

Compromised Potential
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Judges 16:6-20

What do we mean when we say someone has a “blind spot?” Do we typically use that term to describe someone who is a complete idiot? Why?

- This brief last lesson in Judges focuses on the last judge: Samson, one of scripture’s most complicated, inconsistent, and tragic figures.
- On one hand, he was chosen before birth to do great things for God’s people. When obeying the spirit of God, he began to free Israel from the grip of the Philistines.
- His obedience puts him in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11:33.
- Then there was Samson’s other side. The side controlled by lust. Samson’s “blind-side.” This man of strength had a weakness.
- Ironically, given how his story ends, his weakness began with his eyes.
- As a young man Samson was smitten with a Philistine girl, a daughter of God’s enemies (can you say unequally yoked?) Samson says to his dad: “Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes.”¹ (14:3)
- His permissive parents caved into their spoiled gifted son.
- That was only the beginning of Samson’s eye problem. If it looked good he wanted it. More specifically if SHE looked good, Samson wanted HER.
- Some have said Samson was a “he man with a she problem.”
- Despite Samson’s lustful tendencies, he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years (15:20).² Specifically, he used his unusual, God-given physical strength to defeat the oppressors of God’s people.
- The previous three chapters document the rollercoaster ride that is Samson: a dead lion, a honey comb, a bad marriage, foxes with torches, one thousand dead Philistines, and one jawbone of a donkey.

- After twenty years Samson's lust problem took control. Perhaps it was a classic mid-life crisis. He goes to Gaza, the capitol city of the enemy and sleeps with a prostitute. What was he thinking? Oh, he escapes with a dramatic display of his strength no doubt thinking he was bulletproof.
- Then Samson met Delilah. We don't know if she was a Philistine, but she didn't hesitate to conspire with them to destroy Samson.

⁵ ...the Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Seduce him, and see where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to humble him. And we will each give you 1,100 pieces of silver." ⁶ So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me where your great strength lies, and how you might be bound, that one could subdue you." ³

- Her candor is incredible. She TOLD him exactly what she was up to. **Why do you think Samson didn't throw her out right then?**

The famous Roman Mark Antony was so consumed with lust that his tutor once shouted in disgust: "*O Marcus! O colossal child...able to conquer the world but unable to resist a temptation!*"⁴ That was Samson!

- Like everything in his life, Samson appears to think it's all a game.
- "*If I were tied up with seven new bowstrings that have not yet been dried, I would become as weak as anyone else.*"
- She tied him up. "*Samson! The Philistines have come to capture you!*" Nope, the joke's on YOU Delilah
- "*If I were tied up with brand-new ropes that had never been used...*" Same routine. "*If you were to weave the seven braids of my hair into the fabric on your loom and tighten it with the loom shuttle.*" All fun and games!
- Then Delilah pushed the right button. Verse fifteen:

Judges 16:15–20 (ESV)

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

- She nagged, begged, and seduced until Samson “told her all his heart,” it was all about the hair.
- Verse 19: “She made him sleep on her lap.” One theory: she drugged him. Then one buzz-cut later leads to one of the most tragic verses in scripture.

²⁰ And she said, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” And he awoke from his sleep and said, “I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the Lord had left him.

- “He did not know that the Lord had left him.” How can that be?
- If our Bible’s say God will never leave or forsake us, **what happened with Samson? Could that happen to us? How? What do we mean by God’s “hand of blessing?”**
- Samson was both a hero of the faith, and the poster boy for compromise.
- You know how it ended. They gouged out those lustful eyes. What irony!
- He became a gristmill animal and circus attraction.
- Yet in one last display of strength he killed himself and more Philistines than in his whole career. There **MUST** have been repentance or God would not have given him the strength to do it. The hair was just a symbol the strength came from God.

So, What’s the Takeaway?

Proverbs 5:21–23 (ESV) warns us:

21 For a man’s ways are before the eyes of the Lord,
and he ponders all his paths.

22 The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him,
and he is held fast in the cords of his sin.

23 He dies for lack of discipline,
and because of his great folly he is led astray.

F B Meyer warns that, *“Through neglect of watching and prayer -- or by reason of carelessness in the walk and conversation--it is quite possible to break that holy connection between ourselves and heaven which is the secret of deliverance, and...victory. There is always a Delilah ready to sheer off the locks of our strength, if we allow*

*ourselves to sleep in her lap.” And our strength may be gone before we know it. (Judges 16:20.)*⁵

Warren Wiersbe writes that...

*“Most Christians do not jump into sin and get away from God’s will. They gradually decline spiritually, then find themselves in trouble and wonder how it happened. They leave their first love (Rev. 2:4) and start living for the flesh and not the Spirit (Gal. 3:1–3). That is why our Lord admonished us to watch and pray (both in the present imperative - Mt 26:41-note). When we least expect it, the germ of sin can enter the system.”*⁶

- How is your spiritual eyesight? Are there some blind spots to sin?
- This lesson isn’t just about lust. A blind spot can be any sin, anything that violates the commandments of God.
- The last verse of Judges defines the problem of spiritual blindness:
- ²⁵ In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.⁷
- What about you and me this week? If we’re followers of Christ, we HAVE a king. The question: Are we doing what is right in our eyes, or in His eyes?

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2016). (Jdg 14:3). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2016). (Jdg 15:20). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2016). (Jdg 16:5–6). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

⁴ Insights on James, 1 & 2 Peter (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary)
by Charles R. Swindoll - Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. (December 1, 2014)

⁵ http://www.preceptaustin.org/judges_16_commentary

⁶ Wiersbe, W: *With the Word: Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Handbook.* Nelson

⁷ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Jdg 21:25). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.