

Save Your Strength

Judges 15

In order for us to stay on schedule, we will have to skip through some of the stories in the book of judges, even though I would love to do a series through the book of judges. But because of time we will just jump to the last judge which is Samson.

I'm sure out of all the judges, Samson is the most popular one. Everyone knows him for his strengths, but it was his weaknesses that made this a good story.

Samson was the only judge that an angel came down to foretell his birth. Like of like Jesus, the angle also told his father Manoah that Samson must be under the "Nazarene Vow" which means he cannot have fermented drinks, touch anything dead, or cut his hair. And if he keeps these vows then God's strength will be with him.

But in our story today we will see his strength has gotten him into a lot of bad situation. To quote Uncle Ben as he warns Peter Parker, "With great power, comes great responsibility." This truth is not just found in Spiderman but it's biblical.

In Luke 12:48, Jesus says, "*From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.*" As children of God, he has blessed us with so many good things, talents, creativity, drive, ambition, skills, a family, our relationships, an education, money and our strength. But **if we don't know how to use it, you will abuse it, and then you will lose it.** In the end if the story of Samson God took away his strengths. And as you know this story has a sad ending when they gouge out his eyes, bind him with shackles, and set him to grind grain. It's a picture of the result of our sins, **sin blinds, sin binds, and sin grinds.** Leaving us to walk in circles, trapped with no escape. Tonight I want to show you the source of his slippery slope, and the unfailing source of God's strength. I have titled this session, **Save Your Strength.**

It means, having a prioritized life so that you don't waste time perusing things that you should be running from.

-Save your strength so you don't fight in the wrong battle.

-Save your strength for the relationships that he wants you to invest in, instead of searching in places that he has already put a stop on.

Lets look with me at **Judges 15** and see how Samson did not save his strength for the Lord but instead abused it for himself.

¹ Later on, at the time of wheat harvest, Samson took a young goat and went to visit his wife. He said, "I'm going to my wife's room."

Now my question is, what is he planning to do with that goat?? That's a weird gift to give your GF. This story is kinda getting kinky... see, goats are what you would offer up to the Lord as a sacrifice, in the story of samson his mother offers up a sacrifice to the lord when she received the message, and now samson is offering a goat to his GF instead of the Lord. We get to see what's the most important thing is in his life.

her father would not let him go in. ² “I was so sure you hated her,” he said, “that I gave her to your companion. Isn’t her younger sister more attractive? Take her instead.”

Is it terrible that Samson acted in such a way, that the father had to give his daughter to someone else? Samson had no self-control of himself at all, he was careless and reckless. And the result was losing the very thing he was fighting for. That why he should have **saved his strength**.

And btw this father is all kinds of messed up, “You can have the younger daughter, she’s hotter”. As you can see the philistines, the people that are not of the Lord, have a very twisted idea of love and marriage.

That’s why God calls you to **save your strength** for the relationships that he wants you to invest in, instead of searching in places that he has already put a stop on.

I’m going to say it right now, if you are dating someone that is not a believer, you are on a slippery slope. God has already given his warning, “do not be yoked with non believers”. So don’t think that you can change her mind, because the moment you think that, you are relying on your own strength and it is not of the Lords.

So let me ask you, Where does your strength come from? What is the **source** of your strength? Because if you can show me the source, I can show you it’s powers or its problems. From this chapter, let me show you where The Source of your Strength must come from.

The Source of your Strength must come from;

1. The Spirit’s Discernments or else it will lead to Self-Destruction. ^(v.3-8)

³ *Samson said to them, “This time I have a right to get even with the Philistines; I will really harm them.”*

Get this, Samson justified his actions, because in his eyes, what he was doing was right. A lot of time in our anger, or in our emotions, we do things that look like the right thing, but ends up causing more harm than good.

⁴ *So he went out and caught three hundred foxes and tied them tail to tail in pairs. He then fastened a torch to every pair of tails, ⁵ lit the torches and let the foxes loose in the standing grain of the Philistines. He burned up the shocks and standing grain, together with the vineyards and olive groves.*

First of all... what? How in the world did he catch 300 foxes with his bear hands? It shows us the extent of stupidity guys are capable of after a bad break up.

As you can see, he is careless and destructive wherever he goes. That’s what happened when you depend on yourself to do whatever you want. Because his strength was not depended on the Spirit, so it will ultimately lead to self-Destruction.

So are you guided by your own desires and wants, or are you summing to the spirit to guide you?

⁶ *When the Philistines asked, “Who did this?” they were told, “Samson, the Timnite’s son-in-law, because his wife was given to his companion.” So the Philistines went up and burned her*

and her father to death. ⁷ Samson said to them, "Since you've acted like this, I swear that I won't stop until I get my revenge on you."⁸ He attacked them viciously and slaughtered many of them. Then he went down and stayed in a cave in the rock of Etam.

Again I want you guys to see, Samson is not living by God's law, instead he is living by his own law, where it's an eye for an eye. You hurt me? I will hurt you.

I think a lot of guys can relate to this, this lesson shows us, "**Don't fight fire with fire, if you play with fire, you'll get burned.**" It cost Samson his loved ones, what is it going to cost you?

That's why you should **Save your strength** so you don't do in the flesh, what God can only do through the spirit.

The Source of your Strength must come from **the Spirit's Discernments** or else it will lead to **Self-Destruction**.

The Source of your Strength must come from;

2. The Standards of the Lord or else it will lead to bad Situations. (v.9-17)

As children of the Lord we are called to be set apart from the rest of the world. God has his own standards on how we should live. These standards are not something he wants from us but instead he desires for us. They are good rules to live by.

Games are only fun when you play them by the rules.

Think about it, "How can you expect God's strength, when you don't embrace his standards?"

See, how can I call God the source of my strength, if I have not made him the source of my standards.

⁹ The Philistines went up and camped in Judah, spreading out near Lehi. ¹⁰ The people of Judah asked, "Why have you come to fight us?" "We have come to take Samson prisoner," they answered, "to do to him as he did to us." ¹¹ Then three thousand men from Judah went down to the cave in the rock of Etam and said to Samson, "Don't you realize that the Philistines are rulers over us? What have you done to us?" He answered, "I merely did to them what they did to me."

Can you see that Samson is playing by their rules and their standards? How can you expect God's strengths, but ignore God's standards?

¹² They said to him, "We've come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines." Samson said, "Swear to me that you won't kill me yourselves." ¹³ "Agreed," they answered. "We will only tie you up and hand you over to them. We will not kill you." So they bound him with two new ropes and led him up from the rock.

It's not surprising that he thinks that his people might kill him. With the way he has been living, he knows that everyone hates him.

14 As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came toward him shouting. The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him. The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands. ¹⁵ Finding a fresh jawbone of a donkey, he grabbed it and struck down a thousand men. ¹⁶ Then Samson said, "With a donkey's jawbone I have made donkeys of them. With a donkey's jawbone I have killed a thousand men." ¹⁷ When he finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone; and the place was called Ramath Lehi.

Here is something amazing I want to point out to you. Samson is driven by his own feelings; he sets his own standards of right and wrong. In this moment he picked up a fresh donkey's jawbone... What just happened? He broke the Nazarene Vow by touching a dead animal. Yet, the spirit came upon him, why? God still gave him a second chance!

Because God is showing us that **one of the most powerful gift he has given us, is the power to choose.** We have the free choice to obey him or to not. And let me tell you every day you have a choice, to live by his standards or yours.

The Source of your Strength must come from the Standards of the Lord or else it will lead to bad Situations.

I don't know about you, but I need a God who is bigger than me, stronger than me, wiser than me, that knows my coming and going, I need a powerful God. If we are not careful we will let the world set our standards and let the world tell us who we are and what we must do. We must not be standardized by a dysfunctional world. We have a higher standard! We are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy people who have been called out of darkness.

If your source of strength is driven from your **low standards** than you will find out what your **low standards** can **produce**, but if the source of your strength comes from God's **standards** than you will get what His power can **produce**.

Who sets your standards? God or man?

The Source of your Strength must come from;

3. The Satisfaction in Jesus or else it will lead to Spiritual thirst. (v.18-20)

Can't you see that Samson is acting this way because he is trying to fill something that is empty inside? He has this thirst that cannot be quenched.

Like many of us, Samson has tried filling his void with;

- Girls Jud. 14:1
- Food Jud.14:9
- Partying Jud. 14:10
- Friends Jud.14:11
- Gamboling Jud. 14:13
- Anger Jud. 14:19
- Gifts Jud.15: 1
- Revenge Jud. 15:3
- Killing Jud. 15:15

But none of these things satisfy him. The more he indulges in these things it made him worst. It made him thirstier.

¹⁸ Because he was very thirsty, he cried out to the Lord, "You have given your servant this great victory. Must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" ¹⁹ Then God opened up the hollow place in Lehi, and water came out of it. When Samson drank, his strength returned and he revived. So the spring was called En Hakkore, and it is still there in Lehi. ²⁰ Samson led Israel for twenty years in the days of the Philistines

Let me tell you, we all have a thirsty heart, but God has open up the heavens and Jesus has came to us, he is the living water and whoever drinks of him will never thirst again.

It says When Samson drank, his strength returned and he revived.

If you need revival from the source of living water, I suggest that you do what samson did and cry out to the Lord and see how Jesus can quench your thirsty heart.

Once you are his, he doesn't want you to be dry and thirsty he wants you to be filled and flows over. The only way to be satisfied is in Jesus and what he has done for us. We do not need to be looking anywhere else.

The Source of your Strength must come from;

- 1. The Spirit's Discernments or else it will lead to Self-Destruction.** (v.3-8)
- 2. The Standards of the Lord or else it will lead to bad Situations.** (v.9-17)
- 3. The Satisfaction in Jesus or else it will lead to Spiritual thirst.** (v.18-20)

That's why the **source** is so important. Who is your **source** of strength?

What if, like Samson, you are using God's strength to fight the wrong battles, or even worst, using your strength to fight God's battle?

That's why you should **save your strength** for the battle that really matters. It means don't waist your time with little arguments and problems, **save your strength**, the battle is not against flesh and blood. it's not against each other, God is preparing you for a different kind of battle.

It means we have to pray,

- God let it not be my will, but yours.
- Show me what you want to do through me,
- help me to live according to your words,
- and make me believe that Jesus is enough."