



EMPOWERED

A FOUR-WEEK STUDY ON PENTECOST FOR STUDENTS



Samson is a picture of one who has been supernaturally gifted by the power of God, but lacks the integrity to withstand temptation. There is no doubt that God had a specific purpose for his life and had blessed him with supernatural strength to accomplish that purpose.

Is it possible to wield the power of God apart from the purity of God? It appears so, not only here, but also in the New Testament as we consider the example of the Corinthian believers. They had been blessed with every gift of the Spirit, yet continued to live in carnality and had to be disciplined.

As we seek the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we must also consider the integrity of our heart and the purity of our spirit. If we imagine Samson as a building, we see that while he was founded on the promise and blessing of God, there were flaws in his character. When he became an adult, he built his life around the supernatural abilities given to him by God. However, because his foundation was flawed, his house was doomed. He continuously got too close to the edge and eventually fell over. All that he built collapsed in a moment in Delilah's lap. The Holy Spirit departed from Him because he finally stepped over the line of complete disobedience. Samson was like any other man.

God certainly has a plan and purpose for our lives, and He will grant us the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish that purpose and plan. We can, however, short-circuit that plan and purpose by our own poor decisions. Just like Samson, we can attempt to get as close to the world as possible without failing and try to have the best of both worlds, but in the end, the cracks in our foundation will sink our house and we'll fall flat on our faces.

Before we seek to begin moving in this power, perhaps we should take a moment to examine the foundations of our own life. Are there cracks in our foundation? Are there places where we're getting too close to the world and too much like them? We might find that God uses us even when we dance along the edge of failure, but if we continue down that path, there will come a day when we step over the line and all that we've worked for will disappear. We will no longer have access to God's power, and we will find ourselves in despair with our life in crumbles around us--all because the foundation of our character was flawed.

JUDGES 13:2-6 NLT

"In those days a man named Manoah from the tribe of Dan lived in the town of Zorah. His wife was unable to become pregnant, and they had no children. 3 The angel of the LORD appeared to Manoah's wife and said, "Even though you have been unable to have children, you will soon become pregnant and give birth to a son. 4 So be careful; you must not drink wine or any other alcoholic drink nor eat any forbidden food. 5 You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and his hair must never be cut. For he will be dedicated to God as a Nazirite from birth. He will begin to rescue Israel from the Philistines." 6 The woman ran and told her husband, "A man of God appeared to me! He looked like one of God's angels, terrifying to see. I didn't ask where he was from, and he didn't tell me his name."



JUDGES 14:5-9 NLT

"As Samson and his parents were going down to Timnah, a young lion suddenly attacked Samson near the vineyards of Timnah. 6 At that moment the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him, and he ripped the lion's jaws apart with his bare hands. He did it as easily as if it were a young goat. But he didn't tell his father or mother about it. 7 When Samson arrived in Timnah, he talked with the woman and was very pleased with her. 8 Later, when he returned to Timnah for the wedding, he turned off the path to look at the carcass of the lion. And he found that a swarm of bees had made some honey in the carcass. 9 He scooped some of the honey into his hands and ate it along the way. He also gave some to his father and mother, and they ate it. But he didn't tell them he had taken the honey from the carcass of the lion."

JUDGES 14:15-19 NLT

"On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband to explain the riddle for us, or we will burn down your father's house with you in it. Did you invite us to this party just to make us poor?" 16 So Samson's wife came to him in tears and said, "You don't love me; you hate me! You have given my people a riddle, but you haven't told me the answer." "I haven't even given the answer to my father or mother," he replied. "Why should I tell you?" 17 So she cried whenever she was with him and kept it up for the rest of the celebration. At last, on the seventh day he told her the answer because she was tormenting him with her nagging. Then she explained the riddle to the young men. 18 So before sunset of the seventh day, the men of the town came to Samson with their answer: "What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?" Samson replied, "If you hadn't plowed with my heifer, you wouldn't have solved my riddle!" 19 Then the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him. He went down to the town of Ashkelon, killed thirty men, took their belongings, and gave their clothing to the men who had solved his riddle. But Samson was furious about what had happened, and he went back home to live with his father and mother."

JUDGES 15:9- 17 NLT

"The Philistines retaliated by setting up camp in Judah and spreading out near the town of Lehi. 10 The men of Judah asked the Philistines, "Why are you attacking us?" The Philistines replied, "We've come to capture Samson. We've come to pay him back for what he did to us." 11 So 3,000 men of Judah went down to get Samson at the cave in the rock of Etam. They said to Samson, "Don't you realize the Philistines rule over us? What are you doing to us?" But Samson replied, "I only did to them what they did to me." 12 But the men of Judah told him, "We have come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines." "All right," Samson said. "But promise that you won't kill me yourselves." 13 "We will only tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines," they replied. "We won't kill you." So they tied him up with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock. 14 ¶ As Samson arrived at Lehi, the Philistines came shouting in triumph. But the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon Samson, and he snapped the ropes on his arms as if they were burnt strands of flax, and they fell from his wrists. 15 Then he found the jawbone of a recently killed donkey. He picked it up and killed 1,000 Philistines with it. 16 Then Samson said, "With the jawbone of a donkey, I've piled them in heaps! With the jawbone of a donkey, I've killed a thousand men!" 17 When he finished his boasting, he threw away the jawbone; and the place was named Jawbone Hill."



JUDGES 16:23-30 NLT

"The Philistine rulers held a great festival, offering sacrifices and praising their god, Dagon. They said, "Our god has given us victory over our enemy Samson!" 24 When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying, "Our god has delivered our enemy to us! The one who killed so many of us is now in our power!" 25 Half drunk by now, the people demanded, "Bring out Samson so he can amuse us!" So he was brought from the prison to amuse them, and they had him stand between the pillars supporting the roof. 26 Samson said to the young servant who was leading him by the hand, "Place my hands against the pillars that hold up the temple. I want to rest against them." 27 Now the temple was completely filled with people. All the Philistine rulers were there, and there were about 3,000 men and women on the roof who were watching as Samson amused them. 28 ¶ Then Samson prayed to the LORD, "Sovereign LORD, remember me again. O God, please strengthen me just one more time. With one blow let me pay back the Philistines for the loss of my two eyes." 29 Then Samson put his hands on the two center pillars that held up the temple. Pushing against them with both hands, 30 he prayed, "Let me die with the Philistines." And the temple crashed down on the Philistine rulers and all the people. So he killed more people when he died than he had during his entire lifetime."



PASSAGE COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- How was Samson's birth different? What was God's purpose for his life? What was he going to do? (HINT: see 13:5)
- What incredible feats did Samson accomplish? Where did he get the great ability to do those great feats? What did those feats all have in common?
- What were Samson's personal weaknesses?
- Was Samson's life more like climbing a mountain, or riding a roller coaster?

MIDDLE SCHOOL APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. **Describe what happened when the Holy Spirit came upon the 70 elders. Describe what happened when the Spirit came upon Samson.**

The 70 elders prophesied and the people of the camp recognized them as leaders. Samson received super-human strength.

2. **How can we show dedication to God like Samson did with his long hair?**

Obedying the Word of God. Participating in worship. Serving our community in love.

3. **What are some ways we can overcome temptation?**

Possible Answer: Avoid temptation. Study Scripture to be well-armed. Ask for help from trusted friends.

4. **How might giving in to temptation steer our life away from God? What can we learn from Samson's life?**

Sin and giving in to temptation can lead us away from what God has called us to do.

5. **Why did God send the Holy Spirit?**

God sent His Spirit to strengthen Samson to accomplish what He called Samson to do. The same is true for us.

6. **How does the Spirit help us in our weaknesses?**

He teaches us how to pray when we don't have the words (Romans 8:26). He leads us into truth, gives us the right words to say, and gives us insight into what we should do (Mark 13:11; Luke 12:12; John 16:13). He gives us boldness to speak the truth (Acts 4:31). He gives us wisdom (Acts 6:10). He gives us spiritual gifts to build up the body (1 Corinthians 12:4-11).

HIGH SCHOOL APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. **What are some similarities between the story of Samson and the story of the 70 elders in Numbers 11?**

Overwhelming task to perform. The Holy Spirit came upon ordinary people. The Holy Spirit gave people great ability.

2. **How did Samson's purity affect his ability? How does our personal purity relate to our ability to be used by God?**

His great strength was directly related to his relationship with God.

3. **How did Samson handle his personal weaknesses? What should we do about our weaknesses?**

Samson did not avoid temptation—he gave in to it. (answers may vary)

4. **Can you think of celebrities or famous people who failed because they were overcome by their weaknesses?**

Consider Whitney Houston, Charlie Sheen, Ted Haggard, Lindsay Lohan, et al.

5. **Why did God send His Holy Spirit to rest on Samson? Why do you think He sent it to us?**

God sent His Spirit to strengthen Samson to accomplish what He called Samson to do. The same is true for us.

6. **How does the Spirit help us in our weaknesses?**

He teaches us how to pray when we don't have the words (Romans 8:26). He leads us into truth, gives us the right words to say, and gives us insight into what we should do (Mark 13:11; Luke 12:12; John 16:13). He gives us boldness to speak the truth (Acts 4:31). He gives us wisdom (Acts 6:10). He gives us spiritual gifts to build up the body (1 Corinthians 12:4-11).