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Judges 16

*"The Cost of Compromise"*

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This is the second of two messages on the life of Samson, who was the last of the 12 judges of Israel. A number of songs and movies have been written about the so-called "immortal love story" between Samson and Delilah, however, as glamorized as these have been, the truth is that this account isn't an immortal love story; it's an immoral love story.

Last week we learned about two of the ways Samson compromised himself. In this study we'll take a look at the third way he compromised himself, by allowing Delilah to cut his hair, which ended his Nazirite vow.

### Historical Background

1. Like most people, we can see how Samson's life was often a mixture of good intentions and bad actions.
2. He was clearly called by God, having been born to deliver *"Israel from the hand of the Philistines,"* according to [Judges 13:5](#).
3. Four times in the book of Judges we read that the *"Spirit came upon Samson in power."*
4. At different times in Samson's life he fought and single-handedly killed hundreds of Philistines.
5. Samson was called by God, empowered by God, and used by God, but we never read about Samson living for God, or worshiping, seeking, or hearing from God.

6. The only time we see him pray was at the end of his life when he asked God to help him take his revenge upon the Philistines.
7. The only thing we ever really see Samson do was live for his pleasures, his desires, and his will.
8. Samson lived and died a very troubled man, and yet, he's listed in the Hall of Faith in [Hebrews 11:32](#).
  - a. Even though God used him and he's listed in the Hall of Faith, that doesn't mean Samson was a model of a God-honoring life.
  - b. Sometimes we have to separate the unfaithful lives of people from the faithful deeds they've done.
  - c. Samson's life doesn't negate the faithful things he did for Israel, but that doesn't mean he's an example of a life well lived.
9. Samson seems to have a "thing" for Philistine women!
  - a. In [Judges 16](#) we read that he's not only with a prostitute; he's with a Philistine prostitute!
  - b. The Bible tells us that Samson fell for three women, all of whom were Philistines; the very people he was born to defeat!
10. Samson had a brazen lust, which is easy to recognize, especially when we see how he intentionally went down to Gaza to find this prostitute.
  - a. Gaza was the capital city of the Philistines, so he didn't care about the "who" or "where," or it was the case that he was delusional enough to think that he could go undetected in their midst. <sup>1</sup>
  - b. Compromise always leads to doing irrational things.

### We Begin To Lose All Sense Of Reason

11. The Philistines found out that Samson was in Gaza, so they made a plan to kill him, but before they could act, he left the city in the middle of the night.
12. When Samson got to the city gate, he found that the gate was locked, so he ripped it off - hinges and all - and threw it from the top of a hill. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pastor Gary made mention of the fact that Gaza is located in what is now Palestinian territory, but that doesn't mean the Palestinians are descendants of the ancient Philistines. The Philistines were a sea-faring people who end up vanishing from the pages of history. The Palestinian people are basically of Arab descent, with a population that is 98% Muslim and 2% Christian.

<sup>2</sup> It's been estimated that the gate weighed somewhere between 800 and 1,000 pounds!

## We Become Oblivious To The Traps Of The Enemy

13. Some time after the episode in Gaza episode, Samson met and fell in love with Delilah.
14. **Judges 16:5** - *“The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, ‘See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels of silver.’ ”*<sup>3</sup>
  - a. This verse explains why many Bible scholars believe Samson was an average man with an average build and average natural strength, otherwise why would the Philistines need to find out where his strength came from?
  - b. The fact is it wasn’t the size of his muscles; it was the strength of the Spirit of God that was upon him that gave him superhuman strength.
15. **Judges 16:6** - *“So Delilah said to Samson, ‘Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued.’ ”*
16. Seven Fresh Thongs (cords or bowstrings)
  - a. **Judges 16:7-9** - *“Samson answered her, ‘If anyone ties me with seven fresh thongs that have not been dried, I’ll become as weak as any other man.’ Then the rulers of the Philistines brought her seven fresh thongs that had not been dried, and she tied him with them. With men hidden in the room, she called to him, ‘Samson, the Philistines are upon you!’ But he snapped the thongs as easily as a piece of string snaps when it comes close to a flame. So the secret of his strength was not discovered.”*
17. New Ropes
  - a. **Judges 16:10-12** - *“Then Delilah said to Samson, ‘You have made a fool of me; you lied to me. Come now, tell me how you can be tied.’ He said, ‘If anyone ties me securely with new ropes that have never been used, I’ll become as weak as any other man.’ So Delilah took new ropes and tied him with them. Then, with men hidden in the room, she called to him, ‘Samson, the Philistines are upon you!’ But he snapped the ropes off his arms as if they were threads.”*
18. Seven Braids
  - a. **Judges 16:13-14** - *“Delilah then said to Samson, “Until now, you have been making a fool of me and lying to me. Tell me how you can be tied.”*

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<sup>3</sup> It’s believed there were five Philistine rulers. Eleven hundred shekels would weigh about 28 pounds, which means she was to receive about 140 pounds of silver. Today, silver sells for about \$20.00 an ounce, which means she was to receive about \$45,000 in exchange for her participation in the Philistine’s plot.

*He replied, 'If you weave the seven braids of my head into the fabric on the loom and tighten it with the pin, I'll become as weak as any other man.' So while he was sleeping, Delilah took the seven braids of his head, wove them into the fabric and tightened it with the pin. Again she called to him, 'Samson, the Philistines are upon you!' He awoke from his sleep and pulled up the pin and the loom, with the fabric."*

19. Samson was oblivious to the dangerous situation he was in, otherwise why wouldn't he question the bowstrings or the ropes!
20. It's almost comical to think that Samson's reactions demonstrate that he had no clue about what was happening to him when he woke up to find a wooden loom attached to his hair!
21. When you have desensitized your spirit to the dangers of compromise and sin, you are vulnerable because you are no longer on high alert.

#### We Forfeit The Strength Of The Lord And Become Weak

22. **Judges 16:15-22** - *"Then she said to him, 'How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength.' With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was tired to death. So he told her everything. 'No razor has ever been used on my head,' he said, 'because I have been a Nazirite set apart to God since birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man.' When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines, 'Come back once more; he has told me everything.' So the rulers of the Philistines returned with the silver in their hands. Having put him to sleep on her lap, she called a man to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. And his strength left him. Then she called, 'Samson, the Philistines are upon you!' He awoke from his sleep and thought, 'I'll go out as before and shake myself free.' But he did not know that the Lord had left him. Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding in the prison. But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved."*
23. We will be in a bad place if there comes a time when we cannot tell the difference between when God is with us, and when he has left us.
24. Samson failed to remember that it was the Lord who was his strength, and that his strength was the Lord.

- a. Moses - [Exodus 15:2](#) - *"The Lord is my strength and song..."*
- b. David - [Psalm 28:7](#) - *"The Lord is my strength and shield..."*
- c. Habakkuk - [Habakkuk 3:19](#) - *"The Sovereign Lord is my strength..."*
- d. Sons of Korah - [Psalm 46:1](#) - *"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble."*

25. There's no doubt about it, Samson's life is a picture of what happens to someone when they are taken down by compromise!

### Compromise Blinds Us And Binds Us

26. [Judges 16:23-31](#) provides the details of the tragic ending to Samson's life.

27. Unlike the previous eleven judges of Israel, Samson never gathered the army of Israel to fight a war against the enemies of God.

28. It seems to be the case that the biggest war Samson fought was with himself.

### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Judges 16:1-6, 18-19](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Spend time talking about the fact that the Bible doesn't mention any times in which Samson lived for God, worshiped, sought, or heard from God.
  - a. What were the circumstances in your life when you, through a series of compromises, etc., chose not to separate and dedicate yourself to the Lord?
  - b. What were some of the ways you chose to live for your pleasures and desires?
  - c. Were your actions and words as irrational as Samson's? (See #9 above)
  - d. How did the Spirit minister to you and help you recommit yourself to God?
4. Read and discuss [Judges 16:5-14](#).
5. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's statement: "When you have desensitized your spirit to the dangers of compromise and sin, you are vulnerable because you are no longer on high alert."

6. Read and discuss the biblical examples of men who recognized the fact that the Lord was their strength. (See #23 above)
7. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: recognize that they are vulnerable to compromise and sin unless they rely on the Spirit to help them be alert to the traps of the enemy; understand that yielding to compromise will blind them and bind them; be thankful that the Lord is their refuge, shield, and strength!

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).