

I. Samson's Moral Weakness On Display (1)

"Samson went to Gaza, and there he saw a prostitute, and he went in to her."

- **Samson had been previously humiliated**
- **Samson had given in to his own wrath and fought an exhausting battle**
- **Samson had lost his woman to another man**

It is astounding that the same man who had just trusted the Lord, who had written a short praise song to Him, and experienced a miraculous provision of water when he was dying of thirst could then transition immediately to an act of outright rebellion against God. What transpired in his heart to motivate Samson to go in the complete opposite moral direction from God's desires for him? He moved deeper into Philistine territory and found himself in Gath where he solicited a prostitute. The warning signs were there as Samson had experienced humiliation at losing his wife to another man, was physically exhausted after killing 1,000 enemies in a battle and had been trained in his flesh to give in to whatever impulse found him in the moment. This time the impulse was sexual passion and he further soiled his testimony by hiring a prostitute for a night of forbidden pleasure. Modern studies reveal that men are susceptible to sexual lust during times of exhaustion, anger and loss of control. Because Samson did not immediately press in to the Lord after the battle at Lehi, he left himself vulnerable to his inward desires. Unchecked lust led him down a pathway that would eventually lead to his own death.

II. The Enemy's Deadly Strategy In Motion (2)

"The Gazites were told, "Samson has come here." And they surrounded the place and set an ambush for him all night at the gate of the city. They kept quiet all night, saying, "Let us wait till the light of the morning; then we will kill him."

Because he was in a place to which he never should have gone, Samson then finds himself surrounded by the enemy. This is the nature of sin in that one decision to rebel against the will of God opens us up to a wider array of unseen dangers. Our enemy is like

Samson's: organized, working in darkness, preferring to go unnoticed, patient and committed to destroy us. While Samson was indulging his flesh with a prostitute, the enemy was moving in for the kill. Samson was completely blind to the great danger that had found him through the open door of his willful sin.

III. The Lord's Sovereign Grace For Samson (3)

A. God kept him awake (3a) – "But Samson lay till midnight, and at midnight he arose..."

Again, we see the sovereign hand of God working on Samson's behalf in spite of Samson's failures. We must remember again that God was committed to begin to destroy the Philistines through His chosen vessel, Samson. With a prostitute sleeping by his side, Samson found that he could not fall asleep. Somewhere in his restlessness, he became aware of the danger he was facing in enemy-territory. He then began to act accordingly to escape the danger in which he had placed himself.

B. God stirred him up (3b) - "...and took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts, and pulled them up, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders..."

Can you see the vast grace of God here? Most of us would have allowed Samson to die there in Gath. Who among us would have even thought about helping this rebellious servant of God after he squandered his testimony in an act of sexual passion? God is great and God is gracious. Not only did He not allow Samson to die, He imparted enough strength to Samson for him to wrench the city gates out of the wall so that he could escape the Philistines who were waiting in the night to ambush him.

C. God broke him out (3c) – "...and carried them to the top of the hill that is in front of Hebron."

Not only did Samson pull the gates off their hinges, he carried them as a shield to protect him from any among the enemy who might try to harm them. This miraculous feat of strength would have frightened even the bravest Philistine.

IV. The Flesh's Proven Failure In Life (4-6)

A. The cycle resumes (4) – "After this he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah."

And here we go again...Samson learned nothing from his last implosion. Did he even stop to acknowledge before God his sin with the prostitute? Was he humbled that God had delivered him yet again? There is nothing mentioned about Samson giving the honor to God or confessing his sexual sin. The very next scene reveals him going straight back into the arms of yet another woman – his third woman in a very short amount of time. Delilah would be Samson's fatal choice. He would never find the love that he sought in all these women. He may have satisfied his sexual appetites, but he never found the one whom his God had picked for him. This is the nature of sexual promiscuity: it promises a great return, but the end thereof is the way of death.

B. The danger reappears (5) – "And the lords of 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."

Delilah must have had quite the reputation in her town. The leaders of the Philistines had no qualms about asking her to sexually seduce Samson. They had confidence in her ability to manipulate Samson. As they offered her a very large sum of money, they knew she would not hesitate to extract the secret of Samson's strength from him. Samson loved sex and Delilah loved money. This was the perfect combination for Samson's enemies to finally bring down the leader of the Israelites. The testimony of Delilah leaves no room for us to assume that she ever felt anything genuine for Samson. She was an opportunist who used her sexuality to gain what she desired. The next message in this series on the life of Samson will explore her instinct for manipulation in greater detail.

C. The temptation repeats (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."

"The Pitfalls of Passion" - JUDGES 16:1-6
Wednesday 8/1/18 - Jeff Lyle

Samson learns nothing from his previous failures. It was not too long before this moment that another woman used her skills to extract secret information from him. One would think that Samson's spiritual radar would have signaled immediate danger when Delilah moves to extract his most important secret from him. This was not the case, however. Samson's sensitivity and discernment were buried under a pile of self-will and ongoing sexual sin. Many people do not realize that, when they choose a life of compromise, they dull their ability to hear the voice of God. Because of this, in the absence of their repentance, they move into deeper vulnerability to the schemes of the enemy. Samson should have fled the scene when Delilah asked him the question the very first time. He was drunk with passion, therefore he stayed right in the middle of the danger zone. The reality is that he had zero understanding of just how vulnerable he had become as this message reaches a haunting closure, signaling a bad omen of things to come.