

SAMSON AND THE RIDDLE OF GRACE

Judges 13-16

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- Have you ever made a sincere promise, but failed to follow through? What happened?
- How do you define grace? Identify an example of God's grace in your life.

Before Samson was even born, God chose him to deliver Israel from the Philistines. He was to be God's servant, liberating Israel from their oppression and leading them back into relationship with the one true God. Yet Samson was a very imperfect leader, who failed over and over again. He even dismissed God as the source and giver of his strength. However, no matter how many times Samson forgot God, God never forgot Samson and worked through Samson to bring about his greater purpose. Like Samson, we may not always understand or remember God's grace, but we can be sure that God's grace is always bigger than our failures and we can give thanks that no human choice can derail God's plan to bring salvation to his people through Jesus Christ.

Listen: [Samson and the Riddle of Grace](#)

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- In *Judges for You*, Timothy Keller notes that unlike the stories of previous judges, in the case of Samson, Israel never cries out for God's help. "In short, Israel's capitulation to the Philistines is far more profound and complete than any of their previous enslavements...The Israelites do not groan and resist their "captors" now because they have completely adopted and adapted to the values, mores and idols of the Philistines" (139). Why is this fact so dangerous to Israel's faith and the existence of God's people? Do you see similarities to the condition of God's people today?
- In segment 2, hosts Dave Bast and Scott Hoezee observe that Samson repeatedly breaks his Nazirite vows (for which the detailed instructions are found in Numbers 6:1-21). Samson's observance (or lack thereof) of these outward signs certainly reflects the condition of Samson's inner faith life and relationship to God. We may not follow the strict rules of Nazirite vows today, but what outward practices do Christians engage in now that have the potential to reflect the condition of our inner faith life in a similar way? Describe *why* you think these practices function similarly.
- What did you learn about the nature of God's grace from Samson's story?
- Even though Samson was a very flawed deliverer, what similarities do you see between him and Jesus? How do Samson and his story point us to Jesus and the ultimate deliverance he provides?

Related Passages

- **Hebrews 11:32-40**
- **Romans 7:15-25**
- **Ephesians 2:1-10**
- **Numbers 6:1-21**

Conclusion

Read Ephesians 2:1-10. With the story of Samson fresh in your mind, what observations can you make about God's character and the nature of grace by reading this passage?

Then reflect on this quote from Keller's commentary and consider how/where God's grace enters in:

"Becoming and continuing as a Christian is about the same pattern—becoming weak to become strong. Only those who admit they are unrighteous receive the righteousness of Christ...Only those who know their own weakness are able to know God-given inner strength; the strength which enables us to avoid the pitfalls of Samson's life: pride, lust, anger, vengefulness and complacency" (165).

In prayer, talk through your thoughts and reflections with God; confess to him where you feel convicted, seek his clarity for your questions, ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance in strengthening your faith, and give thanks for his salvation and abundant grace.

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