

LOVE, LIONS, & LIES

JUDGES 14

SUMMARY

Samson fell in love with a Philistine woman while he was at Timnah. He went back home and asked his parents to get the Philistine woman for his wife. His parents objected by asking him to take one of the wives in their own clan because the Philistines were pagans. Samson was stubborn so his parents had no choice but to get the Philistine woman to be his wife. God purposely made Samson fall in love with the Philistine woman because he wanted to create troubles for the Philistines.

When Samson and his parents were on their way to Timnah, Samson came across a young lion. The young lion attempted to attack Samson but Samson ripped its flesh off like it was a young goat kid. After some time, Samson took the same path to Timnah to marry the Philistine woman. While traveling on the path, he came across the carcass of the lion which he had killed earlier. He found some honey in the lion's skeleton so he scooped it out and ate it. He also gave some honey to his parents but he did not tell them how he found it.

It happened that 30 young Philistine men were present at Samson's wedding party. Samson decided to challenge the 30 young Philistine men with a riddle of the lion and the honey he found in it. The riddle that Samson gave was 'Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.' Samson gave them three days to tell him the answer. If they couldn't give him the answer, they were to give him 30 sheets and 30 sets of garments. If they managed to give him the answer, he was to give each of them a sheet and a full set of garment. When the men couldn't come up with the answer to the riddle, they threatened Samson's wife that they would burn her and her family if she didn't tell them the answer.

Samson's wife was very worried about what the Philistine men might do to her family so she kept nagging Samson to give her the answer. Finally, Samson gave in and told her the answer to the riddle. She told the men and they told Samson the riddle's answer in turn. Samson was angry that they knew the answer to the riddle because he knew his wife told them. The Holy Spirit filled Samson and he went to

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS:

SAMSON FINDS LOVE IN THE WRONG PLACE
SAMSON SHOWS HIS STRENGTH BY KILLING A LION
SAMSON LIES TO HIS PARENTS
SAMSON LOSES A BET, HIS TEMPER AND HIS WIFE

Ashkelon and killed 30 men. Then he took off their clothing and gave them to the 30 young Philistine men. Later, he returned home to his family and his wife was given to one of the young Philistine men.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Samson was rebellious at heart.

Samson had a rebellious nature. From birth Samson was dedicated to God as a Nazirite. As a Nazirite, Samson must make himself holy and set apart of God. Although he was not allowed to drink fermented drinks, he went to parties and drank wine. Nazirites were not allowed to touch a dead animal or human. Samson knew that he was a Nazirite but he touched the corpse of the lion anyway. Another rule was that Nazirites could not cut their hair. Samson's hair was never cut until a Philistine woman called Delilah deceived him.

Samson did not honor God in the things he did.

God clearly does not want His people to marry women of other nations because of their pagan

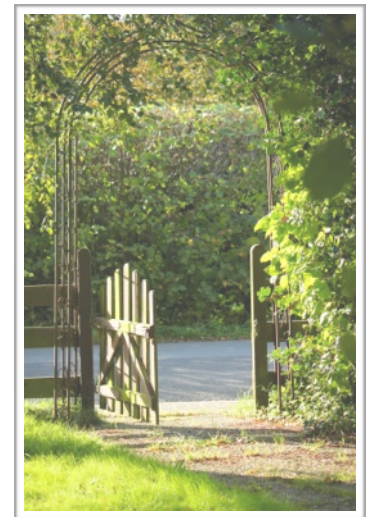
practices. He knew that the Philistine people were enemies to his own people yet Samson chose to marry a Philistine woman. Samson never cared to obey God. He tended to put himself near temptation. God had a plan for Samson. He wanted to use Samson to rescue his own people, the Israelites, but Samson had failed to honor Him in many ways. He had done a lot of evil things to bring dishonor instead of glory to God. He acted just like a pagan. Fortunately, Samson repented at the end of his life.

We should please and honor God in all we do.

Christians should only have one ambition in life, which is to seek to please God in all things we do. God loves each and every one of us. Therefore, we should do things that please God and bring honor to Him. In this way, you will be able to bear testimony to the people around you. Through your good role model they will know the greatness of God.¹

Open it?

1. Describe a place that was off limits to you as a kid. Why was it off limits? Did you ever break the rules and go there anyway? What was the result? Was it worth it?



2. Describe a time you received godly wisdom and advice from someone you respect only to go against it. What came of your decision? Looking back would you have done it differently?

READ IT: JUDGES 14 – Read the entire passage before proceeding to the questions below.

EXPLORE IT


1. As a Nazirite, from what three things was Samson to abstain? Which two did he seemingly break in Judges 14?
2. What unwise thing did Samson do in verses 6 and 9?
3. What kind of challenge does Samson give the male attendants at his wedding celebration?
4. What do the men do in order to address this challenge from Samson?
5. In verse 20 who ends up with Samson's wife?

GET IT

Everywhere you go in life there are warning signs. There are signs along the roadway that point to dangers that lie ahead. Only a fool ignores those signs. To do so can lead to injury or death. There are warning signs that our bodies give us from time to time. Pain, tenderness and fatigue are all indications that there are problems in the body. To ignore those signs can lead to serious illness or death.

There are warning signs that our minds send out when there is a problem. Feelings of sadness, feelings of hopelessness, feelings of anxiety and other unwarranted feelings are signs that there may be depression. To ignore those warning signs can lead to far worse mental issues.

Then, there are spiritual warning signs. There are times when we slack in our commitment to the Lord. We don't attend church regularly, we don't pray and we don't give as we should. There are times when we harbor bitterness and unforgiveness. We hold onto hurts and have hard feelings toward others. There are times when we flirt with sin. We mess around in areas where we have no business being. When we ignore these warning signs, and there are many more we could mention, we are headed for spiritual shipwreck.



In our text, Samson manifests all the signs of a man who is headed for trouble in his life. Yet, he ignored every one of those signs and traveled ever farther down a road that would lead to dishonor, defeat and death. As Samson took these first steps down the road to ruin, he had no idea where his path would ultimately lead him. He had no idea how bad things would be at the end of the way. Had he heeded the signs Samson could have avoided many of the problems he faced later in life.²

1. What was the reason for Samson's parents to protest his choice for marriage? What place do parents have in choosing a spouse for their children?
2. When choosing a spouse what criteria should parents teach young people?

All of this wonderful heritage the grown Samson despised! Instead of putting himself in God's hands to accomplish his God-given task, he chose to live to please himself. How tragic it is when God gives a young person a wonderful heritage and a great opportunity, and he or she treats it lightly.³

3. What should be the response of godly parents when their adult children spurn godly counsel?
4. In our text (verses 3 and 7) we are given the reason for Samson's choice. What is it and why is it foolish to base your choice of a partner on such criteria?
5. What are some of the ramifications you have seen when an unwise selection of a spouse is made?

In the second half of Judges 14 we move from the countryside to the reception hall. It is in this hall that we see Samson becoming all too comfortable with living and partying amongst the pagans. There seems to be a laxness regarding past and present sin and a pride that he can do no wrong in the future. The latter leads him to place a wager in the form of a riddle with a group of men. Little does he know that while it seems he may win the battle in the end he will lose this war. Samson has defiled himself and his family through a series of bad decisions. It seems like pure insanity for someone with such a great spiritual heritage and calling upon his life to do such things. Yet the same can be said for every Christian who falls to sin.

6. What truths can you learn from Samson's downward spiral into sin? What warning signs are you ignoring right now? What can you do to change course?
7. Samson has defiled his parents by forcing a marriage with a Philistine and feeding them food that had been defiled by a carcass. How does sin done by one person affect others around you? When has a sin you committed in private become others' problem?
8. In verse 15 we are told that Samson's wife sides with her people instead of her husband. What does Genesis 2:24-25 tell us about the primacy of the marriage relationship?

What types of allegiances and secondary relationships erode the one-flesh relationship of marriage? What makes these so tempting to pursue?

9. Samson's wife uses a well-known technique often used by people to get their way... whining and complaining! Why is such a technique hostile and detrimental to a marriage? What is the root of such activities?
10. At the heart of Samson's wager is covetous greed and the thrill of the gamble. While the Bible seems to be silent on the subject of gambling it has much to say about a desire for wealth and things. What does the Bible say about such behavior in the following passages?

Proverbs 13:11

Proverbs 23:4-5

Ecclesiastes 5:10-12



Women were Samson's weakness. He could overcome lions. He could overcome Philistines. But in the modern idiom, he couldn't overcome Philistine women. First the Philistine woman enticed him (Jdg 14:1), then she controlled him (v17), and then she betrayed him (v17), which is the way the world always treats the compromising believer. Samson could kill lions and break ropes, but he couldn't overcome the power of a woman's tears.⁴

11. This study has centered on Samson's inability to address his greatest weakness. How about you – what is your greatest weakness?

In what ways are you slipping closer to the precipice of sin?

What things must be dealt with before it is too late?

Who can you confide in and seek help with regarding these struggles?

Take some time in quiet communion with God. Ask Him to show you your weaknesses and sins. Seek His forgiveness and rest in the God who forgives you. Thank Jesus for the cross that made this possible and seek the empowerment of the Spirit so you will not continue to gratify the cravings of the sinful flesh.

¹ www.preceptaustin.org

² Alan Carr, Sermon: All the Signs Point To Danger

³ www.preceptaustin.org

⁴ www.preceptaustin.org