

**LIFE OF SAMSON
PART 7–TEMPTATION
JUDGES 15:18-20; 16:1-3**

Introduction

When we last saw **SAMSON**, he had been bound by the men of **JUDAH** and then delivered to the **PHILISTINES**. In **15:14**, the **SPIRIT OF THE LORD** came upon him and he broke the bands that he was tied with, then took a jawbone of an ass and killed 1000 **PHILISTINES**.

In **Judges 15:18** we see that he worked up quite a thirst doing that. (*Read*) This is one of only two recorded **PRAYERS** by **SAMSON**. We've had a lot to say about **SAMSON'S** lack of **SPIRITUALITY**, but here he not only **PRAYS**, but actually acknowledges that the **LORD** gave him this great deliverance.

In **verse 19** we see that the **LORD** miraculously answered his **PRAYER** and quenched his thirst. (*Read*)

Then we see in **verse 20** a span of 20 years where we are not told anything other than that **SAMSON JUDGED** (avenged) **ISRAEL** in the days of the **PHILISTINES**.

The **BIBLE** doesn't give us any details of those 20 years. But we know that **GOD** used him against the **PHILISTINES** who were **ISRAEL'S** oppressors during **SAMSON'S** day.

Today we want to take our text from **Chapter 16** and **verses 1 through 3**. (*Read*)

We see here in our text that once again there is a contrast between two aspects of **SAMSON'S** character. Nothing much seems to have changed in 20 years time.

1. SAMSON was strong PHYSICALLY!

The amount of physical strength that was required to do what **SAMSON** did in these verses was nothing short of supernatural. **GAZA** was a large **PHILISTINE** city and that meant that this city gate would have been huge.

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Also, the distance he carried them made an already remarkable feat even more remarkable! **HEBRON** was a great distance from **GAZA!**

SAMSON was strong PHYSICALLY...

2. But SAMSON was weak SPIRITUALLY!

We see him still playing around with **SIN** and being **CONTROLLED** by the **LUSTS OF HIS FLESH!**

SAMSON, perhaps more than any other character in the entire **BIBLE**, had first-hand knowledge of what the **POWER OF GOD** can do in a person's life **PHYSICALLY!**

However, he repeatedly wasted **GOD'S POWER** in his life as he involved himself in **FOOLISH** and **SELFISH** behavior. And that is part of the **TRAGEDY OF A LIFE THAT IS WASTED!**

SPIRITUAL STRENGTH was available to him, but it seems that he rarely tapped into that resource. We see it time and time again in his life, and that is **TRAGIC!** It was **TRAGIC** for him, and it is equally **TRAGIC** for us when we fail to tap into the **LORD'S STRENGTH** that's available to us!

SAMSON appears to have had little to no understanding of or even an interest in learning how **GOD** could empower him to **OVERCOME TEMPTATION** in his life!

Every one of us faces **TEMPTATION** every day to do things that displease the **LORD!**

But way too many folks are like Oscar Wilde, the well known British writer, who said, *"I can resist anything except temptation."*

Unfortunately, *"resisting temptation"* has gone out of style and

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“*doing what comes naturally*” has become the “*in*” thing.

With that in mind, I want us to consider **FOUR BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES** we need to understand in order **TO GUARD AGAINST TEMPTATION** in our lives:

I. TEMPTATION CAN BLIND US TO THE DANGERS OF SIN!

Consider where **SAMSON** was, geographically speaking. When we look at this on a map, we find that he was deep in enemy territory.

GAZA was one of five major cities of the **PHILISTINES**. The others were **ASHDOD, ASHEKELON, GATH, and EKRON. TIMNATH** where he found his “*wife*” had been a small city very near to **ISRAEL’S** border, but here **SAMSON** was this time was very deep within the enemy's territory!

But I want us to consider why **SAMSON** was there. **He was there to satisfy the lusts of his flesh!**

Here is the man whom the **LORD** had chosen to lead **HIS** people! He **could have** and **should have** led them into **godliness** by a godly example, but his interests were far more selfish than that!

Why do you suppose he went so far away from home? We’re not told, but perhaps it was partly to **TAUNT** the **PHILISTINES** and **FLAUNT** himself before them. Or perhaps it was to indulge himself with the excitement of something new and exotic.

Bottom line is this, **SAMSON was there because he chose to be there!** He was there because he thought he could get away with it!

What are the lessons for us in this? Let me give you several things:

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1. **If we FAIL to RESIST TEMPTATION, we can become BLINDED to the DANGERS OF SIN! What dangers?**
 - a. We can end up **going to** dangerous places!
 - b. We can end up **saying** dangerous things!
 - c. We can even end up **doing things** that are reckless, putting ourselves and possibly even others in serious jeopardy!

2. **If we FAIL to RESIST TEMPTATION, the CONSEQUENCES can be DEVASTATING!**
Galatians 6:7-8a—“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption...”
SAMSON appears to be “*getting by*” with his behavior...

3. **The CONSEQUENCES are not always immediate, but GOD’S PRINCIPLES are clear!**
James 1:14-15—“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.”

4. **This is not original with me, but SIN WILL TAKE YOU farther than you want to go, SIN WILL KEEP YOU there longer than you want stay, and SIN WILL COST YOU more than you want to pay! (Illustrated by the lives of Jonah and Samson!)**
SAMSON started down this road early when he went to **TIMNATH** in *14:1*...and here he went down farther to **GAZA**...We will see in the rest of this chapter where this progression leads him to a woman in the valley of **SOREK** by the name of **DELILAH**, who becomes his undoing!

TEMPTATION CAN BLIND US TO THE DANGER OF SIN...

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II. TEMPTATION CAN BLIND US TO THE FULLNESS OF OUR REALITY!

A. SAMSON Saw The Fullness Of His Physical Reality.

1. SAMSON was 'buff' - He had 'abs' of steel!
2. SAMSON was a ladies man!
3. SAMSON was fearless! (*"Ain't Skeered!" attitude*)
4. SAMSON was a force to be reckoned with!
5. SAMSON had a good sense of humor!
6. At times SAMSON was a lot of fun to be around!
7. SAMSON was no doubt a hero to many.

B. SAMSON Was Blinded To His Spiritual Reality.

We look at SAMSON and we can see that he WAS NOT maximizing what he had been given SPIRITUALLY!

We look at SAMSON and we can see that his FLESHLY DESIRES caused him to be more susceptible to what came later in his life in the lap of DELILAH!

Because SAMSON was blinded to his **Spiritual Reality!**

What good is it to be strong enough physically to rip the city gate off its hinges and carry them a great distance if you're not strong enough morally to overcome the temptation to go in to a prostitute?

*TEMPTATION CAN BLIND US TO THE DANGER OF SIN...
TO THE FULLNESS OF OUR REALITY...*

**III. TEMPTATION CAN BLIND US TO THE POWER OF SIN!
SAMSON acted as though he was INVINCIBLE!**

But, he wasn't!

Maybe he thought, *"It's not going to hurt me"*.

Or maybe it was, *"I can handle it... I'm different"*

Or maybe it was, *"I can stop anytime I want."*

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We can't know what he was thinking, but **we can see that he was getting more and more ENTANGLED IN HIS SIN and it DESENSITIZED HIM to THE POWER SIN WAS EXERTING OVER HIM!**

Every time we CHOOSE TO SIN, it makes becomes easier for us to SIN AGAIN! That's the **POWER OF SIN**— it chips away at our defenses. Every time we **WILLINGLY SIN A PARTICULAR SIN** it makes it a little bit harder each time to say **"NO!" to that SIN!** (*habit*)

Many in this world that think **FREEDOM** is getting to do whatever they want...

When we get out from under our parent's authority...

When we forget about what the **BIBLE** or any other authority has to say and we just do our own thing...

Now, that's what the world thinks real **FREEDOM** is all about!

But that isn't true! **REAL FREEDOM is doing what GOD wants us to do.**

Anything other than that, even though it might be enjoyable for a while, is eventually going to make us its **SLAVE!**
2 Peter 2:19—*"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."*

GOD wants us to see the BLINDING POWER OF SIN!

SAMSON never seemed to understand that principle, and it wound up costing him dearly!

TEMPTATION CAN BLIND US TO THE DANGERS OF SIN...TO THE FULLNESS OF OUR REALITY...TO THE POWER OF SIN.

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**IV. TEMPTATION CAN BLIND US TO COMING JUDGMENT
OR CHASTISEMENT FOR OUR SINS!**

**A. Just Because Judgment Or Chastisement Doesn't Come
Immediately, That Does Not Mean It Isn't Coming!**

Eccl 8:11-12—“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. 12Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him.”

We might ask ourselves, “*Why did God allow Samson to continue on in his sin? Why didn't he judge him right on the spot? Why didn't God just turn him into a 98 lb. weakling?*”

We can't know, but **GOD** has **HIS** reasons for what **HE** allows!

Is **SAMSON** the only person who sinned without being immediately and completely judged or chastised? No!
Lamentations 3:22-23—“It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.”

The very fact that each our hearts are still beating is a demonstration of the grace, mercy, and longsuffering of God.

B. It is possible to take that for granted!

1. Even though **GOD** wants **HIS GRACE** to motivate us to **LOVE AND SERVE HIM** more effectively, sometimes we can **PRESUME** upon **HIS GRACE!**
2. We can think in our hearts – “*Maybe I can get away with this. Maybe I can sin without GOD knowing, or without HIM caring.*”

3. And when **GOD DOESN'T DEAL** with our **SIN** immediately, we can foolishly think that we got by that time and **HE** won't deal with it! Don't count on that! (*Numbers 32:23—“...be sure your sin will find you out.*)
4. May the **LORD** help us with this lesson from the life of **SAMSON** that just because it appears we're getting by with **SIN**, we're not!