

SAMSON LOSES HIS STRENGTH

The true source of our strength is God.



THE STORY: JUDGES 16:4-14

MONDAY

Samson's pride and the Philistines' plot

Samson's pride and the Philistines' plot - Samson was increasingly confident in his strength and became very proud. At the same time, the Philistines were tired of being overcome by Samson's strength. They wanted to kill him (Judges 16:2) or humble him (Judges 16:5). The Philistine rulers enlisted the help of Delilah, whom Samson loved. Each ruler promised to pay her the incredible treasure of 1,100 pieces of silver if she could find out the secret to his strength. Delilah repeatedly asked Samson for the secret of what would overcome his strength and three times Samson lied to her. She then whined and badgered him until finally his soul was vexed and he revealed his secret (see Judges 16:17).

TALK ABOUT IT:

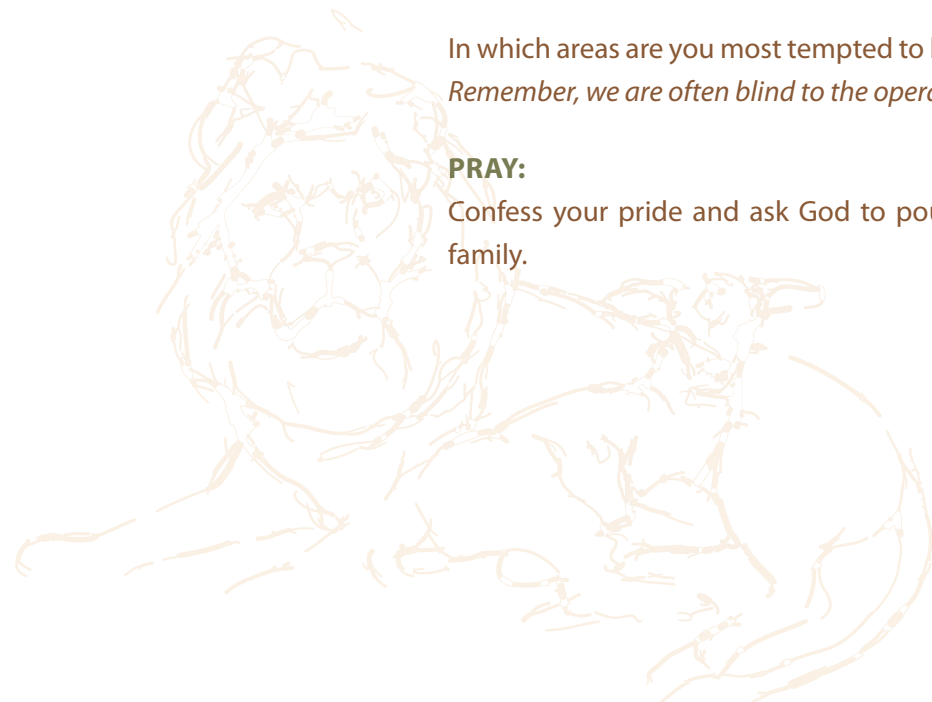
How did Samson's pride blind him? *(Samson thought that he was invincible. Instead of honoring the Lord, he played with danger.)*

Does pride do the same thing to us? *(Yes, pride blinds us by causing us to focus attention on ourselves. Instead of giving God the glory and living for Him, we keep the glory and live for ourselves. Pride can cause us to boast to others or pride can cause us to withdraw from others. Either way, we are more concerned about what others think of us than what God thinks of us.)*

In which areas are you most tempted to be prideful? *(Parents, help your children here. Remember, we are often blind to the operation of pride in our lives.)*

PRAY:

Confess your pride and ask God to pour out His grace on each member of your family.





God humbled Samson

God humbled Samson. Samson delighted in women more than in the Lord. In the end, God used a woman's manipulation to humble him. Samson so wanted Delilah's love and he was so confident of it that he remained with her for days or perhaps weeks after her first three betrayals. When the Philistines learned the secret of his strength, they gouged out his eyes so that even if his strength returned he would be of little danger to them. Samson was then thrown in prison and, in his weakness, was mockingly used to entertain guests of the Philistine lords. One can only imagine how they abused Samson, the mighty warrior, who was now blind and had to be led around by a young man (Judges 16:26). Samson, the man of great strength, had become nothing but a clown, completely humiliated. Samson's hair began to grow back, but his strength did not return. His prayer to God, asking for strength just one more time, proves that the Lord was the true source of his strength.

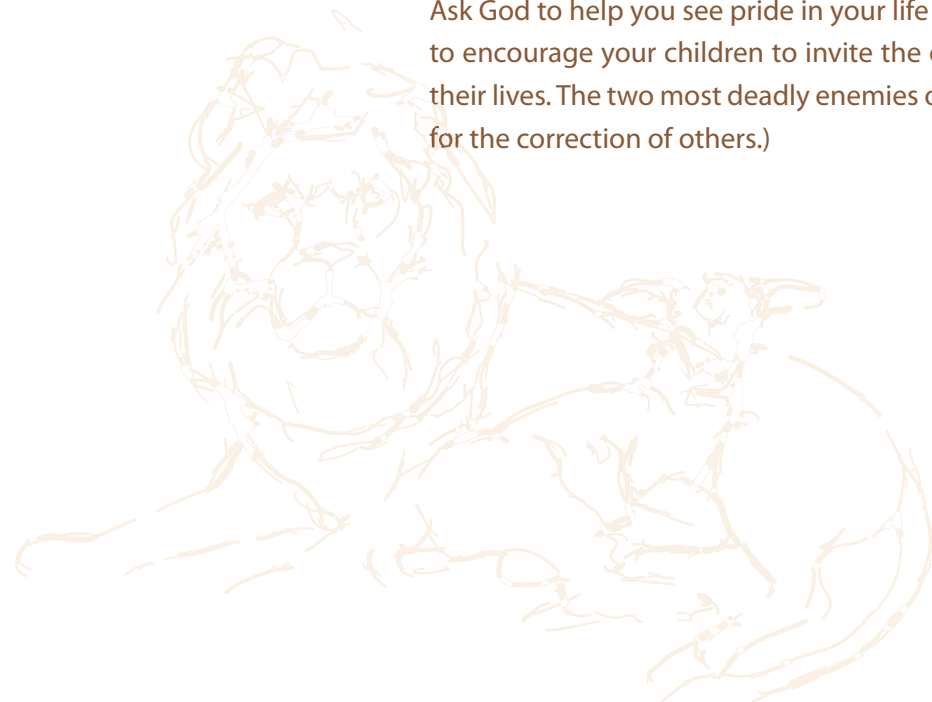
TALK ABOUT IT:

How did Samson's pride betray him? *(Samson thought he could get himself out of any predicament. Instead of honoring and trusting the Lord, in his pride Samson disclosed the secret of his Nazirite vow and the Lord left him. Samson found out very quickly that, apart from the power and the presence of God, he was like any other man.)*

How quickly can God humble us? *(God can humble us in a moment. Think of a time when you were very sick. It doesn't take much of a virus to put us into bed and then make us turn to everyone around us to serve us in our weakness. God is the source of our strength just as He was Samson's. We need to be on the lookout for pride.)*

PRAY:

Ask God to help you see pride in your life and quickly confess it. (Parents: Take time to encourage your children to invite the observation and correction of others into their lives. The two most deadly enemies of pride are humble confession and asking for the correction of others.)





THE STORY: HEBREWS 11:32-12:2

WEDNESDAY

Where is Jesus?

Samson was one of the heroes of faith that the writer of Hebrews cited as an example for us (see Hebrews 11:32). As we think of the men and women of faith from the Old Testament, we can be encouraged to run the race that God has prepared for us. In doing so, Hebrews 12:2 reminds us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus so that we will not “grow weary and lose heart.” (see Hebrews 12:3).

TALK ABOUT IT:

How did Samson fit into God’s plan of salvation for us? (*Samson was one of many deliverers that point us to the greater deliverer. Samson was also used of God to protect and keep Israel from destruction, so that one day Jesus could be born through the line of Abraham.*)

The author of Hebrews wrote that we should run the race of faith, looking to Jesus. Why should living a life of faith be easier for us than for the heroes of old? (*We have the full truth of God’s salvation through Jesus, which was only a shadow to them. If we disregard this truth, we are even more prideful than Samson was.*)

PRAY:

Ask God to help you keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and run the race of faith, casting off the sin that hinders us.



THE STORY: JUDGES 16:23-31

THURSDAY

God restored Samson and judged the Philistines

God restored Samson and judged the Philistines. Though Samson was interested in his own revenge as he stood between the pillars of the temple, he called upon the true source of his strength. There is no record of Samson ever before calling upon the Lord prior to engaging in battle. Here, now completely humbled, he cried out to God. The Philistines not only mocked Samson, they mocked the Lord by saying “Our god has given Samson into our hands.” God answered Samson’s prayer and in the greatest display of his strength, Samson brought down the whole temple and everyone was killed. Those he killed in his death, including the leaders of the Philistines, numbered more than those he killed during his lifetime.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How did Samson's prayer to the Lord reflect a humility not seen in his earlier life? *(Samson had been humbled by the Lord for his pride and now recognized that his strength came from the Lord alone. He humbly asked God for help and perhaps used a word that was unknown to him before: "please.")*

Can you think of a time when God used your failures or a trial to humble you? *(Parents, help your children think of a time when they were humbled. This could simply be a time when they were injured or when someone was more successful than they were.)*

PRAY:

Ask God to help you humble yourself each day by confessing your weaknesses and your need for God's help. When we humble ourselves we don't need to be humbled.



THE STORY: EZEKIEL 34:20-24

FRIDAY

On the road to Emmaus.

In this passage, Ezekiel prophesied about a coming shepherd from the line of David who would watch over the rescued sheep of God's flock. Jesus is the descendant of David who is the chief shepherd over God's sheep.

In John 10:14-15, Jesus explained that He is the good shepherd who knows His sheep. He is the one who lay down His life for the sheep.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How does John 10:14-15 help us interpret the Ezekiel passage? *(Ezekiel told of a shepherd who would come to watch over God's sheep and Jesus claimed to be that shepherd.)*

What makes a good shepherd? Why is Jesus a good shepherd? *(A good shepherd defends the sheep with his life if anyone tries to steal or harm them. Jesus is the good shepherd who gave up His life for the flock of God.)*

PRAY:

Thank Jesus for being our shepherd and for laying His life down for the sheep.

