

LESSON 49

Samson Loses His Strength

JUDGES 16:4-31



BIBLE TRUTH

THE TRUE SOURCE OF OUR STRENGTH IS GOD

LESSON SNAPSHOT

- 1. OPENING REVIEW** **5 MIN**
 Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
- 2. BIBLE STORY** **10 MIN**
 Read Judges 16:4–31 from the Scriptures or read story 49, “Samson Loses His Strength,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
- 3. OBJECT LESSON 1** **10 MIN**
 How Many Eggs Can You Juggle?
SUPPLIES:

 - ✓ six hard-boiled eggs
 - ✓ a juggler
- 4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION** **10 MIN**
- 5. OBJECT LESSON 2** **10 MIN**
 Humility of a Prayer
SUPPLIES:

 - ✓ pens or pencils
 - ✓ paper
- 6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY** **5 MIN**
- 7. ACTIVITY TIME** **15 MIN**
 Samson, the Blind Man
SUPPLIES:

 - ✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper
- 8. CLOSING PRAYER** **5 MIN**
- 9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON** **10 MIN**
 Hair Makes You Strong?
SUPPLIES:

 - ✓ wig
 - ✓ empty copy paper box
 - ✓ books to fill the box
 - ✓ two volunteers, one with long hair and one bald or with very short hair (e.g., a petite woman with long hair and a strong bald man)

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Samson's pride and the Philistines' plot—By this time in the story, Samson has performed great feats of strength. He has defeated the Philistines and now rules over Israel. But he has become very proud of his strength and very confident in himself.

The Philistines are tired of being ruled by Samson, and they hate him, so the Philistines offer Delilah a huge amount of money if she will betray Samson. Three times Delilah asks Samson to tell her the secret of his strength. In lying to her each time, Samson is basically showing off. He likes talking about his own strength. Samson is risking not only his own safety but the safety of all Israel. His pride causes him to behave foolishly. Pride always turns us into fools.

God humbles Samson—Samson is not only very proud, he also delights in women more than in the Lord. Ironically, God uses a woman to bring about his downfall.

Samson craves Delilah's love and attention and as a result behaves foolishly. Even when she keeps trying to tie him up, he never stops cooperating. After her first three betrayals, he stays with her several more days or even weeks. Finally, her persistent questions wear him out. As a result of his foolishness, Samson is blinded and thrown in jail.

God restores Samson and judges the Philistines—As Samson stands between the pillars of the temple, he calls upon God for help. There is no record in Scripture of Samson ever before preparing for battle by calling upon the Lord. But Samson has learned humility. So here in his final act he cries out to God, the true source of his strength.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Pride

Pride essentially means to lift oneself up or to exalt oneself. Since we are to be dependent on God, any attempt to bring glory to oneself is sin. God promises to humble the proud.

I say to the boastful, "Do not boast," and to the wicked, "Do not lift up your horn; do not lift up your horn on high, or speak with haughty neck." For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up, but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another. (Psalm 75:4–7)

WHERE IS JESUS? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read Hebrews 11:32.

Samson was one of the heroes of the faith that the writer of Hebrews listed as an example for us. Hebrews 12:2 tells us to fix our eyes on Jesus when we think of men of faith from of old. In the end, Samson gave up his own life to save Israel by destroying their enemies. That is what Jesus did for us—he gave up his life to destroy our enemies.

Although Samson was one of several judges appointed to deliver Israel, Samson's life demonstrates the frailty of earthly deliverers. Samson became foolishly distracted with the pleasures and desires of the world. Jesus was different. Jesus came as a deliverer but did not fall into sin (Hebrews 4:5).

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Judges 16:4–31 from the Scriptures or read story 49, "Samson Loses His Strength," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

How Many Eggs Can You Juggle

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ six hard-boiled eggs
- ✓ a juggler

Follow the dialogue loosely below between two adult teachers. (Teacher #2 must be able to juggle three eggs so ask around for a volunteer to help you.) Read Proverbs 16:18 to the children and ask them to tell you how Samson's life fits this proverb.

Teacher #1: *(holding up an egg)* Hey kids, look what I can do with an egg. *(tosses it into the air and claps once before catching it)* Watch this! *(tosses it into the air and claps twice before catching it)* Pretty good, huh?

Teacher #2: *(picks up an egg, casually, tosses it into the air and claps three times before catching it, shrugging like it is nothing)*

Teacher #1: Show off. Watch this. *(picks up two eggs and begins to juggle them [Since the eggs are hard-boiled, if one drops, just pick it up quickly making it seem like they are raw but somehow it just didn't break.]*)

Teacher #2: How many eggs can you juggle? I just learned to juggle three. Can you juggle three?

Teacher #1: Of course I can juggle three. I can juggle however many I want. Why, I can juggle six eggs. *(smugly)* I'll juggle six if you can juggle three without dropping any.

Teacher #2: I'll give it a try. *(juggles three eggs a few passes then stops [If one drops, ask for another chance, ad-libbing the dialogue.]*) Okay, I did it, now I want to see you juggle six.

Teacher #1: Well, I ... I ...

Teacher #2: You **can** do it can't you?

Teacher #1: *(with pride)* Of course I can. Give me those eggs. *(Roughly grab the three eggs from the other teacher along with the remaining three. Get ready to juggle by going through the motions in practice with three eggs in each hand. When you finally do attempt to juggle throw the eggs up so they land close to but not on the children.)*

Teacher #2: I guess you can't juggle six eggs at once. Have you ever heard of Proverbs 16:18?

Teacher #1: No, I haven't.

Teacher #2: Perhaps someone in the class can read it for us.

Have one student read the proverb then ask the class the following questions:

■ How does this proverb apply to our skit?

(Teacher #1 was proud of how many eggs he could juggle. It led to him committing to juggle more eggs than he could. In the end, he was humbled by his failure.)

■ How does this proverb apply to Samson?

(All Samson cared about was pleasing himself, and in the end, he paid a terrible price for his pride. Delilah tricked him into revealing the true secret of his strength—his Nazirite vow to God, which included not cutting his hair.)

■ How does this proverb apply to you?

(Encourage the children to give specific examples of “pride going before a fall” from their lives. Then point them to the cross as the place where we are forgiven our sins of pride—and all our other sin too.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

Humility of a Prayer

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ pens or pencils
- ✓ paper

Compare the prayer of Samson in Judges 16:28–30 with the prayer of the thief on the cross in Luke 23:40–43. Write the answer to the following question: How are Samson and the thief on the cross alike in both their prayers and God’s answers?

In brief, Samson lived a life of sin but in the end recognized God as his only hope. In the same way, the thief lived a life of sin, but in the end recognized Jesus as his only hope. God answered both their prayers.

WORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the WORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

Samson, the Blind Man

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper

Have the children draw a picture of blind Samson being led around by a young man.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Hair Makes You Strong?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ wig
- ✓ empty copy paper box
- ✓ books to fill the box
- ✓ two volunteers, one with long hair and one bald or with very short hair (e.g., a petite woman with long hair and a strong bald man)

Prior to class arrange for two volunteers to come to your class. Gather enough books to fill the box.

After you tell the story of Samson's defeat, turn your class's attention to the volunteers standing near the box and the stack of books. First, demonstrate the strength of the long-haired person by filling the box with one book at a time until she can no longer lift it. Ask her if she feels stronger now that her hair is long. Celebrate her strength.

Next, have the bald person come forward and admonish the class not to make fun of his weakness explaining that it comes with being bald. Have the second volunteer try to lift the box explaining to the class that he will never be able to lift it. Look shocked that he can actually lift it and, in fact, can lift the box when entirely full of books.

Next have the bald person put on the wig and ask his if he feels stronger. He should say, "No, I actually feel weaker!"

Use this exercise to help the children understand that it was God who helped Samson. Then read Judges 14:6, 19; and 15:14. Ask the children what these verses have in common and what they tell us about Samson's strength. (The verses tell us that it was really God who gave Samson his great strength.)