



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH
SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

The Way of the Wayward

Tim Badal | June 8, 2014 | Judges 14

The Life of Samson | Part 2



Let's turn to the [Book of Judges](#) as we continue looking at the life and times of Samson in our series entitled "Samson: The Flawed Fighter." I want to encourage you to follow along and take some notes as we move forward in our study together. I would also encourage you to visit our website where there are study guides for each of our weeks in Judges. These materials are available so you can glean and apply even more truth than from just the sermon alone.

Last time we started our series on Samson but we actually didn't talk about Samson at all. Instead we talked about his parents: Manoah and his unnamed mother. They were faithful and godly people. Now we're going to look at [Judges 14](#) and there seems to have been a large amount of time that has passed. Samson has gone from being a child promised to his parents to a young man looking for a wife. He is either in his late teenage years or in his early twenties. So today we're going to learn about Samson as a young man.

Our first glimpse of Samson leads to a bad first impression. God had blessed Samson with strength, great parents and the Holy Spirit stirring within him at the end of [Judges 13](#). Now we're going to see that Samson is heading down the road of disobedience. Like so many of us, he is following the route of the wayward.

As we read through this passage of Scripture we're going to see some checkpoints. There are some warning signs to Samson that the way he is heading is going to bring great trials and tribulation into his life. Though Samson doesn't see them, hopefully you and I will see them. Sometimes we need to look at someone else's life, see the inherent danger in some of their bad decisions and then apply that to our lives.

Let's read [Judges 14](#). It's a long passage of Scripture but it reads like a Hollywood story with many incredible things happening. The story that seems to start out so well will end in terrible tragedy yet there is so much we can glean from this passage of Scripture. I will pause at different moments in the reading of our passage to make some references:

¹ Samson went down to Timnah, and at Timnah he saw one of the daughters of the Philistines.

² Then he came up and told his father and mother, "I saw one of the daughters of the Philistines at Timnah. Now get her for me as my wife." ³ But his father and mother said to him, "Is there not a woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you must go to take

a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes."

⁴ His father and mother did not know that it was from the LORD, for he was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines. At that time the Philistines ruled over Israel.

⁵ Then Samson went down with his father and mother to Timnah, and they came to the vineyards of Timnah. And behold, a young lion came toward him roaring. ⁶ Then the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, and although he had nothing in his hand, he tore the lion in pieces as one tears a young goat. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. ⁷ Then he went down and talked with the woman, and she was right in Samson's eyes.

⁸ After some days he returned to take her. And he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion, and behold, there was a swarm of bees in the body of the lion, and honey. ⁹ He scraped it out into his hands and went on, eating as he went. And he came to his father and mother and gave some to them, and they ate. But he did not tell them that he had scraped the honey from the carcass of the lion.

Notice the repeated phrase "went down." That is a geographical term but I think there are some spiritual implications also because the decisions Samson is making are spiraling downward.

¹⁰ His father went down to the woman, and Samson prepared a feast there, for so the young men used to do. ¹¹ As soon as the people saw him, they brought thirty companions to be with him.

¹² And Samson said to them, "Let me now put a riddle to you. If you can tell me what it is, within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes, ¹³ but if you cannot tell me what it is, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes." And they said to him, "Put your riddle, that we may hear it." ¹⁴ And he said to them,

"Out of the eater came something to eat. Out of the strong came something sweet."

And in three days they could not solve the riddle.

¹⁵ On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband to tell us what the riddle is, lest we burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us here to impoverish us?"

¹⁶ And Samson's wife wept over him and said, "You only hate me; you do not love me. You have put a riddle to my people, and you have not told me what it is." And he said to her, "Behold, I have not told my father nor my mother, and shall I tell you?" ¹⁷ She wept before him the seven days that their feast lasted, and on the seventh day he told her, because she pressed him hard. Then she told the riddle to her people. ¹⁸ And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down,

"What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?"

And he said to them,

"If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have found out my riddle."

Here's where we know Samson had superhuman strength:

¹⁹ And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon and struck down thirty men of the town and took their spoil and gave the garments to those who had told the

riddle. In hot anger he went back to his father's house. ²⁰And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.

Let's pray.

Father God, bless the reading of Your Word, the hearing of it and the application of it. Bless Your people as we glean truths from Your Word. Now speak through me. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

There is a lot happening in this passage and I'm going to try to apply some very practical truths from it. When we look at this chapter of Scripture, we say, "Samson, you should have known better!"

When I wrote those words down in my notes, they reverberated in my memory as what I used to hear when I was a young man. "Tim, you should have known better!" Like Samson, I too had a wonderful pedigree. I had great parents, a wonderful church, a great youth group, wonderful role models and wonderful mentors. Yet I made mistake after mistake and bad decision after bad decision that made people say, "Tim, you should have known better!"

That is true of many of us today. The Bible makes it clear that as followers of Jesus Christ we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing under heaven. Christ went to the cross and died on our behalf so that we no longer stand guilty before the throne of God. God has given us His Word. He's empowered us by the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit. He's placed us in a country in which we can study and glean truths from Scripture. In spite of all those blessings many of us have gone the way of Samson—the way of the wayward—and the way of disobedience. As your pastor, I stand here not condemning but as one who struggles with this as much as you do.

We should know better. We should know that the way of sin leads to destruction. We should know that nothing good comes when we pursue a life of sin, debauchery and selfishness. Galatians 6:7 tells us, "*Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.*" You're going to see in our passage today that when you sow to the flesh you will reap a harvest of unrighteousness and pain. In His grace God is reminding us to stop living the way we do, determined to do what we want. The bad example we have from Samson reminds us that when we live only for sin destruction will come our way.

Today we are going to look at some signs along this path. Samson had everything going for him. He had been told from childhood that he was a chosen man. But Samson blows it and we do as well. We are going to see five things from our text to remind us of the road that leads to waywardness which many of us may find ourselves on as well. We have to be careful. The Bible is abundantly clear that as followers of Jesus Christ we can destroy our lives because of sin. We can make decisions this week that will have ramifications for the rest of our lives.

To see this we only need to look at some of the great men and women of the faith:

- Noah was faithful to build God's ark, bring all of the animals onto the ark and endure the great flood. Then Noah got drunk, became perverted and found himself in a place of great sin (Genesis 9:21-23).
- Abraham was promised great things by God: that he would be a father of many nations and many descendants. When it didn't happen right away and he and his wife were getting older and older, he made a bad decision. Following the advice of his wife, he took a maidservant and had a child with her. That was his plan to become the father of many nations. That decision to sleep with Hagar is a decision that had ramifications both in Abraham's life as well as in the rest of human history (Genesis 16).

- Lot picked a piece of land close to Sodom. As a result he found himself dwelling with people who were sinners to the core. Before he knew it he found himself forced to flee from the sinful place with his two daughters and his wife in order to save their lives. He then lost his wife when she turned back to look at the destruction of their home (Genesis 13, 19).
- Moses killed a man thinking that he was liberating the nation of Israel from Egypt (Exodus 2:11-15).
- Saul started out so well and ended so badly (1 Samuel 10, 31).
- David was a man after God's own heart but he made a bad decision regarding a beautiful woman and ultimately killed her husband (2 Samuel 11).
- Solomon was a man of great wisdom yet he took many wives and concubines. Despite having wisdom from God he failed in some major ways (1 Kings 11:1-8).

It doesn't take us long to see that godly men and women can still make very bad decisions.

We saw this happen only a couple of weeks ago in one of the largest churches—almost 30,000 people—in the U.S. The pastor of a good Bible-teaching church who is known throughout the nation and the world was dismissed because of multiple affairs. At the age of 55 this man lost his ministry and was left trying to restore his marriage and his testimony—all because of bad decisions.

Here's the thing: we encounter these decisions every day. The question is, "What are we going to do with them?" Through the teaching of God's Word I want us to look at five areas where we need to take notice because Peter reminds us to arm ourselves. We are to be ready for the fight and not fall due to sin.

1. Like Samson, Christians Can Find Themselves on Sin's Road

We need to notice the sins that come on sin's road. What did Samson do? What caused him the pain and sorrow that comes at the end of the chapter? We need to watch out for five things:

Be Careful When Your Desires Come First

In verses 1-3 Samson is looking for a bride. It says:

Samson went down to Timnah, and at Timnah he saw one of the daughters of the Philistines. Then he came up and told his father and mother, "I saw one of the daughters of the Philistines at Timnah. Now get her for me as my wife." [His parents have a problem with that.] But his father and mother said to him, "Is there not a woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you must go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes."

Let's stop there for a moment. The first warning that we're walking down the road of sin is when our desires become number one. Twice in the text it says that he saw her. In verse three it says that she was right in his eyes. This is not a picture of wholesome care and affection for a woman. This is lust at first sight not love at first sight. He is not falling in love with her as a person. He is thinking, "What can this woman do for me?" Samson never thinks about what he can do for her as her future husband. No, she has his motor running, he knows what he wants and he's going to get it.

First John 2:16 tells us that Samson is struggling with the lust of the eyes which does not come from God; it comes from the world. He's lusting after something that he thinks will bring him pleasure or good fortune and he wants it. The lust of the eyes isn't always sexual. It can be for people, possessions, prestige or

some sort of prominence. In this case Samson looks at a woman, likes what he sees and decides to get her.

Samson is also very disrespectful to his parents. He tells them, *"Now get her for me as my wife."* I want you to see three things about our desires. How do you know if your desires are getting the best of you? Your desires are getting the best of you when instant gratification becomes the most important thing. Let me explain. In the text he says, *"Now!"* Beware when you are so determined to get something that you start saying things like, "I will die without it."

I was about 17 years old when I had saved up enough money—about \$2,500—to go buy a car. This was my money—hard earned or given to me, I'm not sure—but it was mine to be spent. So I told my dad, "It's time for me to go buy a car." That money was burning a hole in my pocket. I couldn't spend it fast enough. I remember the first car I saw at the dealership. It didn't look right, sound right or drive right. There was nothing right about the car but I had to have it. I told my dad and the salesperson sitting in the chair, "I'll do anything for this car!"

Then my dad got up and said, "Sir, thank you for your time but we're leaving." Then he said to me, "If you ever say that again I'll never go car shopping with you." I wanted a car. I didn't care what the car looked like or sounded like. I didn't care if it was a good deal. I just wanted a car.

Samson wanted a woman. He didn't really care anything about her, he just knew that this woman was going to bring him pleasure and fulfillment. It had nothing to do with her and everything to do with him.

I'm not saying there's anything wrong with wanting a car, a house or any real possession that is in God's creation. There's nothing wrong with wanting a spouse. There's nothing inherently wrong with what Samson is asking. But he is asking for it on demand. You can see the selfishness in him. Beware when you say that you can't live one moment without some void being filled.

There are young people in our midst who are saying, "If that certain someone doesn't go to the dance with me, I don't know what I'll do," or "If that school turns me down my life is a mess and wreck." We need to be careful when we put noble and right desires so high that we have to have those things now. Then our desires translate into something else.

Be careful when your desires become demands. Twice in the text he says, *"Get her for me."* Scripture says that he told his parents to do something. Growing up I never told my parents to do anything. If I did try to tell my parents to do something my dad would discipline me. But Samson is demanding something from his parents.

Demanding things was common in the home of an Old Testament Israelite. Here's the problem: it has been flip-flopped in this passage. The son was the ones who did the demanding. Notice that the kind of communication Samson has with his parents is mimicked by the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32. In both scenarios the son demands of his father, "Do this. I'm the one in charge. I'm the one who is going to get my way."

We need to understand that is not the way it went in those days. Samson is flexing his muscles through his demands. His parents were supposed to arrange his marriage. So he's telling them, "You're too stupid to know who I'm supposed to marry. You're too naïve and dumb to know who is best for me. I will tell you who is right. I will tell you who looks good in my eyes. You go get her and you do what I say."

Do we do that today? Maybe some of us demand like Samson did. Some of us whimper and whine. We make people's lives miserable so they will help us pursue what we want: a spouse, a position, a certain possession, etc.

There's one more thing to notice when desires go bad. Be careful when your desires for things or people cause you to view them as creations of your pleasure or fulfillment. The text tells us when Samson sees this woman he says twice, "*She is right in my eyes.*" Commentators say that he means, "She's beautiful. She's hot. I think she's a knockout." I don't need to go any further in explaining what a young man might think about a knockout woman.

Samson is sitting there thinking only about himself—never about relationship, only about gratification. He's thinking about his earthly, sensual desires and saying, "I like her. She can do well for me so I'm going to bring her into my life to fulfill my every whim and desire." There's no common affection between them. There's no indication by Samson of how he might serve her or honor her. It's all about him—his desires and his wants.

Some of us today are in exactly the same spot. It may not be with a person. It may not be an engagement to a spouse. But we unquestionably allow our desires for people, positions or prominence to tempt us to do things that we shouldn't. Now here's the rub: Samson has been told since birth that he was set apart to serve and honor God. God's plans for him were to be first in his life. Now what does Samson do? He makes a bad decision, "I don't want to follow those ways. I'm going to do it my way."

When you say no to obeying God and say yes to obeying your own earthly desires and wants, you are putting yourself in competition with God. God has called us to obey Him and follow His ways. God had called Samson to fulfill God's purposes for him but Samson says, "No, God. I'm going to do it my way. I'm going to pursue my thoughts, my desires and my wants. I'm going to pursue them for me."

You will never fulfill God's calling in your life if you're pursuing your own wants and desires. Let me explain. You will never worship God in the way that He calls you to if you're worshipping at the altar of self. You're never going to serve God in humility as He has called you to if you're serving yourself first. You will never give acceptable tithes and offerings to the Lord because you need to give that money to the things you want in your life. So we need to be very careful.

Samson is saying, "I'm my own god and I'm going to do what I want. God, you're going to get seconds out of this deal because my prerogatives and desires come first." As followers of Jesus Christ we don't have a choice in the matter. God is number one.

Samson's heading down the wrong road. His desires are getting the best of him. Some of us are allowing our desires to get the best of us right now. Will we stop and heed the warning or will we continue to go down the wrong road?

Be Careful When You Dismiss Godly Counsel

If only Samson had someone to speak some sense into him. Even the greatest and best leaders of our world have lapses in judgment. Even godly men and women make mistakes. If only God would have given Samson someone to show him the way before it's too late. Wait a minute! Look at the text. God is gracious; Samson does receive godly counsel. Verse three says, "*But his father and mother said to him, 'Is there not a woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you must go to take a*

wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?' But Samson said to his father, "'Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes.'"

When you're being a bonehead it is a great thing for God to give you someone who says, "Hey, turn around! Fix this! You're going the wrong way. Hey, the bridge is out ahead. Detour now! Get off that path!"

I can think of another time in the Old Testament when a godly man was making a very bad decision (2 Samuel 11:2-3). David, a man after God's own heart, saw a woman bathing and lusted after her. Then he made inquiry of her. One of his advisors replied, "King, don't you know this is Uriah the Hittite's wife?"

Let me help you understand what the advisor is saying here: "With all due respect, King, don't do this stupid thing. Let me help you. Let me remind you she's a married woman. You could have any single woman you want in all of Israel. Don't take someone else's wife. Her husband is your faithful military leader. Don't do this thing."

That's what Samson's parents are doing here in Judges 14:3. They're clearly showing Samson wise and godly teaching.

I used to watch reruns of a show called "Lost in Space" as a kid. Some of you remember those shows because you're old. It was the story of an astronaut family who was lost in some far-off place. They had a robot with them who was friends with the young boy. This robot had the ability to sense when danger was coming. My favorite part was always when little Will Robinson and the robot were out and the robot sensed danger. It would go berserk and start yelling, "Danger Will Robinson! Danger!"

When we make bad decisions we need Scripture or some godly individual to come into our lives and start saying, "Danger ahead!" Samson's parents knew their son and his mission. They knew the commitment they had made to the Lord so they say to their adult son, "You're making a bad decision."

Parents, I want you to see how they deal with this. I'm going to speculate for a moment here. In the text there is nothing painting a picture of these parents becoming hysterical with their son. They don't go off the deep end because of the bad decision he is making. Instead they have a rational response. They say, "Can't you find someone within our own lineage or our own country to take as a wife?"

Look at how they responded when their adult child made a bad decision. The text does not say that they banished Samson from their home and kicked him out of their lives. In fact it says that they went along with the decision in some ways. They gave some level of support even though they disapproved of what he was doing. That's important for us to remember. As parents we may disapprove of what our children are doing but it doesn't mean that we should totally disown them. We should let them do what they are going to do without advocating it or approving of it.

When their adult son was making a bad decision, they spoke to Samson with Scripture instead of with their own words. They spoke the truth of Deuteronomy 7:3-6 and told him, "Don't intermarry with pagan people." So it was less parents vs. child and more about obedience to God vs. disobedience. What a great model for us as parents to remember!

Now I want to address some practical truths from this passage. First, I am going to talk to the kids and tell them some things that their parents are going to love. Then I'm going to talk to the parents and tell them some things that their kids are going to love.

Young people, the first thing I want to make abundantly clear to you from this story is the utter foolishness of circumventing your parents when it comes to big decisions in your life. So if you want to play the part of a moron then don't listen to what your parents say. Your parents haven't paid me to say this; this is just what I've learned from being a kid myself and having grown into adulthood.

One of the trends I see on TV—especially in some of the shows my children watch that are geared toward young people—is the trend of presenting parents as buffoons. The dad can't put two things together to save his life; the mom is out doing this or that and they're both asleep at the wheel. None of these TV parents are doing what they're supposed to do.

Let me tell you what the Bible says—not Hollywood—about parenting. Young people, if you live in your parents' house you need to listen to what I'm saying right now. The reason why you have parents is simple. You have been given parents because you are too naïve to live life alone without them. I'm not saying you're stupid or dumb. I'm saying that as a kid you don't have it all figured out and in His grace God says, "I'm not going to leave you alone because that would be disastrous. I'm going to give you two people who are going to know you from birth and walk with you every step of the way." Then when you're about to make a boneheaded decision your parents are going to say, 'Danger, Son! Danger, Daughter! Don't do this bad thing.' Whether you want to believe it or not, your parents are a gift to you from God Himself.

When should you listen to your parents the most? When making major decisions. For Samson it was picking a spouse. Parents know their kids more than their kids know themselves many times. They can be a great help in the process of dating, courtship and marriage. So young people, listen to your parents. They're not perfect. They're going to make mistakes. But God has given them to you to help you navigate through life.

I know that right now some parents are thinking, "Yeah, Tim is giving it to Junior! I love it!" Let me remind you parents that just like you know your kids, they know you. They may not come to you for wisdom or advice—not because they don't want to—because it may be unwise for them to do so. Kids know their parents better than other people do. Your kids have seen how you live, how you follow Jesus, how you work, how you manage your money and how you deal with your marriage. They may be sitting back saying, "The last people I want to talk to right now are my mom and dad because they're an abject failure at the very things I want wisdom and insight about—I'm not going to them."

As a parent of young boys I've been building and investing in them—something I would encourage all parents to do. I've been telling my boys that my goal is to prove to them that I can be totally trustworthy and dependable in all areas of their lives. When they see their dad I hope they see a man who is not perfect but who desires nothing more than to be of the greatest resource for them. I hope that they can come to me at any hour of the day with any issue and that I will be able to help them. I want them to know they will always have me in their corner. I want to prove myself faithful to that end. I hope that when my children talk to you or anyone else they say, "I am so thankful that I have a mom and dad I can depend on when it's good and depend on when it's bad."

Where did I learn that lesson? I learned it from my parents because that's the kind of parents I have. They are anchors through my storms and point me back to Jesus all the time.

So fathers and mothers, you need to study to know yourself approved unto God. You need to be men and women of the Word, men and women of prayer and men and women of holiness. Your kids are watching. They're looking for answers. If all they see in you is the world, then they'll look to the world for answers before coming to you.

Parents and kids, God has brought us together to work as a team so we don't make bad decisions and mistakes like Samson did.

Be Careful When You Dabble with Sin

Notice that you may be on the wrong track when you start dabbling with sin. In verses 5-7 Samson is going down to the first celebration with his soon-to-be-wife. He heads down with mom and dad, which was the custom at that time. Men would throw parties for their soon-to-be-brides and their family and friends. They're making their way down to Timnah, her hometown. It seems as if Samson takes a detour without his parents. We know this because they're unaware of what happens next.

Notice where Samson goes. It says in verse five that he comes to the vineyards of Timnah. Now that's wonderful. I mean who doesn't like Napa Valley? The beautiful vineyards, the grapes that are hanging on the trellises, the scenery, the aroma, the beauty. So Samson detours for a moment just to go hang out in the vineyards. What a great time to visit the beautiful landscapes of God's creation!

But here's the problem: danger Samson! "Aren't you a Nazirite? Aren't you to stay away from the fruits of the vine?" Where do the fruits of the vine come from? They don't come from Wal-Mart; they come from the vine. Where are vines found? In vineyards. Now let's give Samson the benefit of the doubt. Let's say he doesn't touch any of it; that he is just there for the scenery. Even if that's the case it's dangerous. It goes against the heart of what God had planned for his chosen man of the hour. God says, "I don't want you around that stuff." And Samson says, "I'll just hang around. I'll just look around." Maybe he drinks; maybe he doesn't. I'm not going to condemn him because it doesn't say. It just says he's hanging around.

Can I add that some of us as followers of Jesus Christ are hanging around the bad stuff without partaking in it? We want to see how close we can get to the peak of the action. We position ourselves to catch the smells. We loiter around enough of the crowd so that we can say we were there. At the minimum Samson is testing his willpower; at the maximum Samson is totally disobeying the core of God's commands.

So he's in the wrong place and what always happens when we're in the wrong place? Something bad happens. A lion comes out. Now we're not sure why this lion appears but it does and Samson uses his strength to rip this wild animal from limb to limb. Many commentators say Samson doesn't do this for protection but just for fun. It's sport. He knows the strength that God has given him and he knows that he is supposed to use this strength to bring down the Philistines but he wants to have some fun so he kills a lion.

Be Careful When You Deceive Others About the Real You

Now how do I know that what Samson is doing is wrong? Notice that when we dabble with sin we are fully aware that we shouldn't be doing it. How do we know? Notice the next thing Samson does is deceives others about who the real Samson is. We do that when we deceive others about our real identity. Notice in the text he's gone to the vineyard and he's killed the lion.

Let me tell you something: if a lion came upon me and I ripped it from limb to limb you better believe mom and dad are the first call I'm making. "You're not going to believe this! This big lion...(and the lion was this big and it'll keep getting bigger as the story goes on)...and I killed it!"

But notice the text says twice that he does not tell his father or mother what he's done (verses six and nine). Why? Because he knows what he's done is wrong. He knows as a Nazirite he's not supposed to be

in the vineyard. So instead of telling them his exploits of ripping a lion from limb to limb he just tells them another story. Be careful, Christian, when you're dabbling with sin and you know full well what you are doing and you deceive others by lying to them. So here's the fundamental question that each of us must ask: do the people closest to me know the real me? Do they know what I'm looking at, what I'm watching, what I'm reading? Do they know what thoughts are going on in my head? If I pull back the curtain of my life, would people be shocked by what they see? Or have I done a good job deceiving them?

I was once watching a documentary on the company Google. One of the comments the CNBC reporter made was, "You have such incredible information. The national secrets that Google has on its main frames could destroy kingdoms." To which the Google CEO said, "That's not the information we're most worried about. What we're worried about is the impact on people's relationships. Our company is one of the most powerful in the world because if one day we allowed the search engine history logs of our users to be given out, marriages would fall apart and families would be wrecked. The absolute secrecy of what people do on the internet would change the facet of relationships for all time." Why? Because we do things in secret and we hide them from the people who know us best.

Samson keeps quiet. Some of you are going down that road where you are not known by anybody. But let me remind you, God knows the real you. God knows where you are, who you are, what you read, what you watch, what you think, what you desire. God knows all of those things and you're just deceiving others. You may win that battle but there's a Day of Judgment coming when everything will be laid bare.

Be Careful When You Dare to Make Sin a Game

Notice Samson takes it even further and dares to turn his sin into a game. We get to the point where Samson finds himself with his soon-to-be-wife and they've brought 30 companions to be with Samson. He goes to those 30 guys and says, "I've got a deal for you. I'm going to buy you guys new suits if you can get this riddle." And the riddle is there in verse 14: "*Out of the eater came something to eat. Out of the strong came something sweet. And in three days they could not solve the riddle.*" Samson's going to win a whole bunch of new Versace suits. He's excited.

What does Samson bring about with the riddle? He is making a joke of his sin. The essence of what Samson is asking is, "Do you know where I've been and what I've done?" So Samson, who's deceiving his parents by not telling them what he's done because he knows he shouldn't be doing it, is now carousing with the world—the Philistines—and he's making sport of it. "Hey, you guys won't believe what I've done. You won't believe it! And I'm going to gamble with you that you'll never figure this out."

Now here's a man who had been set apart by the Lord not to eat from the fruit of the vine and he's hanging around in the vineyard—strike one. He's not to be around dead and corrupted bodies and we know in the text that he goes back to that rotting lion carcass and scoops food out of it—strike two. He's to vanquish the Philistines and now he's carousing with them. Instead of raising up an army to overtake them he's joking around with them and giving them riddles—strike three. His sinful disobedience has now led him to make a joke of his sin.

Some of us are making a joke of our sin because we don't really believe that God cannot be mocked; a man reaps what he sows. We think we're getting away with it. We think we've got everybody deceived. We think we can make sport of disobedience to God. But notice that Samson is going to learn the hard way you don't mess with God. You do not walk in the way of the wayward and live the wonderful life. It'll catch up to you.

2. Sad Results

What transpires is absolutely tragic and heart breaking for Samson. A man who thought he knew what was best for him, what was right in his eyes, is going to see his world unravel. How? I want you to notice that when we give ourselves to sin three things happen.

Sin Has a Way of Defiling Others

Number one: sin has a way of defiling you as well as others. I want you to understand that Samson has in essence ruined his own life because of sin and he's ruined the life of his parents. These parents have been godly people; they have been teaching their son the promises of God as he sat on their knee. They taught him the great things that Samson was going to do through the power of God in his life. But now his parents are worried about the decision of marrying a Philistine woman. They are struggling with their consciences, "How do we support our son and not enable him?" And they're defiled in the process.

Notice the text says that Samson has turned again to the lion's carcass in the vineyard. He sees a swarm of bees, follows them to the lion's body and he sees honey inside. He scrapes it out—remember, touching the body of a rotting carcass defiles him—and he takes it and he eats it. Then notice what he does. He gives his parents some of it as well and they ate. He defiles them as well.

I want you to know something that is very helpful for me. When I am tempted to sin this is what I do and hopefully this will be a blessing to you as well. I run through the ripple effect of what that sin will do if I'm caught. Right away I take spiritual inventory:

- What will this decision mean with my relationship with God?
- What will Amanda say about this decision? Would she be okay with it? Will it ruin my relationship with her?
- What will my boys say?
- What will my extended family say? My parents, my in-laws, my brothers- and sisters-in-law?
- What will this do to my ministry?
- What will this decision do to my walk and testimony among unbelievers in my community?
- What will this do to the world around me?

After asking all these questions, if I can say that all is going to be good then I can proceed. But here's the problem: by the time I get to the second or third point—usually the question about my wife—I find out I'll be dead. And what happens? I say, "It ain't worth it."

Some of us need to start doing a spiritual checklist in order to see the ripple effect of what sin does and that it has a way of defiling others, too. We're sometimes willing to pay sin's price but are we willing to defile others around us? Some of us have defiled our parents. Some of us have defiled our children. Some of us have defiled our testimony and our relationship with God. Some of us have defiled our testimony to the outside world. Why? Because we chose to say yes to temptation and sin instead of turning away from it. Sin has a way of defiling others.

Sin Has a Way of Destroying Your Dreams

Notice that Samson knows exactly what he wants. He's found the woman. She's right for him. She looks good and man, the honeymoon is going to be sweet. He's got it all figured out but he is going down the

road of sin. Notice what happens around the time of the honeymoon. His wife is a wreck. For seven days she nags him. "Don't you love me? Won't you tell me the secret? Won't you tell me the riddle? You hate me. You hate my parents." And on and on. This woman no longer is attractive to him in any way because she's driving him insane. The dream of a wonderful honeymoon has now been cast aside because he's got a nagging wife who presses him to the point of being absolutely out of his mind so he gives her the answer to the riddle. He says, "You know what? Fine. I can't deal with this incessant nagging. Here it is."

So he loses the bet and he buys clothes for those 30 companions. But then his anger flairs up and he goes and kills 30 other men as a result. While he's killing those men, you know what happens? Notice the last verse of the text. *"And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man."* Talk about shattered dreams! The woman of your dreams is given to your best buddy, your best man and you don't get to have her now. You may have dreams but when you give your life to sin those dreams are as good as gone. They're going to fall apart.

Sin Has a Way of Derailing Your Plans, Not God's

Here's the last thing I want you to see. Sin can derail your plans--it did for Samson. He had planned everything. He knew his life's purpose. He thought he knew what was going to happen but here's the thing: sin doesn't work out as planned. While sin looked good to Samson, it did not live up to its billing. I want you to notice that our sin will derail our plans but our sin will never derail God's plans. Verse four says, *"His father and mother did not know that it was from the LORD, for he was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines. At that time the Philistines ruled over Israel."*

That is important! We may think we are making our own plan and that God is on the outside. By the sovereignty of God, He will use your obedience or your disobedience to accomplish His plans. So if you think, "I'm getting ahead of God. God didn't see this curveball coming. God doesn't know what to do with this. I've caught God flat-footed." No. God knows exactly what He's going to do with your disobedience; the same thing He would have done with your obedience. So the only thing you've done is hurt yourself, you can never hurt God.

I can hear God's reaction: "I'm moving full speed ahead. I can take your disobedience; I can take your obedience and I'll use either to fulfill My plans. You will not thwart My plans one iota." So the only thing you're doing when you sin is hurting yourself. Samson is the only one who is down trodden at the end of chapter 14. God is not. It's like God is saying, "My plan is moving ahead. I've got a plan and Samson's missing out on some blessings." And you and I are going to miss out on some blessings when we sin but God says, "My plans and purposes will not be thwarted."

So as we stop and write "to be continued" on this story, the question is will you be like Samson? He did not obey God. Samson chose his flesh over his spiritual relationship with God. He chose selfishness over his Savior. Will you do the same? Or will you, because of the warning you've been given today, start to address some of these issues? Give them over to God, seek His forgiveness and allow the blessings and goodness of God to shower you in the days to come. Samson's making his own bed. The question is, how are you going to do respond? The answer will be seen in the days to come.

We'll come back next week and we'll pick up the story again.

Father God, we thank You for Your Word. I know there's a lot in this one chapter but I pray that You would allow us to glean truths from Your Word that will change and transform our lives. Lord, I pray that this

would be a warning to the listener, a warning to the preacher, that we can't play games with You. Lord, when we do only ruin and problems come. We only wreck our lives. We don't wreck Your plans and Your ways. So Lord, give us wisdom and let us use Samson's life as an example of how not to live so that we may honor You.

Lord, there is a lot of Samson in each and every one of us so use Samson's life as an example of what disobedience looks like so that we will chose obedience. Thank You for Your grace in Samson's life; thank You for Your grace in our lives. Thank You that though we fail You minister to us. You love on us. You give us other opportunities. Let us not take these for granted but apply them to our lives so that we might honor You in the days to come. Now Lord, lead us forth from this place as we fellowship with one another and as we go about our days so in the decisions that are made we will honor You in all of them. In Christ's name we pray. And all God's people said, "Amen."

Village Bible Church | 847 North State Route 47, Sugar Grove, IL 60554 | (630) 466-7198 | <http://www.villagebible.org/sugar-grove/resources/sermons>

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