

3 Lesson

Strong Outside, Weak Inside

Judges 16; Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 560-568

Have you ever done something that you knew was wrong? How did you feel? That is probably how Samson felt. Again and again he ignored God's plan. But God did not give up on Samson.

Samson grew up hearing his mother telling him about God's special plan for his life. She often spoke of the angel who had spoken to her and Samson's father before he was born. The angel told them that Samson's hair should not be cut. He was to be a Nazirite—set apart to serve God. God had promised, "As long as you do not cut Samson's hair, I will give him strength." God wanted Samson to use his strength to lead Israel against the Philistines. But Samson did not follow all of God's instructions.

Samson wanted his own way. He wanted to follow his own wishes, not God's. Even though Samson continued to disobey God and do what he wanted, God still worked with him to bring down the Philistines. One day Samson went to the Philistine city of Gaza to see a woman there. Then he was trapped in her house.

It was midnight. Some men were whispering outside the house. "The house is

surrounded," they said. "We'll kill him at dawn."

Even though Samson had abandoned God, God was still with him. Samson ran to the city gates, but they were locked. Then Samson grabbed the huge wooden doors, lifted them right out of the ground, and walked away. The Philistines were amazed.

Not long after his escape from Gaza, Samson went to see a Philistine woman named Delilah. When the Philistine leaders found out about this, they went to see Delilah. "We will give you lots of money if you find out the secret of Samson's strength," they promised.



The Message

God loves me and can work with me even though I make mistakes.

Memory Verse

“Create in me a pure heart, O God”
(Psalm 51:10, NIV).

Three times Delilah begged Samson to tell her his secret. Three times he told her a lie. Three times she tied Samson, then called to him, “The Philistines are attacking you!” Three times Samson escaped easily.

“You don’t love me,” Delilah finally told Samson. “If you really loved me, you would tell me the secret of your strength. You would tell me everything!” Every day Delilah begged Samson to tell her the secret to his strength. Over and over she begged him until Samson got tired of hearing her ask.

Samson finally told her the secret of his strength. “If my head were shaved, I would be weak,” he said.

That night Delilah had Samson’s hair cut. Then she screamed, “Samson, the Philistines are attacking you!” This time Samson’s strength had left him. More important, God had left him too.

The Philistines captured Samson and put out his eyes. They took him back to Gaza, through the very gates he had once carried. Thousands of people came to see Samson, who was now weak and blind and helpless.

The Philistines put Samson to work in the prison. Gradually his hair began to grow back.

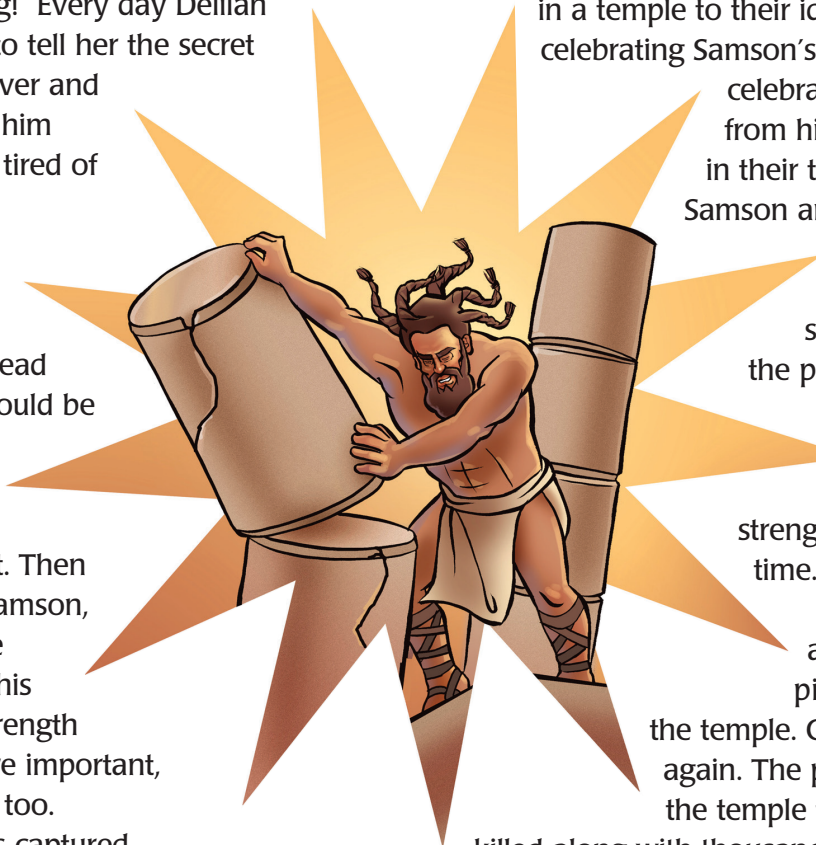
Samson knew he had done wrong. He told God that he was sorry and asked God to forgive him.

After some time the Philistines threw a party in a temple to their idol Dagon. They were celebrating Samson’s capture. During the celebration Samson was led from his prison cell. There, in their temple, men teased Samson and humiliated him.

Finally Samson asked to rest. A servant led him to the pillars in the middle of the temple. There Samson prayed: “O God, please strengthen me one more time.”

Samson pushed against two main pillars in the center of the temple. God gave him strength again. The pillars collapsed, and the temple fell. Samson was killed along with thousands of Philistines.

God had given Samson enormous physical strength, but Samson disobeyed God. He was strong, but on the inside, Samson was weak. Let’s ask God to strengthen us inside and outside, so we can resist temptation and always do what is right.



S A B B A T H

DO If possible, go for a walk with your family. When you get home, ask each person to name the most beautiful thing they saw. Imagine how Samson felt when he could no longer see.

DO Look for Gaza on a Bible map. Find it on a map of today.

PRAY Thank God for the gift of sight.

M O N D A Y

ASK Ask your mother for a large raw potato. Cut the top off and scoop out some of the potato. Draw a face with colored markers. Place a thin layer of cotton in the hole and sprinkle some water and alfalfa seeds on it. Keep the cotton damp and see how quickly the "hair" grows.

DO Who has the longest hair in your family? Trace around a coin or other round object and draw each person and their hair. Talk about Samson during worship. What was the real source of his strength?

PRAY Thank God for giving you strength today.

W E D N E S D A Y

READ Read and discuss Judges 16:4-20 during worship.

DO How many different kinds of rope, string, or thread can you find in your house? Ask your mother for samples. Have a competition to see who can break them.

DRAW Draw what you think Delilah's face looked like when Samson kept breaking the ropes.

PRAY Ask God to help you to be kind when others make mistakes.

S U N D A Y

DO Help your mother do the dishes. How is washing away the dirt like asking God to give us a clean heart?

DO Make a heart for each member of your family. Write your memory verse on them, including the reference. Use them to teach your family the memory verse during worship.

PRAY Pray that God will wash away the mistakes you have made.

T U E S D A Y

READ Read and discuss Judges 16:1-3 during family worship today. Count all the doors in your house. Write the number.

DO Write a poem or rap about Samson's strength. Share it during family worship.

DO Decide who is the strongest and weakest in the family. Thank God that the strong can help the weak.

They weighed thousands of pounds, but Samson carried the Gaza city gates nearly 30 miles!



THURSDAY

READ Read and discuss Judges 16:21-30 during family worship.

DO Samson repented when he was in prison. Write in your own words what repentance means.

PRAY Thank God for hearing and forgiving you when you repent. Ask Him to keep you from sinning again.



FRIDAY

DO Act out the story of Samson with your family during worship.

SING Sing together "Teach Me, Lord" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 110). Talk about what it means to allow Jesus to teach you. Where did Samson go wrong?

DO Say your memory verse together. Then explain it in your own words.

PRAY Ask God to be with you tomorrow on His special day.

**Strong Outside,
Weak Inside**

PUZZLE

Directions: Color in the spaces with dots to find out what God wants to make pure.

