



BROKEN RECORD

Studies in Judges-Ruth

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Growing in Spirit & Truth

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Highest and Best Use Judges 13-16



To achieve God's best for us we must break the cycle of disobedience and discipline.

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- **Worship**—You were planned for God's pleasure
- **Fellowship**—You were formed for God's family
- **Discipleship**—You were created to become like Christ
- **Ministry**—You were shaped for serving God
- **Evangelism**—You were made for God's mission

It's a maxim in real estate that the highest and best use of a piece of land will yield its greatest value. Similarly, since people are diverse, with differing strengths and weaknesses, the highest and best use of a person for God will take both aspects into account, as illustrated by this week's study of Samson. He had great strength, but also had a great weakness for foreign women. God used both elements, though, to accomplish His purpose of delivering Israel from the Philistines. The story begins as a deliverer is promised to Samson's mother, Manoah. Although barren God told her she would have a son who would be raised as a Nazirite, dedicated to God. Part of this vow was to never cut his hair. She and her husband followed this instruction when Samson

was born and raised him as a Nazirite. When Samson grew up the Spirit of God stirred him and gave him divine enablements to defeat the Philistines. The first feat occurred as Samson, pursuing his weakness for foreign women, went to Timnah to marry one. On the way he tore a lion into pieces when the Spirit came upon him. He turned this into a riddle which the Philistines had to solve. They "plowed with his heifer" to get the answer, so Samson killed 30 Philistines for their clothes to pay off the wager. The next mighty act was to get vengeance on his wife's father for not letting her be his wife. He tied the tails of 300 foxes together and placed a lit torch between them. This set an entire wheat field on fire. The Philistines then killed the father and his daughter for

this so Samson slaughtered them. Next, he killed 1000 men with the jawbone of an ass, and then had his thirst quenched by God. After this he went to Gaza to see a harlot, and when trapped carried the heavy city gates 38 miles to escape. The final story was that of an evil woman, Delilah. She finally coerced the secret of his strength, and cut his hair. He was then overcome, taken captive and humiliated. However, he wreaked devastation on the Philistines in his dying act of pushing pillars apart in Dagon's temple, killing 3000 of them. God had gotten the highest and best use for him.

Study Questions for Judges 13-16

(For answers go to <http://www.celebrationnet.com/abf.html/study-questions>)

<p>1. Read Judges 13:1-14. What recurred and for how long (v1)? What did the angel of the Lord promise (v2-3), and to whom (v2), and what was required (v4-7)? What did she request (v8) and what occurred (v9-14)?</p>	
<p>2. In 13:15-25 what did Manoah then do (v15) and ask (v17)? What answers were given (v16, 18) and what happened then (v19-20)? What was Manoah's fear (v21-22) and husband's response (v23)? Describe Samson's early life (v24-25).</p>	
<p>3. From 14:1-9 what did Samson want and why (v1-2), and what did his parents say (v3)? How did he react and why (v3-4, 7)? What was Samson's 1st exploit and by whose power (v5-6)? What else occurred (v8-9)?</p>	

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Judges 13-16 - Daily Study Questions (cont)

<p>4. From Judges 14:10-20 what deal did Samson's make, and with whom (v10-13, 14)? What happened next (v15, 16) and what was the outcome (v17-18, 20)? How did Samson respond (v18b, 19) and why (see v4)?</p>	
<p>5. Looking at 15:1-8 what did Samson decide to do and when (v1) What happened (v1-2)? How did Samson react (v3-5) and what resulted (v6, 7-8)? Why did this really happen?</p>	
<p>6. Using 15:9-20 retell the next story of Samson's destruction of the Philistines (v9, 14-16). Who objected and what did he do (v10-13)? What was his next problem (v18) and how did God deal with it (v19-20)? Apply.</p>	
<p>7. In 16:1-3 where did Samson go and why (v1) and what occurred (v2)? What does this teach? Describe how he escaped (v3). What do you think God's purpose was in this event?</p>	
<p>8. Based on 16:4-14 what pattern recurred (v4) and how was it used by the enemy (v5)? How did Samson deal with it (v6-9, 10-12, 13-14)? What does this show?</p>	
<p>9. Read 16:15-22. What did Samson reveal to Delilah (v17) and why (v15-16)? What was the result of his flippancy with God's strength (v18-20, 21) and why (v20)? What hopeful thing then happened (v22)? Apply.</p>	
<p>10. According to 16:23-31 how did Samson's life end positively (v30, 31) and what did he have to endure to get there (v23-27)? Why? What enabled his life to end well (v28-29)?</p>	
<p>11 Review the amazing feats of Samson's life (14:5-9, 19; 15:4-5, 8, 14-15; 16:1-3, 28-30) and his weaknesses (14:1-3, 16-17; 16:1, 4, 5-14, 15-16). How does this story show how God uses both our strengths and our weaknesses to accomplish His will?</p>	

Scripture to Remember

"However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it was shaved off."

Judges 16:22 (NASB)

Celebration Fellowship

Help—Hope—Healing

We're on the web

www.thehospitalchurch.com

Life Group Questions—*The 3 R's of Christian Responsibility (2 Kings 6:24-7:10)*

(Using questions from Sunday's sermon, Life Groups meet in homes to build supportive relationships with others at Celebration Fellowship, helping us to grow in Christ.)

1. Let everyone in the group share on a scale of 1-10 of whether they are a risk-taker (10) or one who plays it safe (1). Why do you think you're that way?
2. Look at 2 Kings 6:24-7:10. Retell the story—the ugly (6:24-31), the bad (6:32-33), and the good (7:1-10). Which of the people in the story do you most identify with and why?
3. Talk about the risk the lepers took. How does this illustrate the meaning of true faith—taking God at His word, and taking a risk? Give an example in your life of a "faith-risk" God is leading you to take.
4. Discuss the necessity of faith being an "act of desperation". Of the two ways to become desperate—repeated failure and realizing it from the start—which is most typical of you. How can we change having to go the route of repeated failure?
5. According to 7:8 the lepers rejoiced. Why do you think God was okay with this—and why does He want us to do this, too? How well do you rejoice?
6. Share how you view the lepers returning to tell others (v9-10). Why do we have a hard time with this? What will help us overcome this tendency?