

I'm looking forward to being with you all this Sunday. I hope you'll take a few minutes to ponder these questions so that the crickets I hear out my window tonight will be missing on Sunday morning!

Allen

This week's lesson comes from Judges chapter 16...the story of Samson.

Our lesson text jumps ahead to the story of Samson and Delilah. To get the full picture it's helpful to read chapters 14, 15, and 16.

Opening Question - Can you think of some famous people who had great potential but squandered it? What are some of the reasons these very talented, promising people BLOW it?

It's tragic to see people who have such amazing gifts and such incredible potential just squander it all. Unfortunately, that's the LEGACY of Samson. Samson was the LAST of the Judges in this period of Israel's history.

Let's talk about that word CONSECRATED. Question: What does it mean to be CONSECRATED?

Samson was CONSECRATED as a Nazirite, set apart to God from birth to DELIVER Israel from the Philistines.

What is a Nazirite? (Use a STUDY BIBLE (Numbers 6); Bible Dictionary; or Google)

Judges 13:24-25

24 The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the Lord blessed him, 25 and the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him while he was in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Question: What do you think it means "the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him"?

In Chapter 16, verses 4 and 5 tell us:

Some time later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah. 5 The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, "See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels[a] of silver."

Three times Delilah tried to convince him to tell her the SECRET to his strength. But each time he TRICKED her.

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

17 So he told her everything. "No razor has ever been used on my head," he said, "because I have been a Nazirite set apart to God since birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man."

19 Having put him to sleep on her lap, she called a man to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him.[d] And his strength left him.

20 Then she called, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!"

He awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as before and shake myself free." But he did not know that the Lord had left him.

21 Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding in the prison.

Samson's sins were SPECTACULAR! Consorting with evil women; destroying the grain of a city; killing thousands single handedly while bent on revenge.

It would be easy to say "I'm sure glad I'm not like Samson!"

But, would we be safe in saying that? Why?

Let's take a look at the road to ruin for Samson, and how it might apply to us.

We saw in verse 25 that even as a boy "the Spirit of the Lord began to stir" Samson

He started out CONSECRATED for God and EMPOWERED BY God.

So, how did Samson begin to get off track?

Look back at Chapter 14 verse 13. When Samson wanted that Philistine wife what did he say to his parents? How did this indicate the first way Samson began to slip into a life of SIN?

Question: It's been said that Samson was a "he man with a she weakness." That's accurate, but Samson's REAL weakness was the SIN that CAUSED his weakness with women. What was it?

That led to another stumbling block...

Question: What do we mean when we say someone thinks they are "bullet proof"?

When we see how Delilah repeatedly tried to trick Samson, we have to ask "How could Samson be so naive?" What do you think the answer is? What does 16:4 give as a clue?

Samson's captors brutally GOUGED out his eyes. Once Samson began to live by what was "right in his own eyes"; and to fulfill his DESIRES and LUSTS at any cost...once he felt BULLET PROOF and gave his HEART to MISPLACED AFFECTION...he developed a blindness worse than losing his eyes. Based on verse 20 what was Samson's BLIND SPOT?