

# Compromise

SAMSON'S PHYSICAL STRENGTH COULD NOT SAVE HIM FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS WEAK MORAL CHARACTER.

## Judges 16:16-31

**16** Because **she** **A** nagged him day after day and pleaded with him until she wore him out, **17** he told her the **whole truth** **B** and said to her, “My hair has never been cut, because I am a **Nazirite** **C** to God from birth. If I am shaved, my strength will leave me, and I will become weak and be like any other man.” **18** When Delilah realized that he had told her the whole truth, she sent this message to the **Philistine leaders**: **D** “Come one more time, for he has told me the whole truth.” The Philistine leaders came to her and brought **the silver** **E** with them. **19** Then she let him fall asleep on her lap and called a man to shave off the seven braids on his head. In this way, she made him helpless, and his strength left him. **20** Then she cried, “Samson, the Philistines are here!” When he awoke from his sleep, he said, “I will escape as I did before and shake myself free.” But **he did not know that the Lord had left him**. **F** **21** The Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes. They brought him down to **Gaza** **G** and bound him with bronze shackles, and he was forced to grind grain in the prison. **22** But **his hair began to grow back** **H** after it had been shaved. **23** Now the Philistine leaders gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to their god **Dagon**. **I** They rejoiced and said: Our god has handed over our enemy Samson to us. **24** When the people saw him, they praised their god and said: Our god has handed over to us our enemy who destroyed our land and who multiplied our dead. **25** When they were in good spirits, they said, “Bring Samson here to **entertain us**.” **J** So they brought Samson from prison, and he entertained them. They had him stand between the pillars. **26** Samson said to the young man who was leading him by the hand, “Lead me where I can feel the pillars supporting the temple, so I can lean against them.” **27** The temple was full of men and women; all the leaders of the Philistines were there, and about three thousand men and women were on the roof watching Samson entertain them. **28** He **called out** **K** to the Lord, “Lord God, please remember me. Strengthen me, God, just once more. With one act of vengeance, let me pay back the Philistines for my two eyes.” **29** Samson took hold of the two middle pillars supporting the temple and leaned against them, one on his right hand and the other on his left. **30** Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines.” He pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the leaders and all the people in it. And those he killed at his death were **more than those he had killed in his life**. **L** **31** Then his brothers and his father’s whole family came down, carried him back, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. So he judged Israel twenty years.

### Exploring Key Words

- A** Delilah, a woman who Samson loved. The Philistines bribed her to tell them the source of his strength so they could weaken him (vv. 4-5).
- B** “All his heart” (KJV; ESV). On three occasions, Samson had given Delilah faulty information (vv. 6-14). This time, though, he did not.
- C** The Hebrew term *nazir* identified one separated or consecrated. Nazirites were dedicated to God (Num. 6:1-21). Their vow meant abstaining from wine or beer, avoiding dead bodies, and never cutting their hair.
- D** The Philistines occupied the southwestern part of Canaan, along the Mediterranean Sea. The leaders of the five major Philistine cities ruled over them together.
- E** The Philistines paid Delilah 5,500 shekels of silver to pass along the secret of his strength to them. By comparison, a slave was worth thirty shekels of silver (Ex. 21:32).
- F** Ultimately, Samson’s strength depended on God’s presence. But ongoing compromise left him unaware of the Lord’s absence in his life.
- G** Earlier, Samson had ripped this Philistine city’s gate off its hinges (Judg. 16:1-3). Now, it was the site of his captivity.
- H** Some scholars see this as a ray of hope, a reminder that God was not done with Samson.
- I** The primary deity of the Philistines. It possibly was a sea god since its name meant “fish.”
- J** “Make us sport” (KJV); “amuse us” (NASB). They wanted to mock their humiliated enemy.
- K** Though his motives may have been selfish, Samson finally turned to God for help.
- L** Some interpret this as an indictment on Samson for wasting his life and his calling.



## NOTES

**Strength Departed** (Judg. 16:16-20)

- Delilah coaxed Samson into telling her the secret of his strength—his long hair, which was a symbol of his consecration to God.
- He explained that his hair had never been cut because of a Nazirite vow. If it were cut, his strength would be gone.
- While he slept in her lap, she called a Philistine to cut Samson's hair. As a result, his strength left him. Due to his consistent compromise, Samson was not aware that God had left him as well.

**Samson Defeated** (Judg. 16:21-25)

- Without God's favor on his life, the Philistines easily seized Samson. They gouged out his eyes, bound him, and put him in prison.
- While in prison, Samson ground grain like an animal. Yet, unnoticed by the Philistines, Samson's hair began to grow back.
- Samson's captors celebrated his capture by praising their god, Dagon, believing it had handed him over to them. For their entertainment, they brought Samson out of prison so they could humiliate him. He stood between the two pillars supporting the structure.

**Philistines Destroyed** (Judg. 16:26-31)

- Samson called on God to strengthen him once again, and the Lord honored his prayer. When Samson pushed against the supporting pillars of the Philistine temple, the temple collapsed.
- The writer of Judges stated that Samson killed more Philistines at his death than he had while he was alive. His family came, carried his body home, and buried him in the tomb of his father.

**Summary Statements**

*Samson's physical strength could not save him from the consequences of his weak moral character.*

- Believers should avoid putting themselves in situations that will tempt them to sin.
- Believers who compromise their faithfulness to God will eventually be put to shame.
- Believers can be confident that God does not abandon them, in spite of their sin.

**Memory Verse**

*Psalms 28:7*

**Key Doctrine**

*God's Purpose of Grace*

Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. (See John 10:27-29; Colossians 1:12-14.)



For additional commentary, see the Leader Guide or Adult Commentary, available for purchase at [goExploreTheBible.com](http://goExploreTheBible.com).

## ENGAGE

**How has understanding the principle of cause and effect influenced the choices you make in life? (PSG, p. 100)**

- Parents, teachers, and anyone who has spent time with children recognize the importance of teaching about cause and effect. The idea is that for every cause there is an effect and that for every effect there was a cause.
- In other words, there are consequences to every person's thoughts, behaviors, and actions. In the Bible, Samson is one example among many of someone who suffered the consequences of a weak moral character.

**Bonus: How would you describe spiritual compromise to someone outside the church?**

**Bonus: What are some common examples of cause and effect in our lives?**

## EXPLORE

### STRENGTH DEPARTED (JUDG. 16:16-20)

**Bonus: How does sin desensitize us to God's work in our lives?**

- Judges 16:4 states that Samson, a judge called to deliver Israel from the Philistines, fell in love with a woman named Delilah. When the leaders of the Philistines heard this, they promised to pay Delilah 5,500 pieces of silver if she could get Samson to reveal the source of his strength.
- Three times, Delilah asked Samson about his strength. Each time, he toyed with her. Over time, though, her persistence won out. He shared the "whole truth" with her.
- Samson's strength came from his relationship with God as a Nazirite. As part of the Nazirite vow, his hair was not to be cut. It was a sign of his special calling from God.
- Confident that she now knew the truth, she told the Philistine leaders to come back and bring the silver. As Samson slept on Delilah's lap, a man shaved his head.
- When Delilah woke Samson, he did not realize the Lord had left him. Without God's favor, he no longer had his physical strength.

**How can the people with whom we choose to associate impact our ability to remain faithful to God? (PSG, p. 104)**

### SAMSON DEFEATED (JUDG. 16:21-25)

**Bonus: How have you seen God bring restoration out of a devastating situation?**

- Ironically, the man who lived his life by the lust of his eyes had his eyes gouged out. The man who could not be restrained was bound in bronze shackles. The man who proudly went wherever he pleased was now forced to grind grain in prison.

- Meanwhile, God was still working in Samson's life—his hair began to grow back. The Lord was restoring Samson and completing the work He had begun in him.
- The Philistines served Dagon as their primary god. Believing Dagon had delivered Samson to them, they gathered to celebrate in their temple. As part of their festivities, they called for Samson to be brought from prison. They wanted to amuse themselves at his expense.

**What do you think was Samson's greatest loss, and why? (PSG, p. 106)**

### PHILISTINES DESTROYED (JUDG. 16:26-31)

**Bonus: Do you believe that God responds to imperfect prayers? Explain.**

- Samson asked a servant boy to lead him to the pillars supporting the temple. Once he was in position, Samson called out to God. He asked the Lord to remember him and to allow him to avenge his two eyes.
- Samson's motivation was selfish. He was not concerned about the Lord's reputation or even the well-being of his own people. But God answered his prayer.
- Samson toppled the supporting pillar, sending the temple crashing down on itself. The writer noted that he killed more Philistines at his death than during his life.
- His family retrieved his body and buried it in a family tomb. Samson had judged Israel for twenty years.

**In light of Samson's story, how would you counsel someone who is experiencing the consequences of sinful choices? (PSG, p. 107)**

## CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss some areas where many adults are prone to temptation and compromise.

**How can your Bible study group encourage one another to avoid putting yourselves in situations that will tempt you to sin? (PSG, p. 108)**

Challenge individuals to reflect on times when they realized God had not abandoned them, despite their sin.

**How does God's faithfulness to you affect your faithfulness to Him? (PSG, p. 108)**

### FURTHER DISCUSSION



Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

## BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 107)

Memorize a verse and apply it to a real-life situation.

Memorize Psalm 28:7, then write the verse in your own words. Reflect on ways Samson's life illustrated this verse and ways that he fell short. Write a brief prayer, asking God to help you trust Him more, celebrate His work in your life, and show gratitude for all He has done.

Point out that Psalm 28:7 is the memory verse for this session. Lead the group in reading the verse two or three times aloud. Then, direct them to read and reflect on the Bible Skill activity found on page 107 of the PSG. After a few minutes, lead a brief discussion on the Bible Skill activity. Allow a few volunteers to share their paraphrase of the verse and how it resonates with them. Encourage the group to use Psalm 28:7 as a prayer prompt during the week, asking God to help them depend on Him and to avoid the temptation to compromise their faith.

## OBJECT LESSON: HOLLOW LOG

Prior to the session, locate a small section of a hollow log or a picture of a hollow log.

During the session, display the log and explain that the tree can look healthy on the outside, but it might crumble under the slightest pressure. Say: *Decay starts from the inside and works its way out. It may be slow and go unnoticed, but it is still destructive.*

Encourage adults to compare decay in trees to spiritual compromise. Emphasize that putting ourselves in dangerous situations where we can give in to temptation will hinder our walk with God. Discuss how Judges 16:20 reflects that Samson wasn't aware of his spiritual slide. Challenge adults to examine their lives and to determine if they are lacking the sensitivity they need to stay in touch with God and His leading.

If time allows, review the Plan of Salvation on the inside front cover of the PSG. Assure adults that you are willing to speak with anyone who needs to know more about starting a personal relationship with Jesus.

## THE PHILISTINES

Of Israel's enemies, the Philistines played an extended role in the history of God's people. Genesis 10:14 states that they descended from Ham, one of Noah's three sons, though the details surrounding their migration to Canaan has been the subject of speculation. They lived in the region during the days of Abraham (Gen. 21:32-34) and were there when Joshua led Israel to conquer the land (Josh. 13:1-3). They come into view more prominently in the book of Judges, as Samson contended with them for twenty years (Judg. 15:20).

During Samuel's ministry, the Philistines defeated Israel and took the ark of the covenant. However, they returned it after the Lord punished them. Eventually, the Israelites recovered their land (1 Sam. 3-7). Years later, a shepherd boy named David killed a Philistine giant named Goliath (1 Sam. 17). After he became king, David subdued the Philistines (2 Sam. 5:17-25), as did Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:6) and Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:8).

The Philistines proved to be a formidable enemy. Their army included horses and chariots, along with foot soldiers and archers. They also had access to

metal and crafted weapons with it (1 Sam. 13:5-23). For example, when Goliath taunted the Israelites, he was covered with armor that included a helmet and a shield. He also carried a spear (1 Sam. 17:5-7).

Instead of having a single king, the Philistines had a system of governance that resembled a federation. Five Philistine cities composed the federation, and each city state had a leader. The cities included Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron (1 Sam. 6:17).

Idol worship permeated Philistine culture. Dagon was their primary deity, but they also worshiped a pagan fertility goddess named Ashtoreth too. Among the other gods in the Philistine pantheon, they worshiped Beelzebub because they believed that he protected them from plagues and insect infestations. His name meant "lord of the flies."