

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 40 (September 25-October 1, 2016)

We have seen that David's eyes were in the wrong place at the wrong time and set off a sequence of events that destroyed the rest of his life. Samson is a physical giant, but he is about to be brought down because he could not keep his eyes off beautiful foreign women. We will look at a familiar story in this week's devotions.

Sunday, September 25 (read Judges 16:1-3)

One day Samson went to Gaza where he saw a prostitute. He went in to spend the night with her. (Judges 16:1)

From the printed verse, you can see why pornography is a multi-billion dollar industry in America. Men are sight oriented by nature, but Samson seems to have an extreme problem with keeping his eyes focused on his role of judge in Israel (see Judges 15:20). The Philistines see their chance to defeat their enemy when they learn that Samson is spending the night with one of their own (v. 2). Unfortunately for them, this giant of a man gets up in the middle of the night and destroys their city gate, carrying it, bars and all, to the top of the hill that faces Hebron. This powerful man who has experienced the power of God in his life, continues to play with fire. It can't be long before his uncontrolled sin nature will destroy him.

Monday, September 26 (read Judges 16:4-9)

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." (Judges 16:7)

Every kid has heard the story of Samson and Delilah, but I doubt that many of them understand its importance. The Bible doesn't often use the phrase "fell in love," but it is used here to describe Samson's feelings for the beautiful Philistine woman (v. 4). The Philistine rulers bribe Delilah into finding the secret of Samson's strength (v. 5). Using her charm, she asks Samson to tell her his secret, but he tells her a lie instead (v. 6-7). She ties the giant up with seven thongs and shouts (v. 9), "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" Of course, the thongs are no problem for Samson and he breaks them with no effort. The Bible doesn't say what he does to the men hidden in the room, but it does reveal that Samson is vulnerable to a beautiful women. We will see the next steps of deception in tomorrow's devotion.

Tuesday, September 27 (read Judges 16:10-12)

He said, "If anyone ties me securely with new ropes that have never been used, I'll become as weak as any other man." (Judges 16:11)

You would think that Samson would at least get a hint that Delilah is deceiving him, but his blind love makes him oblivious to the danger he is in. She rebukes Samson for making her look like the fool she is and asks him again to tell her the secret of his strength (v. 10). Once again, he tells her a lie (v. 11). Once again, he allows himself to be tied up, not aware of the men hidden in his lover's room. Once again, she calls out (v. 12), "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" And once again, he snaps the ropes "as if they were threads." Love has blinded this great man of God to the point that he is getting ready to tell her the truth. It is a great lesson that uncontrolled lust can only lead to heartache.

Wednesday, September 28 (read Judges 16:13-14)

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." (Judges 16:13b)

The deadly game continues as Delilah nags Samson into telling her another lie (v. 12-13). Unfortunately, you can see this giant of a man caving under the relentless questioning. This time, he comes awfully close to telling her the truth as his lie involves his long hair. Wanting the money she has been promised, she does to him, while he sleeps, what he says will cause him to lose his strength. His **deception** is confirmed when she shouts, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you" and he awakes and pulls the pin and loom out with no problem (v. 14). Their dangerous games are about to bring tragedy to Samson, as we will see in tomorrow's study.

Thursday, September 29 (read Judges 16:15-17)

"If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man." (Judges 16:17b)

Several of the proverbs of Solomon deal with the painful effects of a nagging wife. For example, Proverbs 21:19 says, "Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and nagging wife." In today's text, Delilah finally nags Samson into revealing the true source of his strength. His motivation for these dangerous games is sex while her motivation is greed over the money promised to her by the Philistines (v. 5). Notice that the enemy's goal is not to kill Samson, because they could have done that when he was asleep. They want to taunt their enemy by making a public spectacle of him! The stage is set! He has revealed the source of his strength! His hair, of course, is only a **symbol** of his obedience to the call of God. His real strength is derived from the Spirit of the Lord coming upon him to grant him victory as leader of the Jews.

Friday, September 30 (read Judges 16:18-22)

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. (Judges 16:20b)

Delilah brings the rulers back one more time with the money in their hands (v. 18). She shaves his hair while he is sleeping and calls out one more time (v. 19-20a), "Samson, the Philistines are upon you." The sad result is recorded in our printed verse. Likewise, I fear that many called men of God have used their eyes and bodies to sin, only to step into the pulpit to deliver a sermon and discover that the Lord is not present. Galatians 6:7 says, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." Samson could not control his eyes, so the Lord allows his enemy to gouge them out and make him into a prisoner (v. 21). God's grace is still working, however, as you can see from verse 22. We will conclude our story in tomorrow's devotion.

Saturday, October 1 (read Judges 16:23-31)

Then Samson prayed to the Lord, "O Sovereign Lord, remember me. O God, please strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." (Judges 16:28)

You have known the story from today's text since you were a child. Read it today from a different perspective! Marvel at God's grace as He allows Samson to kill more Philistines with his death than he did with his life. The enemy will win temporary battles along the way, but God still loves you and He can still use you to accomplish His will. You, like Samson, may have destroyed your life or your ministry with sins of the flesh. Maybe God has had to remove the source of your temptation too. Allow Him to place you back in the center of His plan (v. 25-27). Grab on with all your might and see what God has in store (v. 28-30)! This wonderful God has something to say to you!