

life groups

NLC Weekly Sermon Study

Week of March 19, 2017
Sermon: Nothing New—Samson
(Judges 13–16)



NEW LIFE
CHURCH

Schedule

30 MIN Eat, Meet & Greet

15 MIN Ice Breaker Game: **Sentence Starters.** Before the group meets, write sentence starters on slips of paper. Have each person pull a slip from a bowl and write their name, read the sentence starter, and then complete it. They should also provide several additional sentences of information that coincide with their sentence starter. Read the completed slips when everyone has arrived to help everyone get to know each other. **Variation:** Have the group sit in a circle. Pull one slip at a time from a basket, read the sentence starter, then have each person take turns completing them. The following is a sample list of sentence starters:

Although most people don't find...	I am...
I have never...	I love it when...
I love to...	I think I have the best...
I would never...	My idea of beauty is...
The best thing I ever did for my child is...	The best way for me to relax is...
The most important decision I ever made was...	The biggest and best...
The funniest thing that ever happened to me was...	The best way to save...
The greatest thing my child ever did was...	The lowest...
The thing that makes me laugh is...	The most unbelievable thing...
There is nothing I enjoy more than...	When I think of prunes...

NOTE: Feel free to use as much or as little of the study as you like, in whatever way flows most naturally for your group.

OPENING PRAYER

45–60 MIN Nothing New—Samson (Judges 13-16)

- Samson is strong on the outside, but with no control on the inside.
 - › He's a lot like us: tempted, wanting revenge, and prideful. There's a little Samson in all of us, and a lot of Samson in most of us.
- Samson's life shows that sin will take us further than we want to go.

HAVE SOMEONE READ JUDGES 13:1

- The Philistines conquered their enemies by assimilating them through intermarriage.
- God set Samson apart as a Nazirite to deliver the Israelites.
 - › Nazirite vows included avoiding any contact with grapes or drinking wine; never touching a dead body of any kind; and never cutting your hair.
- God gave Samson everything he needed to accomplish the task, yet he let it slip away.

Q1. Have you ever been in a place where you knew God was stirring you to accomplish something bigger than yourself, but you blew it? If so, how did you overcome it, or have you overcome it?

JUDGES 14 SHOWS SEVEN STUPID STEPS THAT SAMSON TOOK:

1. He Went to The Wrong Place.

- In Judges 14:1, “Timnah” means “wrong place,” both geographically (leaving God’s people for Philistine land) and spiritually (walking away from obedience and wisdom).
 - › It could be the wrong relationship, the wrong place on the web, the wrong part of town, the wrong date, the wrong phone call, the wrong city or job, or the wrong financial deal.

2. He Was Looking For The Wrong Thing.

HAVE SOMEONE READ JUDGES 14:1-2

- When you are in the wrong place, you look for the wrong thing.
 - › Samson is motivated purely by physical appearance.

Q2. When you have down time or alone time, what kinds of things are you dreaming about?

Q3. Are you close to what might be a wrong place in any area of your life?

3. He Rejected Godly Counsel.

- Samson’s decision in verse 3 demonstrates that he is drifting away from God’s wisdom, such as “obey your parents” (Deut. 5:16), and “don’t intermarry with pagans” (Ex. 34:16).

Q4. When you have what you think is a great idea, do you have wise, godly friends in your life you can bounce your ideas off of? Do you check what the Word has to say about it?

4. He Continued A Wrong Relationship.

(SEE JUDGES 14:7)

5. He Compromised His Commitment.

- In the span of six verses (Judges 14:5-10), he broke three Nazirite vows: entering a vineyard; touching the lion’s carcass, and feasting, (Hebrew word for “drinking bash.”)
- On the outside he still looked like a man of God, but on the inside he was a man controlled by his lusts.

6. Pride blinded him of his weaknesses.

- In Judges 14:14-15, Samson presents a riddle to 30 Philistines. If they solved it in 7 days, Samson would give them new clothes.
 - › By the fourth day, they made Samson's bride an offer she couldn't refuse. "Coax" means "to seduce a simple-minded person."
 - › Samson's weakness was obvious to everyone but himself.
 - › Mask: "A weakness I know about myself, but you don't."
 - › Blind spot: "A weakness you know about me, but I don't."

Q5. Do you have a weakness in your life that no one knows about?

Q6. Do you have real friends who care enough to lovingly show you your blind spots and help protect those vulnerabilities? Are you that kind of friend for someone else?

7. He'd rather take revenge than repent.

- › In Judges 14:19, Samson used his God-given strength to kill 30 men. He had to touch their dead bodies in order to remove their clothes—another clear violation of the Nazirite vow.
- › In Judges 15, Samson tied 300 foxes together in pairs and set the fields on fire, then later slaughtered many of the Philistines.
- Samson never dealt with the problems that initially plagued him.
 - › After sleeping with a prostitute in Judges 16, he got up early, ripped the city gates out of the ground, put them on his shoulders and carried them 38 miles away to the top a hill.
- A modern day jet can take off, fly around storms, and land itself, but if it runs out of gas, it will crash. Without the right power source, you will too, like Samson.
 - › By the time Delilah shows up, he thinks he's invincible, and he's toying with temptation. He eventually told her everything. As soon as he's asleep, she calls a man to hack off his hair. Verse 19 says it plainly: "His strength left him." And then verse 20, "But he did not know that the Lord had left him."
 - › He didn't realize what had happened, until the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding in the prison.
- Most of us don't ruin our lives all at once, but one step at a time.

Q7. Have you ever said, "I've got this!"? Have you ever plowed through an impossible task without taking a moment to first submit the idea to God?

Q8. How do you deal with pride in your life?

READ I PETER 5:6, 8 “Humble yourself therefore under his mighty hand that he may exalt you at the proper time...Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary the devil prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

- Maybe it’s a little flirting, maybe it’s some fuzzy business practices, maybe it’s just a little gambling.

Q9. What’s your weakness? (You’re only as strong as you are honest!)
What do you need to be alert about in your own life?

- We all have issues, and we all make mistakes, but look at this:

READ PSALM 34:17: “The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles.”

- In Judges 16:22, Samson’s hair grows back! Despite his sin, his past, and his failures, once he repented and returned to God, God’s favor returned to him, and in verse 30, the final act of his life, many Philistines were killed.
- “No pit is so deep that He is not deeper still; with Jesus even in our darkest moments, the best remains and the very best is yet to be.”—*Corrie Ten Boom, survivor of Nazi prison camps*

Q10. Have you ever felt like you’ve gone too far for God to restore you?

Q11. In what area of your life right now do you need God to show up?

TAKE PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAY OVER NEEDS

- Reserve some time at the end to pray over any needs that have been expressed during the discussion time. Continue to pray for each other daily until you meet again.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Please refer to your weekend service guide for campus-specific announcements.