (Ezekiel 18).

God does not have any grandchildren.
And the Child Grew

"And the woman bare a _____, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him" (Judges 13:24).

Manoah and his wife named the child, Samson, his name means “like the sun, sunlight, sunny.” Living under the dominion of the Philistines, Samson’s parents named him with bright hopes for the future. Sadly; their son turned from the light into darkness.

A Child of Promise

Judges 13:24 begins with the words, “And the women ______ a son...” How exciting, this childless couple now have a baby boy. This son was the fulfilment of God’s promise. “And the ______ of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son” (Judges 13:3).

I am a promise
I am a possibility
I am a promise with a capital “P”
I am a great big bundle of potentiality
And I am learnin’ to hear God’s voice
And I am tryin’ to make the right choice
I am a promise to be anything God wants me to be.
There are more than 32,000 promises in the Bible. "There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass" (Joshua 21:45).

G. Campbell Morgan said, “I believe the promises of God enough to venture an eternity on them.” When William Carey, missionary to India, was about the possibilities of the future, he replied, “The future is as bright as the promises of God.”

**A CHILD OF PROGRESSION**

“...and the child ______” (Judges 13:24). Thomas Scott said, “The only evidence of life is growth.” For this section of study we will be briefly looking at the childhood of Jesus as an example of four areas of growth.

**Luke 2:52**

“*And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*”

Mental – Physical – Spiritual – Social
• **Mental Development** – "And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his ______________________ and ____________” (Luke 2:46-47). Jesus not only knew the right “answers,” but he understood why they were the right answers. We later read, "Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews ______________, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” (John 7:14-15). The Jews were amazed at Jesus’ knowledge, even though he had not been to the proper schools of the day.

I challenge you to continue to grow academically. I recently read that 33% of high school and 42% of college graduates never read another book after they leave school. While the Bible reminds us that “much _______ is a weariness of the flesh” (Ecclesiastes 12:12), it also tells us that “The heart of the righteous _____________ to answer” (Proverbs 15:28). Remember, that the “eth” ending denotes continual action, there will never come a time to stop learning.

• **Physical Development** – This passage in the Gospel of Luke is the only reference to Jesus’ life from the age of 12 to 30. It was at this point that he would learn the trade of carpentry from Joseph, working with wood and stone. It was during this time that Jesus developed the strength and endurance that would be vital to his future ministry.
While there are many that will remind us that “bodily exercise profiteth little” (I Timothy 4:8). It is important that we continue to take care of ourselves physically.

In I Corinthians 9:24-27, the Apostle Paul uses numerous illustrations from athletics as a reminder to keep our bodies in “subjection.”

Lester Roloff used to say that our bodies are the God’s vehicles and He deserves a well-tuned car instead of a broken down jalopy.

### Spiritual Development

“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read” (Luke 4:16). The dictionary defines *custom* as “a frequent repetition of the same act or habitual practice.”

Some time ago, my daughter, Faith and I watched Prince Caspian together. It is the second in a series of movies called The Chronicles of Narnia. These were based on a series of children books by C.S. Lewis.

Lucy visits Narnia again. She sees Aslan, the lion figure who in Lewis’ series represents Christ. It has been a while since she has seen him, and she says, “Aslan, you’re bigger now.” Aslan replied, “Lucy, that’s because you are older. You see, Lucy, every year that you grow, you will find me bigger.”

You often have to do what you do not want to do in order to do what you want to do.
Ephesians 4:15 speaks of how we should “______ up into Him in all things.” II Peter 3:18 says “But ______ in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

- **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT** – Jerry Ross, in his book, “The Teenage Years of Jesus Christ,” notes the word *favour* comes from the root word for “cheer.” To be interesting, be interested. Dale Carnegie wrote “You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.”

Solomon wrote: “A man that hath friends must shew himself __________” (Proverbs 18:24).

**A CHILD OF PROSPERITY**

“...and the LORD __________ him” (Judges 13:24). We will deal with this subject more thoroughly next week, but for now please note the two aspects of the Spirit.

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<td><em>I receive all of the Holy Spirit</em></td>
<td><em>The Holy Spirit receives all of me</em></td>
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“And the Spirit of the LORD began to _______ him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.” (Judges 13:25).

In the Old Testament, believers were not indwelt by the Holy Spirit as the believer in the New Testament is (see chart from last week).

- **SAMSON** – “And the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at __________...” (Judges 13:25). Later we read, “...the LORD was ______________ from him” (Judges 16:20).

- **SAUL** – “But the Spirit of the LORD ______________ from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him” (I Samuel 16:14).

- **DAVID** – “Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit _______ me” (Psalm 51:11).

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit would come upon or “move” a person to accomplish a specific task (Genesis 41:38; Exodus 31:2-5; Numbers 27:18; Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; I Samuel 10:16; I Chronicles 28:11-12).
Today, as New Testament believers, we are not only indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17; 16:7; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 6:19-20; II Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30); but we are also to be empowered or filled with the Spirit (Acts 1:8; Romans 8:26 Ephesians 5:18).

In his book, *The Divine Comforter*, Dwight Pentecost writes,

If you do not recognize this fact, you are going to be led into the error that there is a second work of grace for men today, and until and unless you have had that second work of grace you will never have the Holy Spirit dwelling within you.

**ENCOUNTERED BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD**

- **PERSON** – The “Spirit of the LORD” is a person, not a thing or mysterious force floating in the air. In John 16:13-15, Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as “he” nine times. He is the third person of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

- **PROCESS** – The word “began” indicates there was not only an initial encounter with the “Spirit of the LORD,” but that there were additional encounters. The phrase “the Spirit of the LORD” appears seven times in the Book of Judges, four of those times are in relation to Samson (Judges 13:25; 14:4, 19; 15:14).
The Apostle Paul wrote: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be ________ with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). The word filled speaks of being “under the total control of something.” Just as a drunk is under the influence or control of alcohol, so is the Christian to be under the control of the Spirit.

A group of men in a certain city were meeting to discuss having a citywide crusade. Many of them recommended D.L. Moody. Finally, one spoke up and said, “All I have heard is about Moody and why we ought to get D.L. Moody. Does Moody have a monopoly on the Holy Spirit?” Another spoke up and said, “No, but the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on D.L. Moody.”

**ENDUED BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD**

“And the Spirit of the LORD began to move” Samson (Judges 13:25). Just as Samson needed to be endued or empowered, so do we. “And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be ________ with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

In regards to God’s work it is “not by might, not by power, but ___ my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6). The word “might” refers to our resources and the word “power” refers to our abilities. God’s work must be done in the energy and power of the Holy Spirit.
Thomas Aquinas visited the City of Rome to pay his respects to the pope. During his visit, the pope proudly showed him all the wonders of the papal palace and took him to his treasury, showing him chests of silver and gold received from every part of the world. With something of a smile on his face he said, “You see, Thomas, we cannot say with Peter, “Silver and gold have I none.” Looking the pope in the eyes, Thomas fearlessly replied, “No, and neither can we say, ‘In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’”

**ENABLED BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD**

Samson’s great strength and exploits was not found in his muscles or his hair, but as a result of “the Spirit of the LORD.” The word “move” speaks of action, not just a feeling as indicated by the verses below:

- “…behold, a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he _______ him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done” (Judges 14:5-6)
- “And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and _______ thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father’s house” (Judges 14:19).
• “And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands _________ from off his hands” (Judges 15:14).

“But ye shall receive ________, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The primary purpose of being endued with power is so that we might be an effective witness.

A.W. Tozer said,

If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, ninety-five percent of what we do would go on, and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, ninety-five percent of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference.
GOING DOWNHILL SPIRITUALLY

“And Samson went _______ to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines” (Judges 14:1).

Samson was a “he-man with a she-weakness.” His life can be summed up by three women. (In an upcoming lesson we will look at the role that sight played in these relationships).

- The woman of Timnath (Judges 14:1-4)
- The harlot of Gath (Judges 16:1-3)
- Delilah (Judges 16:4-20)

DEVIAION FROM THE WILL OF GOD

Judges chapter 13 tells us what Samson could have been, his potential, his purpose and his power. However, in chapter 14 we see the first of his many steps down the slippery slope of spiritual shame.

Three times we read in this chapter that Samson is headed “down.” “And Samson went _______...Then went Samson _______...And he went _______” (Judges 14:1, 5, 7).

THE WORD “DOWN” OCCURS 1125 TIMES IN THE BIBLE AND IS OFTEN AN INDICATION OF WHERE A MAN IS HEADED SPIRITUALLY.

1. "Abram went down into Egypt...” (Genesis 12:10).
2. “Judah went down...saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite” (Genesis 38:1-2).
3. “Jonah...went down...down...down” (Jonah 1:3-5).
These words not only describe the geographical direction of “Timnath” (It was located about 6½ kilometres downstream from Zorah) but also suggests the spiritual direction of Samson’s life. Although, Timnath, was just a short distance physically; spiritually it was a completely different world.

- **THE IDENTIFICATION OF TIMNATH** – The name means “the place of the vineyard.” Part of Samson’s vow as a Nazarite was to abstain from “wine, strong drink, vinegar, grapes and raisins” (Judges 13:5; Numbers 6:2-4). While going into a vineyard may have not been sin, the Bible warns us to “Abstain from _____ appearance of evil” (I Thessalonians 5:22).

- **THE LOCATION OF TIMNATH** – It was part of the allotment of the tribe of Dan, located on the northern border of Judah. It was occupied by the Philistines.
God’s purpose for Samson’s life was to deliver Israel from the Philistines, not to identify with and marry them (Judges 13:5; Haggai 2:12-13). Note the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Position</strong></th>
<th><strong>Integration</strong></th>
<th><strong>Integrity</strong></th>
<th><strong>Isolation</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emphasis</strong></td>
<td>Friend to sinners</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Separate from sinners</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scripture</strong></td>
<td>Matthew 11:19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hebrews 7:26</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong></td>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>Conviction</td>
<td>Contention</td>
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**Disobedience to the Word of God**

*And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and ______ his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well (Judges 14:1-3).*

The reason he asked his parents to get her for his wife was because the custom in those days was for parents of a son to ask the parents of a daughter for her hand in marriage. They would also be responsible for paying a dowry for her hand in marriage. While Samson needed his parents to arrange his wedding, he did not want their advice concerning it.
**His Disregard for God’s Command** – “Neither shalt thou make ____________ with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly” (Deuteronomy 7:3-4 also see Exodus 34:16 and II Corinthians 6:14-18).

**Beware of the Danger of “Missionary Dating,”**
**In the Hopes of Leading Someone to the Lord!**

**His Defiance of God’s Command** – When Samson’s parents spoke to him about what he was asking, he replied, “Get her for ____; for she pleaseth me well” (Judges 14:3). David Squyres, in his book of sermons from Judges, imagines the conversation with his parents going somewhat like this: “‘You know, E-Harmony has some wonderful young Jewish girls. You should give it a try.’ To which Samson replied, ‘Nah, Ma, I already found a great catch over at Bad-Girls-of-Philistia.com.’ **Samson was not only in defiance of his parent’s concerns, but he was also in defiance of God’s command!**

**Paedarchy** – is defined as “government by children.”
John Wesley wrote: “Children ought not to marry, nor to move toward it without the advice and consent of their parents.”

- **PRECEPT** – The 1st question in dating/courting is not whether or not he or she pleases you well, but does he or she please God.
- **PRINCIPLE** – The 2nd question is whether or not they please your parents.
- **PREFERENCE** – The 3rd question is, do they please you.

**DISTRACTION IN THE WORD OF GOD**

In Judges 14:4 we have an interesting statement made. “But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the _______, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.”

If we read this quickly, we may get the idea the motive behind Samson taking the Philistine girl was in order to strike out against the Philistines. However, that is not what the Bible teaches.

- **GOD’S PLAN** – Note the statement once again, “But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD.” The attention is on the Lord. It was the “LORD” that “sought an occasion against the Philistines,” not Samson. When Judges 14:4 says “he sought an occasion against the Philistines,” it is not talking about Samson, but about God. The “he” of verse four refers to God.
• **God’s Providence** – Always remember that God is in control and He will act according to His plan in spite of our disobedience. As one writer said “He will do what He wants to, where He wants to, when He wants to and how He wants to—no matter how man acts!"

F.B. Meyer said, “God overruled the results, though that did not relieve Samson of the blame. God overruled in His providence, but that did not excuse the actions of Samson.”

“**It is never right, to do wrong, for a chance to do right.**”

Bob Jones Sr.

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**During the next several weeks we will see how Samson:**

- Dishonoured his parents
- Deserted his promise
- Distorted his purpose
- Defiled his purity
- Deluded his power
A LION IN THE VINEYARD

“Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the ______________ of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him” (Judges 14:5).

As we mentioned last week, Samson is on a downward path, not only geographically, but also spiritually. Three times we read in this chapter that Samson is headed “down” (Judges 14:1, 5, 7).

This week we will be considering Samson as he returns to Timnath with his parents to make the arrangements for the marriage. On the way he encounters a lion in the vineyards.

THE PLACE THAT SAMSON WAS FOUND

The place that we see Samson going “down” to and “come to” was the “vineyards.” Again, as we pointed out in our previous lesson, going into the vineyards was not necessarily sin; but it is a place of temptation because of his vow as a Nazarite.

• A PLACE OF DANGER – In the Book of Proverbs, Solomon warns of the danger of being in the wrong place.
1. “Enter not into the ______ of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away” (Proverbs 4:14-15).

2. “Remove thy way far from her, and come not ______ the door of her house” (Proverbs 5:8).

3. “And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the _____ to her house, In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night” (Proverbs 7:7-9).

• **A PLACE OF DECEIT** – Twice the Bible records that he “told not” his parents about killing the lion or gathering honey out of the carcass of the lion (Judges 14:6, 9). I do not believe that Samson was just sparing his parents feelings, lest they worry about him; or that it was humility that prevented him from telling his parents what had happened. The reason Samson did not tell his parents about the lion is because it may have been a violation of his Nazarite vow of touching a “dead body”. While the reference in Numbers 6:7-8 is in regards to human bodies, Leviticus 11:27 refers to lions as unclean. A good principle to follow in regards to questionable things is when in doubt, don’t.

• **A PLACE OF DRIFTING** – “He ________ aside” (Judges 5:8).
In Acts 20:20, the Apostle Paul warns the church of Ephesus of the danger of those within the church who would seek to “draw ______ disciples” after themselves. Later, Paul writes to Timothy, who was pastoring the church of Ephesus, that “…some having _________ have turned aside unto vain jangling” (I Timothy 1:6). Finally, he writes to the church itself “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to __________” (Ephesians 4:14).

Sadly, years later, in the last Book of the Bible, John writes to the church of Ephesus these words: “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast ______ thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent” (Revelation 2:4-5).

### The Course of Drifting

“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:14-15).

1. **Desire** – “Lust” is an amoral word, it can be good or bad.
2. **Drawn Away** – “drawn way” is a hunting term, as when a bird is decoyed away from safety.
3. **Deception** – “entice” is a fishing term, picturing the baiting of a hook.
4. **Disobedient** – “sin” is taking the bait.
5. **Death** – “and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (See Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4).
A Place of Death – Just as there were consequences when a Nazarite broke his vow, so there are consequences for our sin (Numbers 6:9-21).

When I was a kid, back in the ’70’s, there was a TV show called “Hee Haw.” While the show was kind of corny, there was a scene where Doc Campbell is confronted by a patient who says he broke his arm in two places. The doc replies, “Well then, stay out of them places.”

I want to encourage you to stay away from “Timnath.”

There is always a high cost for low living.

The Peril that Samson Was Facing

The Apostle Peter writes: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the ________, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (I Peter 5:8).

The Bible describes Satan as our adversary, an “opponent in a lawsuit.” The word devour literally means “to swallow.” It speaks of how a lion would tear its prey from limb to limb and consume it.

Always beware of the peril of going “down” and “turning aside.” A good friend of mine, Don Teubert, once told me “That the devil always devours the deserter.”
THE POWER THAT SAMSON WAS FILLED

“And the ________ of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done” (Judges 14:6). This is the first specific event in which we see Samson displaying supernatural strength. Each time you find Samson doing some great feat that involved and displayed his physical strength, you read that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him.

The male lion weights anywhere from 150 to 250 kilos (330 to 550 pounds) and when it leaps on its prey it brings them down with its crushing weight. Its great canine teeth are set far apart in its square jaws and lock together like a vice. The molars are transformed from grinders into incisors and are so strong they can crack heavy bones. Its claws are large and sharp and when it strikes every claw is like a hook and dagger that tears, cuts and rips.

Yet, Samson, “...he would have rent a kid, and he had _________ in his hand.”

“WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING”  
John 15:5  
In the word “Christian” the accent mark must be on the first syllable. The suffix simply means – I am nothing.
As a closing observation, Ray Pritchard wrote: “It is very possible for a Christian to be empowered by the Spirit of God to do certain things and yet not to have his life yielded to the full control of the Holy Spirit.” This apt assertion is true about Samson, God used him to accomplish some amazing things, yet God was never able to control Samson himself.

“He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without ________” (Proverbs 25:28 also see Proverbs 16:32).
THE DANGER OF TURNING ASIDE

"And after a time he returned to take her, and he _______ _______ to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion" (Judges 14:8).

In today’s lesson we will be reviewing several principles that we have observed over the past couple of weeks.

ESTABLISHING A PATTERN

Samson is establishing a pattern of pursuing questionable things. He has a tendency to get as close to the edge as possible. This pattern or habits of life will influence his relationship with Delilah twenty years later.

Jesus said “For if they do these things in a _______ tree, what shall be done in the ____?” (Luke 23:31).

- TIMNATH – Perhaps Samson reasoned that Timnath was originally a part of the allotment of the tribe of Dan, so why couldn’t he go there?
However, it was located on the northern border of Judah and was occupied by the Philistines. God’s purpose for Samson’s life was to deliver Israel from the Philistines, not to identify with the Philistines ( Judges 13:5).

- **The Philistine Woman** – Samson could justify his interest in “the daughter of the Philistines” by reminding his parents that the Philistines were not specifically mentioned in Deuteronomy 7:1, where God lists seven nations that were rejected.

While this may be true concerning the “letter” of the law, it does violate the “spirit” of the law (Exodus 34:16; Deuteronomy 7:3-4; Amos 3:3). He also rejected the counsel of his parents in regards to this issue.

- **Vineyards** – I am sure Samson could have pointed out the divided opinion among the scholars of his day as to whether or not it was wrong for a Nazarite to be in a vineyard. Besides, he was not planning on eating or drinking anything while he was there.

Yet the Bible instructs us: “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the ________, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:14). We must always be careful to not let our “good be evil spoken of” (Romans 14:16; also see Deuteronomy 16:21).
THE DEAD BODY OF THE LION – There is also a debate as to what is defined as a “dead body” (Numbers 6:6-9). Is it any human body or just family members? Does it include the bodies of animals?

While each of us may have a different opinion concerning the definition of “no dead body;” the Bible makes it clear that a lion was classified as an unclean beast. “And whatsoever goeth upon his paws, among all manner of beasts that go on all four, those are unclean unto you: whoso toucheth their carcase shall be ___________ until the even” (Leviticus 11:27).

In considering the questionable things of life we must not only consider the precepts of Scripture but also the principles of Scripture.

THE EASY PATHWAY

Samson chooses the pathway of least resistance. Three times in Judges 14, we read that Samson went “down” (Judges 14:1, 5, 7). Again, someone once said, “If you are coasting, you are going downhill.”

The Principle of the Path reminds us that our direction (not necessarily our desires or even our discipline) determines our destination.
ELEVATION OF PLEASURE

We read “she pleased Samson well” (Judges 14:7). That is how temptation works, it appeals to our fleshly desires and seeks to get us to fulfil those desires outside of God’s will.

Samson was more interested in what pleased him rather than what pleased God. It was the gratification of self that Samson was interested in, not the glorification of God. He was a man who was ruled by his flesh instead of being ruled by the Spirit.

ESCALATION PROCESS

Judges 14:8 is the third time Samson visited Timnath. The first time he went down to Timnath he “saw” her (Judges 14:1). The second time we read that he “talked” to her (Judges 14:7). Now he is going to Timnath to “take” her. We read, “And after a time he returned to take her” (Judges 14:8).

We see this process repeated in the lives of:

- **DAVID** – “And it came to pass...that David...saw a woman...inquired after the woman...and took her,”” (II Samuel 11:1-5).

- **ACHAN** – “When I _____ among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it” (Joshua 7:21).
• **EVE** – “And when the woman _____ that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Genesis 3:6).

This principle is further illustrated in the Book of Job.

“I made a __________ with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?” (Job 31:1). The reason Job makes this “covenant” is because he realized that our hearts walk after our eyes and then our actions follow our hearts (Job 31:7 also see Matthew 12:34-35; 15:18-19 and Proverbs 14:14; 23:7).

**ENIGMATIC PHRASE**

Note the first four words of Judges 14:8, “And after a ______...” Approximately one year has passed since Samson last visited Timnath, yet sadly; his actions and attitudes have remained the same.

Instead of growing closer to the Lord, Samson is continuing his downward slide towards sin and debauchery. What about us, are we closer to the Lord than we were a year ago?

My favourite hymn, “My Jesus I Love Thee,” was written by a 16 year old boy, William Featherston of Montreal, Canada is 1862.
The final line of each stanza reminds me of my continual need to go forward in my relationship with the Lord.

_If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ‘tis now._

**EMBRACE PERVERSION**

The words “turn aside” are found 20 times in the Old Testament. 18 times they speak of turning from God, only twice is the phrase used in a positive light (Exodus 3:3; Ruth 4:1). While Samson’s initial motive may have been curiosity, it quickly leads to contravening God’s Word.

John Bunyan wrote: Temptations, when we first meet them, are like a lion that roared at Samson, but if we overcome them, the next time we see them we shall find a nest of honey with them.

God has called us to a walk of “holiness,” there is always a danger when we “turn aside” from that walk (I Thessalonians 4:1-7; also see Ephesians 5:1-7; I Corinthians 6:13-7:5).

**ENTANGLED HIS PARENTS**

We next read that Samson “came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat” (Judges 14:9). Samson not only defiled himself, but also deceived his parents in the process.
THE RISK OF THE RIDDLE

"And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a __________ unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments" (Judges 14:12).

Proverbs 14:9 reminds us that "Fools make a mock of sin." In today’s lesson we will see Samson as he continues the downward slope in sin. **We will note his wedding, his wager and his wrath.**

INFATUATION WITH SIN

Our text centres on Samson’s marriage to a Philistine girl. From the first time he saw her, he was consumed with having her as his wife.

- “…Get her for me; for she ____________ me well” (Judges 14:3).
- “…She ____________ Samson well” (Judges 14:7).

Samson’s infatuation with the Philistine woman reminds us of how we can become infatuated with sin, allowing sin to dominate our lives.
A.W. Tozer wrote:

In every Christian’s heart, there is a cross and a throne, and the Christian is on the throne till he puts himself on the cross; if he refuses the cross, he remains on the throne. Perhaps this is at the bottom of the backsliding and worldliness among gospel believers today.

Infatuation with sin is always a case of one listening to their lusts rather than the Lord. It is letting their desires overrule the will of God for their life.

**INDULGENCE IN SIN**

“So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a ________; for so used the young men to do. And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him” (Judges 14:10-11).

- **THE SETTING OF THE FEAST** – It was customary for a wedding feast to last several days. The words “for so used the young men to do,” simply means that this was the custom.

In Strong’s Bible Dictionary *mish tel*, the Hebrew word for *feast* is a “drinking banquet.” He also notes that it comes from the root to *imbile* or to be “inebriated.” **We would call it a bachelor party.**
Solomon warns of the danger of alcohol in Proverbs 23:

Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet _______” (Proverbs 23:29-35)

• **The Surrounding of the Feast** – We read “that _______ brought thirty companions to be with him' (Judges 14:11). The normal custom was for a marriage festival to be held in the home of the bridegroom. It was also normal for the friends of the bridegroom to have been invited to participate in the feast.

Samson is not celebrating his marriage in his own home and among his own people, but in an area occupied by pagan Philistines. Instead of Jewish friends being invited, there were thirty Philistines that were brought in as wedding guests. Instead of surrounding that reflected his people, his faith and his God, his marriage feast reflects more of a place and people that did not know God.
Samuel Ridout said “He went down to marry one woman and he finds he has thirty Philistines as companions. He is linked with one and that one has grown to thirty. You cannot adopt one unscriptural principle without finding a whole host of others equally unscriptural that follow it.”

INDIFFERENCE TO SIN

Riddles were a customary form of amusement at marriage feasts (it was the days before the smart phone). So during the course of the week, Samson presented them a riddle.

- **THE CONTENT OF THE RIDDLE** – “And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a _________ unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments: But if ye cannot declare it me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it. And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle” (Judges 14:12-14).

The riddle itself was short, consisting of just two parallel lines, each containing seven words: “... Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.” His riddle was based on the lion he had killed and how he had found bees storing honey in the carcass.
With the riddle, he makes a wager. If they solve the riddle he will give them “thirty sheets and thirty changes of garments.” The word sheets refer to a type of “fine linen used as an inner garment and was considered a costly garment.” The word garments refer to an “expensive kind of outward garment known as a tunic.”

Each would have been an expensive gift in itself, but thirty of each was a very costly wager. One writer wrote that a man might expect to own only one such type of garment once in his life. **The value of a single set of garments of this quality would cost a year’s wage.**

- **The Choice of the Riddle** – The sad reality is that the very thing that had been an act of disobedience and desecration in the life of Samson, he now uses as a riddle. What should have been an act of shame and embarrassment, he chooses to use as a form of entertainment.

**Wanna Bet**

Gambling can be defined as “the betting of money—or something of value—on the outcome of an artificially created chance or uncertain event, whereby the prize money is not determined by value, service or goodwill; but rather by chance, in such a way that the gain of the winners is at the expense of the losers.”

**Method** – Chance versus providence of God (Isaiah 44:24-25; Proverbs 16:33).

**Motive** – Greed versus contentment (Philippians 4:11-13; I Timothy 6:6-10).

**Means** – Selfishness versus generosity (I John 4:20).
In Jeremiah 8:12 we read, “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were _____ ____ _____ ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.”

IN Volvement with Sin

Hebrews 12:15 reminds us that when we fail to respond to “the grace of God,” not only do we get into more “trouble” but others are affected too. “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble _____, and thereby many be defiled” (Also see Psalm 12:8).

We read in Judges 14:14 “…And they could not in three days expound the riddle.” Finally they resort to dishonest and deceptive methods to find the answer. “And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, ________ thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye called us to take that we have? is it not so?” (Judges 14:15).

The word entice is first used in Exodus 22:16 and speaks being “open, spacious, or wide.” It speaks of one is open to all kinds of enticements, one who does not discriminate between what is right or wrong.
They were asking Samson’s new wife to do whatever was necessary to learn the answer to his riddle. When we talk about temptation we are talking about an enticement or securement to do evil.

**INTIMIDATIONS TO SIN**

Just as the Philistines wedding guests used intimidation to pressure Samson’s wife to get the answer to the riddle, so she pressured Samson for the answer.

We read, “And Samson's wife _______ before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee? And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted...” (Judges 14:16-17a – Delilah would use the same method 20 years later (Judges 16:15).

One of the methods of interrogation used in the Iraqi War was the use of heavy metal or children’s music from Sesame Street for hours at a time. The theory behind the method was that if one has to listen to something they dislike for prolonged periods of time, the brain and body functions start to slide. One’s train of thought slows down and eventually the will is broken.
INTENSIFICATION OF SIN

We next read, "...and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he _______ her, because she lay sore upon him: and she _______ the riddle to the children of her people" (Judges 14:17b).

- **DECEITFUL RESULTS** – "And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down, What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my __________, ye had not found out my riddle" (Judges 14:18).

When Samson called his wife a "heifer," he was referring to her untamed and stubborn spirit (see Jeremiah 50:11; Hosea 4:16). He was also accusing the Philistines of cheating, heifers were not used for ploughing. The Apostle Paul wrote in regard to stealing/cheating: "Let him that stole steal __ more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28).

- **DISASTROUS RESULTS** – "And the Spirit of the LORD came _______ him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house. But Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend" (Judges 14:19-20).
Samson travelled 32 kilometres/20 miles to the coast town of Ashketon and killed 30 men to pay his debt. Like most betting, this “friendly wager” turned into something not so friendly.

Samson’s basic problem was that while he was often empowered, he never controlled his own emotions, first in romance, then in revenge.
"And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be __________ of you, and after that I will cease" Judges 15:7).

The word *avenged* speaks of “a person holding a grudge and taking vengeance.” However, the cycle of revenge and retaliation never ceases, with each party seeking payback.

Sydney J Harris said,

> When we “get even” with someone, that is literally what we are doing—becoming even with them, that is, descending to their level in vengeance and losing whatever moral advantage we may have had.

The Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, sometimes referred to as “the wise” said; “The best sort of revenge is not to be like him who did the injury.”

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Dearly beloved, __________ not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Romans 12:19).

The phrase “for it is written” refers to Deuteronomy 32:35; “To ____ belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.”
THE RAGE HE SHOWED

Behind Samson’s revenge is anger. To understand what is happening in chapter 15, we have to go back to chapter 14.

“...And his anger was kindled...” Judges 14:19).

The word anger means “nose” or “nostril.” Samson’s is breathing rapid, his nostrils are dilated, his fists are clenched and his eyes are glaring. Perhaps you have heard the expression “he was so mad that he was breathing fire”

The word kindled speaks of “a fire blazing up.” If you remember for our last study, Samson had been deceived by his wife, tricked by the Philistines and now he is being cheated by his father-in-law.

- **THE ACTIONS OF HIS ANGER WERE UNCONTROLLED** – He was so angry that he stormed out of his wedding and headed back home. His anger is controlling him, rather than him controlling his anger.

Ambrose Bierce wrote, “Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever regret.”

James wrote: “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the ________ of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (James 1:19-20).
• **THE ACTIONS OF HIS ANGER WERE UNCHANGEABLE** – “But it came to pass within a while after, in the time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her father would _____ suffer him to go in” (Judges 15:1). A few months have passed. It is now the time of the wheat harvest (May or June) and Samson takes a young goat as a gift for his bride (today it would be chocolates, perfume or flowers).

But the damage has been done, his father-in-law has given Samson’s wife to his companion (Judges 14:20). This may have been his best man at the wedding.

Because of uncontrolled anger, Samson lost his wife. Someone has said, “An angry man is again angry with himself when he returns to reason.”

**THE REVENGE HE SOUGHT**

Once Samson realized what had happened, he desired and sought revenge. He felt that he had to get even for what they had done to him.

• **THE FEELING HE VENTED** - “And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails. And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives” (Judges 15:4-5).
Samson vented his feelings by burning the crops of those who did him wrong (the Philistines only had three cash crops. One was wheat, one was olives, and the other grapes—vineyards. Samson single-handedly destroys the economic base of the whole nation).

Charles Lowry, in his book, Comic Belief, writes that angry people often use “intimidation instead of negotiation” to win an argument.

- **The Feelings He Voiced** – Notice how Samson justifies his behaviour. We read, “And Samson said concerning them, Now shall I be more ______________ than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure” (Judges 1:3). The word *displeasure* means “harm,” Samson intended to harm them and is justifying his actions.

  He wanted them to pay for what they had done. He speaks of being “blameless.” He was saying that he was absolved of all guilt for doing what he did. I have found that people who are driven by anger often convince themselves it is right when they take steps of revenge.

**The Results He Suffered**

When one seeks revenge, they never escape without personal consequences. Louis XIV of France, said of the starving hordes that were clamouring for bread, “Let the people eat grass.” In a few years the people dragged his son to execution with his mouth stuffed full of grass. Vengeance always comes back to bite the person who is vengeful.
Francis Bacon said, “Men must not turn into bees and kill themselves in stinging others.” A Chinese proverb says, “He who seeks revenge, digs two graves.” It has also been said, “Revenge proves to be its own executioner.”

- **Defilement of His Life** – Remember, when you throw mud at someone, you always end up with dirty hands.

- **The Death of His Wife** – “Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son in law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and ________ her and her father with fire” (Judges 15:6).

**REVENGE ALWAYS BEGETS REVENGE**
“...and he went down and dwelt in the top of the ______ Etam. Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi...”

(Judges 15:8-9). Etam speaks of “rocky ground” while Lehi was a place of heights,

While Samson has hidden away in the rocks of Etam he does not have much room to negotiate. It is during the hard times when we truly see a person’s character.

**ACTION VERSUS REACTION**

No we are not talking about Newton’s third law of motion, but what motivates us as Christians.

Sydney Harris wrote the following article regarding this subject:

I walked with my friend to the newsstand the other night. He bought a paper, thanking the newsie politely. The newsie didn’t even acknowledge the thank you. “A sullen fellow, isn’t he?” I commented. “Oh, he’s that way every night.” “Then why do you continue to be so polite to him?” I asked. “Why not?’ inquired my friend. “Why should I let him decide how I’m going to act?”

Do you respond or react when someone mistreats you? Are you a thermometer or a thermostat? Do you seek to control the circumstances or do you allow the circumstances to control you?
The Philistines were great in military strength because they had learned to smelt iron giving them superior weapons. However, they chose to conquer Israel through seduction, rather than by the sword (see Genesis 4:16; Numbers 22:16; Revelation 2:8-11 cf 2:12-17). We find the two main weapons that the Philistines used were: Trade (I Samuel 13) Intermarriage (business and pleasure).

The background to what we see happening was Samson’s slaying of the Philistines that murdered his wife. We read “And he _______ them hip and thigh with a great slaughter...” (Judges 15:8). This expression was used in reference to a wrestler tripping and beating an opponent. How many Samson slew is not disclosed, but it was a “great slaughter.”

After this Samson retreats to “the top of the rock Etam” (Judges 15:8). Perhaps to get away from everything or to find a place to defend himself. The Philistines are not about to take what Samson has done. “Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi” (Judges 15:9). Remember, from last week’s lesson, revenge always begets revenge.

We will consider both the tribe of Judah and Samson’s response to the Philistines.
JUDAH CHOOSES TO REMAIN IN BONDAGE

The presence of this large number of Philistines caused the children of Israel great concern. We read “And the men of Judah said, ______ are ye come up against us? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us” (Judges 15:10). They were afraid that the Philistines were “against” them.

Even though they were told by the Philistines that they had come for Samson, there was still a fear they might take their anger out on them. As a result, “Then _______ thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson…” (Judges 15:11).

• A LIFE DOMINATED BY THEIR ENEMIES – “…Knowest thou not that the Philistines are _________ over us?” (Judges 15:11). The word “rulers” describes how they were under the control and domination of the Philistines.

STOCKHOLM SYNDROME

It is a paradoxical phenomenon wherein hostages express empathy and have positive feelings towards their captors, sometimes to the point of defending them. These feelings are generally considered irrational in light of the danger or risk endured by the victims, who essentially mistake a lack of abuse from their captors for an act of kindness.

The FBI’s Hostage Barricade Database System shows that roughly 27% of victims show evidence of Stockholm Syndrome.
It is always sad when the believer is living below his privilege.

1. Romans 8:37 – “Nay, in all these things we are more than ___________________ through him that loved us.”
2. II Corinthians 2:14 – “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to ____________ in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.”
3. I John 5:4 – “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the ____________ that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

• A LIFE DISPLEASEING TO THEIR LORD – The reason that the children of Israel were dominated by the Philistines is found in Leviticus 26:14-17

But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.
• **A LIFE DESTRUCTIVE TO THEIR FREEDOM** – The third truth is that their choices not only enslaved Samson but continued to keep the men of Judah enslaved. “And they said unto him, We are come down to ______ thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines...” (Judges 15:12).

They have aligned themselves with the enemies of God. As Warren Wiersbe said, “This is the only time during Samson’s judgeship that the Jews mustered an army, and it was for the purpose of capturing one of their own men.”

The men of Judah wanted to keep everything “status quo.” They did not want Samson to “rock the boat,” they wanted him to go along to get along.

Matthew Henry said this: “Justly is their misery prolonged, who to oblige their worst enemies, thus abuse their best friend.”

**SAMSON CHOOSES TO REMAIN BITTER**

The men of Judah asked “what is this that thou hast done unto ____?” (Judges 15:11). Notice the response Samson gave to them, “And he said unto them, ____ they did unto me, so have I done unto them.” (Judges 15:11 – emphasis mine)
Last week we spoke on Payback, getting even and seeking revenge. Remember the sequence: Samson gives a riddle—the Philistines threaten his wife to get the answer—Samson killed 30 men to pay his gambling debt—Samson’s wife is given to another man—Samson burns the Philistines crops—The Philistines kill the wife and father—Samson slaughters the Philistines—They intimidate the men of Judah—etc.

Note also that Samson rationalises his actions. **We must be careful about using our perceived rights as justification for revenge.**

If we are not careful when someone does us wrong it can leave us with a bitter spirit. Peter Marshall said, “If you hug to yourself any resentment against anybody else, you destroy the bridge by which God would come to you,” Bitterness greatly affects our relationship not only with others, but with God.

Let me draw your attention to Hebrews 12:15, once again, “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of ______________ springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”

**The Germination of Bitterness** – The writer of Hebrews speaks of bitterness “springing up.” The words carry the idea of germination or growth, such as the germination and growth of a plant. At first there is only a seed in the ground. That seed germinates and springs up as it is nurtured and nourished from the nutrients in the soil, the rain falls upon it and the sun shines upon it.
The same is true of bitterness. If we dwell upon what has been done to us, keep thinking and talking about it, rather than laying it before the cross, it will only grow until it manifests itself in a heart filled with bitterness. Quite often when we have been wronged against, it consumes us. It is all we think and talk about. It is constantly on our minds. This only allows bitterness to germinate and spring up in our hearts.

We must treat any mistreatment or wrong-doing as a weed in a garden. We must pluck it up by the roots. We must treat bitterness as an enemy of our hearts, just as we would treat weeds as an enemy to a healthy and beautiful garden. If we water and fertilize it, it will grow until it takes over our hearts.

**There is no revenge as sweet as forgiveness.**

- **The Agitation of Bitterness** – He speaks of “bitterness springing up _________ you...” (Hebrews 12:15). The word “trouble” speaks of how bitterness disturbs or distresses us. It will create great agitation of the heart.

Over 100 years ago (1909), Dr. S.I. McMilan wrote in his book, *None of These Diseases:*
The moment I start hating a man, I become his slave. I can’t enjoy my work anymore because he even controls my thoughts. My resentment produces too many stress hormones in my body, and I become fatigued after only a few hours’ work. The work I formerly enjoyed is now drudgery. Even vacations cease to give me pleasure...the man I hate hounds me wherever I go. I can’t escape his tyrannical grasp on my mind. When the waiter serves me porterhouse steak with French fries, asparagus, crisp salad and strawberry cake smothered with ice cream, it might as well be stale bread and water. My teeth chew the food and I swallow it, but the hate will not permit me to enjoy it...the man I hate may be many miles from my bedroom, but more cruel than any slavedriver, he whips my thoughts into such a frenzy that my innerspring mattress becomes a rack of torture.
ON JAWBONE HILL

“And he found a new ____________ of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith” (Judges 15:15).

Last week, three thousand men of Judah came to Samson with the intention of delivering him into the hands of the Philistines, remember they had already given up. They said to him, “We are come down to ______ thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines” (Judges 15:12).

“Swear unto me that ye will not ______ upon me yourselves” (Judges 15:12). They expected a fight, Samson responded with faith; they expected a battle, he gave them a blessing; they expected a war, but he answered with wisdom.

“A SOFT ANSWER TURNETH AWAY WRATH: BUT GRIEVOUS WORDS STIR UP ANGER.”

Proverbs 15:1

John Butler fitly describes his response:

He sized up the situation expertly. With a cool head he guides the whole affair so that in the end he is able to smite the Philistines another serious blow—and without upsetting the people of his own nation who were at that moment very upset with actions towards the Philistines.
We read, “And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee. And they ________ him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock” (Judges 15:13). Bound by his own people, Samson is delivered into the hands of his enemies.

It is here that “...the ________ of the LORD came mightily upon him...” (Judges 15:14).

BATTLES THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE REALIZES

An important lesson for every Christian to learn is that the Christian life is not a playground but a battleground. In Ephesians chapter six, we are reminded that we are involved in spiritual warfare. “For we ________ not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

We have a spiritual enemy, especially when we seek to do something for the Lord. Note that the Philistines are not really interested in the men of Judah, they were already defeated. Corrie ten Boom said “Satan wastes no ammunitions on those who are dead in trespasses and sins.”
• **The Desire of the Enemy** – "Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi... To _______ Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us" (Judges 15:9-10).

Sadly, the Philistines purpose became the men of Judah’s purpose, “And they said unto him, We are come down to _______ thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines..." (Judges 15:12). When Christians compromise their faith, they will often attack Christians of conviction.

The desire of the enemy was clear, to “bind” and destroy Samson. “The _______ cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

• **The Delight of the Enemy** – “And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines ________ against him..." (Judges 15:14). Later when they actually capture him “…they ________ their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy" (Judges 16:24).

They were ecstatic when they saw Samson bound. It thrills the devil to see God’s people in bondage. Thomas Kempis said, “The devil never sleeps and your flesh is very much alive. Prepare yourself for battle. Surrounding you are enemies that never rest.”
BONDAGE A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE REMOVES

“...And they ________ him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock...” (Judges 15:13). The “new cords” speaks of new ropes.

- **Liberation from Helplessness** – One that is bound is helpless, they do not have freedom of movement, and they are held in bondage and under the control of another.

Likewise, bondage to sin places a person under the control of the devil. “So then they that are in the ________ cannot please God” (Romans 8:8 also see John 8:34).

Both the Philistines and the men of Judah thought that Samson was under their control. But we read, “…the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands _________ from off his hands” (Judges 15:14). The “cords” that bound him became as “flax” or linen “burnt with fire.” They simply fell away from his body.

Osward Chambers said, “It is extraordinary how things fall off from a man like autumn leaves once he comes to the place where there is no rule but that of the personal domination of the Holy Spirit.”

A TRUE REVIVAL MEANS NOTHING LESS THAN A REVOLUTION CASTING OUT THE SPIRIT OF WORLDLINESS MAKING GOD’S LOVE TRIUMPH IN THE HEART.

ANDREW MURRAY
• **Liberation from Uselessness** – "And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and ______ a thousand men therewith" (Judges 15:15). It was in the power of the Holy Spirit that Samson was able to carry out God’s purposes and plans for his life—"...begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (Judges 13:5).

D.L. Moody said that after he was filled with the Holy Spirit, "I went to preaching again. The sermons were not different; I did not present any new truths and yet hundreds were converted. I would not now be placed back where I was before that blessed experience if you should give me all of the world – it would be as dust in the balance."

When we work in the flesh we will only get what the flesh can produce. However, when we work in the power of the Holy Spirit we get what the Spirit produces.

**Blessings the Spirit-Filled Life Reaps**

• **A Triumphant Testimony** – "And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have _ _ slain a thousand men" (Judges 15:16). This was a declaration of the victory that he had won over the Philistines (it is extremely important that when we share our testimony that God gets all the glory – Isaiah 42:8; 48:11).
Samson renamed Lehi, “And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and _______ that place Ramathlehi” (Judges 15:17). The name Ramathlehi means “hill of the jawbone.”

**A Timely Testimony** – The closing words of chapter 15 states “And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines ________ years” (Judges 15:20).

Before, the men of Judah helped to capture him. Afterward, he was accepted as their judge for twenty years.

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Due to reports of successful revivals by Gipsy Smith, a certain preacher approached the noted evangelist to ascertain the secret of revival. When asked to explain the best method to start a revival, Gipsy Smith replied, “Brother, go back home, lock yourself up in a private room. Take a piece of chalk and draw a circle on the floor, get down on your knees inside the circle, pray to God asking Him to start a revival inside the circle. When this prayer is answered, the revival will be on.”
REVIVE US AGAIN

“But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he ___________: wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day” (Judges 15:19).

Blessings are often followed by battles, mountains by valleys, triumphs by tests and our highs are followed by lows. C.H. Spurgeon wrote: “Dear child of God, if after great mercy you are laid very low, your case is not an unusual one. When David had mounted the throne of Israel, he said ‘I am this day weak, though anointed king.’”

It is at Enhakkore that God revives Samson.

REVIVAL – THE PERSON

He reacted wisely when the men of Judah joined hands with the Philistines to capture him. This time, instead of retaliating, as he had on other occasions, he allowed himself to be taken by his own people so he could take actions against the Philistines, actions for which he had been called of God to take.

AS LONG AS WE ARE CONTENT TO LIVE WITHOUT REVIVAL, WE WILL.

LEONARD RAVENHILL
With the new jawbone of an ass, he scored a great victory for both God and Judah by slaying a thousand of the enemy. He celebrated his victory by naming the place Romathlehi, which means “Jawbone Hill.” It was after this great victory that he experienced a devastating low. Exhausted and dehydrated from the heat of the hot climate and the energy expended in the fight, “he was sore _________” (Judges 15:18). Spurgeon calls him “God’s Fainting Hero.”

Someone once said, “While I may get tired in the Lord’s work, I never get tired of the Lord’s work.” If you are tired or discouraged, you can be revived.

REVIVAL – THE PRAYER

The Bible records only two prayers by Samson, both were borne out of extreme need (Judges 15:18-20; 16:28-31).
The first prayer is only 27 words long: “…_______ hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?” (Judges 15:18). In this prayer, **Samson acknowledges three things:**

- **He Acknowledges God’s Power** – “Thou.” He realized that God had given him the victory. Before this he took credit for what had been accomplished: “And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have __ slain a thousand men” (Judges 15:16). Before this all he talks about is himself (Notice his use of personal pronouns: “I” – 12 times; “me” – 8 times; “my” – 5 times).

  Now he is acknowledging God as the one who gives the victory (Judges 15:14).

- **He Acknowledges God’s Plan** – “servant.” He is finally seeing himself as God’s servant, fulfilling God’s purpose for his life (Judges 13:5).

  When Queen Victoria was a little girl, she was shielded from the fact that she was heir to the throne because it was believed that it would spoil her. However, she showed little interest in her studies until one day her teacher explained that she was destined to the throne. She responded by saying, “Then I will be good.” and begin to apply herself to her studies.
• **He Acknowledges God’s Pre-eminence** – “...and _____ shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?” (Judges 15:18). Matthew Poole said that Samson was asking, “Wilt thou not finish what thou hast begun? Wilt thou undo what thou hast done?” In other words, Samson was asking for more than just deliverance from death, but for a continuance of the work that God had started.

**Revival – The Provision**

“But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came ______ thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day” (Judges 15:19).

There are two different views concerning what happened. Some believe that God brought forth water from the jawbone that Samson used to slay the Philistines. The other view believes God split the layers of limestone in the ground, releasing water that came gushing out. The name Lehi means “jawbone” and the word clave means “to split open.” If this view is correct, it explains why Samson calls the place Enhakkore or “fountain.”

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. II Chronicles 7:14
...his spirit came _______, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day. And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years” Judges 15:19-20).

Notice the following four benefits of revival:

• **Personal Revival** – “he revived.” Samson was refreshed and renewed. F.B. Meyer wrote: “Be of good courage, fainting warrior! The God who made thee, and has used thee, knows thy frame, and what thou needest before thou askest.”

• **Answers to Prayer** – “wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakkore.” Enhakkore means “the fountain of him that was calling” or the “well of him that cried.”

• **Changed the Course of History** – “unto this day.” When this passage was written, there was still water coming out of the spring. Giycas (who lived about 600 years ago) wrote that the spring was still flowing in his day. That it was located in the suburbs of Eleutheropolis and was called the fountain of the jawbone.

The flow of water was a present reminder of God’s past provision for his people.
**BLESSED THE NATION** – "And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years." For 20 years Samson leads the nation, nothing is known of this time period, it seems quiet and peaceful.
SAMSON’S MID-LIFE CRISIS

“And he __________ Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years” (Judges 15:20). For twenty years Samson led Judah in peace, prosperity and relative freedom from the Philistines. As we open chapter sixteen of Judges, Samson is now about 40 years old and beginning to feel restless.

SAMSON AND HIS DEFILEMENT

- **THE WRONG ADDRESS** – “Then went Samson to _______...” (Judges 16:1a also see Proverbs 4:14-17; 5:7-10; 7).

Gaza was located near the Mediterranean Sea, about 42 kilometres/25 miles from Zorah, where he grew up. It was one of the five major cities of the Philistines and was the home of the temple of Dagon. The name Gaza means “strength.”

Gaza was situated on the main road that allowed travel between Egypt, Babylon and Assyria. It was a commercial and military crossroads.
• **The Wrong Attractions** – “...and _____ there an harlot...” (Judges 16:1b).

This the second time we see Samson having women problems. First, there was the woman in Timnath—next it will be in the “valley of Sorek.” However, Samson’s main problem is not his eyesight but focus. It is not the sin of observation, it is the sin of concentration.

Ambrose, an early Christian writer wrote:

Samson, when brave, strangled a lion; but could not strangle his own love. He burst the fetters of his foes; but not the cords of his own lusts. He burned the crops of others, and lost the fruit of his own virtue when burning with the flame enkindled by a single woman.

**While you may not be able to keep a bird from flying over your head, you can prevent it from building a nest in your hair.**

Samson was much like Oscar Wilde (a British writer, known for his decadent lifestyle) when he said: “I can resist anything but temptation. The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it.”
• **THE WRONG ALLIANCES** – “..._______ in unto her...” (Judges 16:1c). The Apostle Paul wrote: “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily _________ us, and let us run with patience the race that is set befo:e us” (Hebrews 12:1).

1. **A Besetting Sin is a Distinct Sin** – “_____ sin.” Paul uses a definite article indicating one particular sin. Sin rears its ugly head in our life in many ways, but in this case the writer is talking about a particular sin. He is describing a sin that seems to prevail and be dominant in a person’s life (Psalm 19:12-13).

   Adam Clarke describes it as “The well circumstanced sin; that which has everything in its favour, time, and place and opportunity; the heart and the object; and a sin in which all these things frequently occur, and consequently, the transgression is frequently committed.”

2. **A Besetting Sin is a Defeating Sin** – It is described as “the sin that so _________ beset us.” Albert Barnes describes it “as the sin that so easily subjects one to calamity.” John MacArthur explained it as “It wraps itself around us so that we trip and stumble every time we try to move for the Lord.”

**PRAYER IS THE SUREST REMEDY AGAINST THE DEVIL AND BESETTING SINS.**

J.C. RYLE
In Greek Mythology, Achilles was the son of Peleus, king of Myrmidons, and Thetis, a sea goddess. Achilles was the greatest, bravest and the most handsome warrior in his army. One of the tales about his childhood relates how Thetis held the young Achilles by the heel and dipped him in the waters of the river Styx. Through the magic power of the water, Achilles became invulnerable in every part except his heel by which he was held. The small part untouched by water was vulnerable. It was in the heel that Achilles was struck by an arrow and killed.

Our besetting sin is our “Achilles heel,” the area in which we are the vulnerable.

**SAMSON AND HIS DISCOVERY**

Samson’s actions become public knowledge. “And it was told the Gazites, saying, ________ is come hither. And they compassed him in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him” (Judges 16:2).

- **SHOWING** – “And it was told the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither...” (Judges 16:2a). He probably thought that he would never be recognized, that no one would ever know. Moses wrote: “...be ______ your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23).
• **SURROUNDING** – The Philistines “compassed him ___” (Judges 16:2b). Sin is like a boa constrictor. It encircles the lives of its victims and slowly squeezes the life right out of them. “*His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his ______*” (Proverbs 5:22).

• **STEADY** – They “*laid ______ for him all night*” (Judges 16:2c).

• **SILENT** – The Bible says the Philistines “*were ______*” (Judges 16:2d). The enemy does not always make his presence known. Sometimes Satan shouts with the roar of a lion, at other times he is silent as a serpent.

• **SLAYING** – The Philistines said “when it is day, we shall ______ him” (Judges 16:2e). Satan’s purposes never change—he always seeks to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10).

**SAMSON AND HIS DELIVERANCE**

We cannot avoid the temptations of the world around us, but we do not have to be a victim of temptation. God has given us a wonderful promise that even in the face of temptation, we can be victorious. “*There hath ___ temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted*”
above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

Adam Clarke wrote:

Satan is never permitted to block up our way, without the providence of God making a way through the wall. God ever makes a breach in his otherwise impregnable fortification. Should an upright soul get into difficulties and straits, he may rest assured that there is a way out, as there was a way in; and that the trial shall never be above the strength that God shall give him to bear it.

- **A CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE DANGER** – “And Samson lay till midnight, and ________ at midnight...” (Judges 16:3a). While not sure what caused Samson to rise at midnight to depart the city, Matthew Poole wrote: “being either smitten in conscience for his sin, when first awaked, and thence fearing danger, as he had just cause to do; or being secretly warned by God in a dream, or by an inward impulse, for the prevention of his designed destruction.”

- **A CONQUERING OF THE DANGER** – “and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and __________carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron” (Judges 16:3b).
Samson lifted the doors off their hinges, pulled the posts that held them as well as the bars that braced them. He put them on his back and carried them on his back 35 miles away, mostly uphill. It has been estimated to weigh between 4,000 and 5,000 pounds!

The gates of the city were not only for the protection of the city but much of the political activity of the city took place there.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>FEATS OF STRENGTH</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>• 1798 – William Carr carried 1,120 lbs anchor ½ mile.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 1895 – Joseph Blatt lifted 3,564 lbs.</td>
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<td>• 1900 – William Pagel carried a 1,000 lbs. horse up a set of 12’ ladders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 1902 – Lionel Strongfort became a human bridge supporting a 3,200 lbs. carload of people on a platform.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 1920 – Frank Richards had a 104 lbs. cannon ball fired into his chest at close range.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 1957 – Paul Anderson lifted a table of lead loaded with auto parts that weighted 6,270 lbs.</td>
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“And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was __________” (Judges 16:4).

The story of Samson and Delilah has been immortalized in art, poetry (John Milton wrote, “Samson Agonistes”), music (opera, folk and even rock) and film (1922, 1949, 1984, 1996 and 2009). A 1959 movie poster advertises Samson as “The Mightiest Moral who ever lived” and notes that his incredible feats of strength and his seduction by the infamous Delilah “have echoed through the centuries!”

Lonnie Lundstrum wrote a gospel song that sums up our message today:

Run Samson run, Delilah's gonna get you
Run Samson run, she's gonna cut your hair
Run Samson run, you're gonna lose your power
And you're gonna go to prison and die down there

Alan Carr called this account of Samson and Delilah a story of love, lies and loss.

A STORY OF LOVE

- **SAMSON LOVED A WOMAN** – “And it came to pass afterward, that he __________ a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah” (Judges 16:4).
As I have mentioned before Samson’s “besetting” sin was improper relationships with women. Today, we would call it sexual addiction.

- **Delilah Loved Wealth** – "And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and ____ _____ _____ _____ every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver" (Judges 16:5). They knew where his weakness was, but not where his strength came from.

"**For the Love of Money is the Root of All Evil...**”

I Timothy 6:10

There were five lords of the Philistines, bringing the total bribe or reward to 550 pieces of silver. Ken Trivette said that this would be close to a million dollars in today.

Matthew Poole said, “The whole course of her carriage towards Samson, shows her to be a mercenary and perfidious harlot.”

**A Story of Lies**

A relationship must be based on honesty, neither Samson nor Delilah were truthful with each other.
The Apostle Paul wrote: “Now the end of the commandment is __________ out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” I Timothy 1:5).

- **SAMSON’S LIES WERE SENSELESS** – Samson is behaving foolishly. He is playing loose and reckless with God’s gift of strength (Proverbs 10:23; 14:9).

  Samson needs to practice some prudence. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished" (Proverbs 22:3; 27:12).

1. **Bind me with seven green vines** – Vine tendrils, pliant twigs, or twists made of crude vegetable stalks used in many Eastern countries for ropes (Judges 16:7-10).
2. **Bind me fast with new ropes** (Judges 16:11-13a).
3. **Weavest the seven locks of my head with a web** (Judges 16:13b-14).

- **DELILAH’S LIES WERE SINISTER** – Delilah uses the same tactic used by the woman in Timnath (Judges 4:16-17). She is playing the “if you loved me you would” card.

  The Bible implies that she begged, pleaded, whined and cried day after day, all day long, slowly wearing him down (Proverbs 19:13; 21:9; 21:19; 25:24; Job 14:19).
While there seems to be several connotations for Delilah’s name, perhaps the most applicable meaning is “feeble, or the pining one.” She certainty brought down Samson.

“A STORY OF LOSS

We will continue this story of loss next week in our final lesson concerning Samson. For now, please note the following two verses:

And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the ________ was departed from him” ( Judges 16:19-20).

“FOR SHE HATH CAST DOWN MANY WOUNDED: YEA, MANY STRONG MEN HAVE BEEN SLAIN BY HER.”

PROVERBS 7:26

Always beware of getting a haircut in the devil’s barbershop!
Run Samson Run

Delilah was a long haired pretty thing with flashing dark brown eyes
And Samson was the servant of the living God who never was to compromise
He met her in a hotel one day the love was sweet to him
But the Lord saw it all and it grieved his heart for Samson fell in sin

Run Samson run, Delilah's gonna get you
Run Samson run, she's gonna cut your hair
Run Samson run, you're gonna lose your power
And you're gonna go to prison and die down there

Delilah was paid by the Philistines to find what made him strong
Three times she tricked and tried to betray the man who wore his hair so long
She begged and pleaded until one day his soul could stand no more
Then he said if they cut my hair I'll be weak for it means I am the Lord's

They cut his hair while he was a sleepin' and he never heard a sound
When he awakened his knees started shakin' as they dragged him to the ground
The Philistines put out his eyes and bound him with their chains
He became a slave in the prison house and died down there in shame

Now listen boy if you been lookin at a girl with pretty eyes
Make sure she loves the Lord with all her heart and never compromise
For a worldly girl will take your life and use it for her gain
Don't trust her or you'll end up with the fools who are in chains
Run boy run, Delilah's gonna get you
Run boy run, she's gonna cut your hair
Run boy run, you're gonna lose your power
And you're gonna go to prison and die down there
Written by Lowell Lundstrom
In the Bible, 1000 year B.C.
There's a story of ancient history
'Bout a fella who was strong as he could be
Till he met a cheating gal who brought him tragedy

Oh, run Samson run, Delilah's on her way
Run Samson run, you ain't got time to stay
Run Samson run, on your mark you better start
I'd soon trust a hungry lion than a gal with a cheatin' heart

She was a demon, a devil in disguise
He was taken by the angel in her eyes
That lady barber was very well equipped
You can bet your bottom dollar he was gonna get clipped

Oh Delilah made Sammy's life a sin
And he perished when the roof fell in
There's a moral so listen to me pal
There's a little of Delilah in each and every gal