

JUDGES 14:12-18
THE PRIDE OF SAMSON!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 14 as we continue our in-depth study of the book of Judges.

We are currently looking at the last Judge in the book of Judges and that is Samson. And, as we have seen, Samson had great potential to do many great things for God.

He was called from the womb to be a Nazirite or dedicated to God all his life. The Spirit of God came upon Samson to empower him for the work that he was to do.

And I think he needed that empowerment because I don't think Samson was a body builder, a Charles Atlas type of guy. I think he was your average guy, not very strong and thus, he could not take the credit for what he was doing, God gave him them strength to do these things.

But, even with all that potential, Samson needed to walk by faith, to obey the Lord and instead of doing that, he did the exact opposite!

As you read the events here in chapter 14, we see Samson going – ***DOWN, DOWN, DOWN!***

That is never a good thing. He went down to Timnah, Philistine territory and lusted after a woman there, one of the daughters of the Philistines, and not a daughter of Israel!

His parents tried to persuade him not to get involved, but he pressured them and they gave in to his demands, they were going to go to Timnah and arrange this marriage for their son Samson and this daughter of the Philistines.

Not only that, but he went down to the vineyards of Timnah, something he was not to do, eat any grapes or drink any wine, for he was to be a Nazarite or totally dedicated to God!

Then he kills a lion and after some time, when he went to get this woman, he found the carcass of this dead lion and in this carcass was a bee nest with honey. So he dug his hand in this dead lion and got some honey to eat and he gave some of this honey to his parents when he met up with them, not telling them where he got this from.

Now we may not see a problem with that, but being a Nazarite, he was not to touch a dead body, and yet, he saw no problem with this.

And this incident with this dead lion and the honey will play a role in what we will be looking at this morning in regard to the life of Samson.

Now it was time for the wedding feast, lasting some seven days and since this took place in Timnah, Samson did not know any of the men there, so they brought thirty Philistine men to Samson for kind of a bachelor party.

And I don't think Samson had many friends in Israel, I think he was more of a loner and that is never a good thing. You see, by ourselves we can justify our behavior but with other brothers and sisters in the Lord, we can be corrected, encouraged, as iron sharpens iron. But that was not Samson and it ended up hurting him as he lusts after women and he is not listening to his parents and there really is no one else except God, and he is not listening to God, not at all!

Now, at these feasts the wine flowed, again, something that Samson was not to do, drink wine and yet, there he is, disobeying the Lord once again!

This morning we are going to be looking at – ***THE PRIDE OF SAMSON!***

And let me say this. Pride is something that brought Lucifer down and it is something that will bring us down if we do not deal with it.

For Samson, it is going to be destructive to his relationship with the Lord, with others and with himself as we will see.

One writer, in regard to pride, put it like this. He wrote, “Pride is inordinate self-esteem; an unreasonable conceit of one’s superiority in talents, beauty, wealth, accomplishments etc. These persons will exalt themselves and at the same time belittle others or magnifying themselves at the expense of their neighbors or others they meet.”

I think that sums it up pretty good for us and, like I have said, pride is very dangerous in our walk with the Lord. If we don’t deal with it, it will bring us down.

I have broken these verses we will be looking at this morning into three main points. And they are,

THE PRIDE OF SAMSON – JUDGES 14:12-14

THE EFFECTS ON OTHERS – JUDGES 14:15-17

THE CONSEQUENCES – JUDGES 14:18

Now, before we get to our text, let me share this with you and that will lead us into our study this morning. We are told,

The late New Testament scholar John Stott said, “At every stage of our Christian development and in every sphere of our Christian discipleship, pride is the greatest enemy and humility our greatest friend.”

He also said, “Pride is more than the first of the seven deadly sins; it is itself the essence of all sin.”

God reveals that He considers a proud look and a proud heart to be an abomination (Proverbs 6:16-17; 16:5). God also inspired Solomon to write, “Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate” (Proverbs 8:13).

The Bible defines pride as arrogance, haughtiness and conceit. Pride emphasizes the self over others, and it rejects God's greatness.

Pride occurs when sinful human beings subconsciously aspire to the status and position of God and refuse to acknowledge their dependence upon Him. Pride contends for supremacy with Him.

Pride takes innumerable forms but has only one end: *self-glorification*. That's the motive and ultimate purpose of pride - *to rob God of legitimate glory and to pursue self-glorification, contending for supremacy with Him*.

The proud person considers himself better than other people, and even seeks to glorify himself instead of God, thereby attempting in effect to deprive God of something only He is worthy to receive.

A proud person has a distorted view of himself, not accepting Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 1:26, 29: "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. . . . that no flesh should glory in His presence."

Putting ourselves in the place of God is truly prideful, but pride also includes deciding that we know better than everyone else when we should be esteeming others better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3). Even comparing ourselves too favorably over others would be prideful and certainly is not wise to do (2 Corinthians 10:12).

Ungodly and hateful pride is a growing reality in the modern world. Instead of emphasizing personal responsibility and gratitude, this world emphasizes self-worth and self-centeredness. From the time when Lucifer developed pride because of his beauty (Ezekiel 28:17) to today, when modern political candidates and celebrities flaunt their greatness, the entire span of history shows us how infectious and dangerous pride can be.

Pride can also affect us in subtle ways. It is always lurking in the background of our lives, and we might not even be aware of it. It's no wonder God listed pride as something He hates and inspired multiple scriptures to be written showing why all humanity should overcome it. We are even told, "God resists the proud" (James 4:6). This alone should be a warning that *pride has to go*.

But pride can also affect us in subtle ways. It is always lurking in the background of our lives, and we might not even be aware of it.

- <https://bit.ly/2DxVMh6>

Not an easy subject to talk about because we all, to some degree or another, have to deal with this issue of pride or it will deal with us.

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Judges chapter 14, beginning in verse 12 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we look at the topic of – ***THE PRIDE OF SAMSON!***

JUDGES 14**VERSES 12-14**

Now we read that, and we may be thinking, *“What is the big deal? It is just an innocent little game isn’t it? I mean come on, don’t make much to do about nothing!”*

Yes, on the surface it looks very innocent, but think about it. How in the world would these thirty, so-called friends, these Philistine men, ever figure this out? They couldn’t and Samson knew that they could not figure this out on their own.

And what we see here is this – ***THE PRIDE OF SAMSON!***

What I mean by that is Samson pulled the rug out from under them, he knew that he had this one in the bag and thus, he was trying to make them look foolish, take advantage of them, and make himself look good. That is ***PRIDE!***

And let me say this. Pride destroys relationships and the first one here is not necessarily these thirty men, but I think it is destroying Samson’s relationship with God!

Think about what Samson is doing. He is down in Timnah, in Philistine country. He is with the enemy. He is not only with the enemy, but he is having a party with them, rubbing elbows with these thirty Philistine men and with others I am sure. It was his wedding party! That is in defiance of what God had spoken to the children of Israel. Thus, Samson thought he knew better than God, and that is ***PRIDE!***

Not only that, but Samson is marrying a Philistine woman instead of a daughter of the children of Israel. And, once again, God told the children of Israel that they were not to do that! So again, Samson thought he knew better than God, and that is ***PRIDE!***

And at this feast, this seven-day wedding feast, there was plenty of wine going around, plenty of drinking and getting drunk. That is the way it was with the Philistines and many of the pagan nations. And I am sure that Samson joined in as well. And, even if Samson had just one drink, it went against what God had spoken to him, that he was to be a Nazarite and not eat grapes or drink any wine, not even a cup! But he disobeyed God, maybe thinking he knew better, it was just a glass or two, but he was wrong. And once again we see that Samson thought he knew better than God, and that is ***PRIDE!***

One more. Remember what the parents of Samson said to him, **“Then his father and mother said to him, ‘Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?’ . . . ”**

And Samson said to them, **“. . . ‘Get her for me, for she pleases me well.’”** (Judges 14:3)

God said we are to respect and honor our parents and instead of doing that, we see that Samson went after what he wanted and in doing so, He was going against God! And when the constant theme of your life is going against God, in the end, that pride will destroy you. You see, Samson thought he knew better than God, and that is ***PRIDE!***

Let me make this clear. If you are doing something that is wrong, and God’s Word is very clear on this issue, and you continue doing it, then what you are saying is that you know better than God, or that God has given you some kind of special dispensation to ignore what He has said in His Word, and that my friend is nothing more than ***PRIDE!***

Let me share with you some verses from the Bible and I will show you what I mean.

In Psalm 10:4 we are told, **“The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts.”**

Now you may be thinking, *“That is speaking of the wicked Pastor Joe! So how does that apply to me?”*

If you know what God has said in His Word and you ignore it, you are not seeking God. And if you are sinning, then your actions are wicked and what usually happens is that as you are in sin, **“God is in none of [your] thoughts.”**

Make no mistake about it, pride pushes God out of the picture, and you replace God with yourself!

Now I know that is a hard one to swallow, but if you are not listening to God, if you are not doing what God has called you to do, who are you listening to and who are you following?

I will tell you that you are listening to and following the unholy trinity of – ***ME, MYSELF AND I!***

In Proverbs 8:13 we are told, **“The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.”**

This should just make sense. If you love the Lord, if you fear the Lord, that reverential fear of God, then you should hate evil! What kind of evil is Solomon speaking of?

Notice what evil is first, ***PRIDE!*** And then, ***ARROGANCE!*** The ***EVIL WAY!*** And lastly, ***THE PERVERSE MOUTH!*** And God hates these things in our lives.

Thus, if you are moving towards God then you are moving away from evil to the point of **“hat[ing] evil”**, hating **“pride”**, hating **“arrogance”**, hating the **“evil way”**, hating the **“perverse mouth.”**

As Christians we should flee those things that the Lord hates. In fact, we should have a deep hatred for them instead of embracing them.

Why?

Because these evil practices destroy not only our relationship with God, but they also destroy people's lives. And we will look at that more in our next point in a few minutes.

Make no mistake about it. It is amazing what pride can do to the human heart. Pride corrupts the heart and is like a terminal disease that spreads into the heart and brings death. Pride kills your love for God, kills your passion for God, and kills your desire for God.

One writer put it like this. He wrote,

Pride is the cause of most, if not all problems in a marriage, business, church, school, and yes, even in families.

History is filled with examples of people who have ruined themselves, because they let their pride get in the way of life. So, don't follow their example, instead, learn from history, and rise above. So, what does pride destroy?

First, pride will destroy our relationship with God. By definition, pride is the exaltation of self. When self is exalted, it dishonors God. For He says so:

“. . . God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6).

- <https://bit.ly/3itZ1os>

Think about this for a minute. In the Garden of Eden, before the fall of man, Adam fellowshiped with God, they walked in the Garden together.

But then, as sin entered the picture, it was that sin that separated Adam from God. And listen to what took place. We are told in Genesis 3:8-10, **“And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’”**

Now that intimate relationship with God was broken by sin. And I think we can do the same because when we are involved in sin, we hide ourselves from God, we distance ourselves from Him and from His Word as well as from other believers because we don’t want to change, we don’t want to stop what we are doing and that, once again, is just plain – ***PRIDE!***

Listen to what we are told in Proverbs 16:18-19, **“Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, Than to divide the spoil with the proud.”**

Think about this for a minute. During a lightning storm, which trees tend to get hit first, which trees attract the lightning?

The tall ones and that is the idea here.

As we stand tall and proud, God will bring us down. It is better to humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and let Him lift you up than you lift yourself up and let Him humble you!

And make no mistake about it, pride has and will continue to destroy people’s lives, even Christians as we stand tall, proud and, like I have said, God will deal with that! You will be struck down!

And verse 19 of Proverbs 16 is saying that it is better to be poor and humble than rich and proud!

This was Samson, proud, arrogant, and as time goes by he will get more prideful and more bold in his pride and he is going to reach a point that he has pushed God out of his life and when God departs from Samson, he is not even aware of that!

How can that be? Because Samson wasn't walking with God and thus, when God departed from his life, nothing changed, he did not see any loss, any changes, he just went on doing what he always did, but now, God is completely out of the picture, at least for a time!

Make no mistake about it, what Samson is doing here is just plain prideful, because, like I have said, he knew that these Philistine men were not going to be able to figure this riddle out in seven days or seven years or seven thousand years. This was a prideful thing Samson was doing, thus, - ***THE PRIDE OF SAMSON!***

VERSES 15-17

Let me give you an overview of what is going on here and then we will look at the topic of how pride works or - ***THE EFFECTS ON OTHERS!***

Samson gave these Philistine men this riddle, "**Out of the eater came something to eat, And out of the strong came something sweet.**" Judges 14:14.

And they have no idea what the riddle is about. They spent three days going over and over this riddle and to their dismay, they could not come up with a good explanation regarding what Samson was talking about. How frustrating it must have been for them.

So, as they gave up on their own, they come to the bride of Samson and they give this bride-to-be a little incentive to find out what the answer was to the riddle Samson gave them. They must have figured that she knew the answer or even if she didn't, she could find out from Samson!

Now, just in case she is a little hesitant in asking or giving them the answer, they tell her if she does not find out what it means and tell them, they will burn down her father's house, and as I read this I get the idea that they would be inside when this home they burn to the ground!

I guess you can safely say that these men were not exactly friends and they were just looking out for themselves and not carrying about others.

So, with that incentive, we see Samson's Philistine wife nag and nag Samson, even with tears, to find out what this riddle was all about.

First of all, he should have never married this woman and secondly, don't let nagging or tears cause you to do something that you should not do! But Samson knew what he was doing, or so he thought – ***PRIDE!***

Now, as you read this story there does seem to be some discrepancy, and many just move on and they don't even deal with it.

What is the problem?

It seems like what was said in verse 15 contradicts what we read here in verse 17.

In verse 15 it says that these 30 Philistine men came to her and asked her on the seventh day to go and pressure her husband and find out what this riddle was all about and yet, here in verse 17 it says that from the first day of the feast she was asking.

What is that all about? Is this a discrepancy in the Bible?

No, it is not.

I like what Keil and Delitzsch wrote in their commentary on this subject and I tend to agree with them. They wrote,

This statement is not at variance with that in v. 15, to the effect that it was only on the seventh day that the Philistine young men urged her with threats to entice Samson to tell the riddle, but may be explained very simply in the following manner. The woman had already come to Samson every day with her entreaties from simple curiosity; but Samson resisted them until the seventh day, when she became more urgent than ever, in consequence of this threat on the part of the Philistines.

- Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament: New Updated Edition

That seems like it is the best explanation and it does flow with what these verses are saying.

So the tears broke Samson down into doing something he probably should not have done and he tells her the riddle and she goes and tells it to these young men. I guess she trusted these men more than she did her own husband here.

Here's the thing. Our pride, our arrogance, will affect our relationships with others. It can affect our relationship with our spouse, as we see here with Samson and his new wife. It can affect our relationship with our friends, as we also see here with these Philistine men, although they obviously were not close friends to Samson, he did not even know them, but they were brought to be friends with Samson for this wedding feast! It can affect our relationships at work, at church, anywhere and everywhere because we are too prideful to let go of what we are holding on to, and we see that here with Samson.

There was no real point to this riddle except to show himself as wiser, smarter than these thirty Philistine men!

Let me show you how deadly our pride, our arrogance can be to others, how it can affect them in a very dangerous way. We are told,

Chuck Yeager, the famed test pilot, was flying an F-86 Sabre over a lake in the Sierras when he decided to buzz a friend's house near the edge of the lake.

During a slow roll, he suddenly felt his aileron [ai-ler-on] lock. [an aileron is a hinged surface in the trailing edge of an airplane wing, used to control lateral balance.]

Says Yeager, "It was a hairy moment, flying about 150 feet off the ground and upside down."

A lesser pilot might have panicked, with fatal results, but Yeager let off on the G's, pushed up the nose, and sure enough, the aileron unlocked. Climbing to 15,000 feet, where it was safer, Yeager tried the maneuver again. Every time that he rolled, the problem reoccurred.

Yeager knew three or four pilots had died under similar circumstances, but to date, investigators were puzzled as to the source of the Sabre's fatal flaw.

Yeager went to his superior with a report, and the inspectors went to work. They found that a bolt on the aileron cylinder was installed upside down.

Eventually, the culprit was found in a North American plant. He was an older man on the assembly line who ignored instructions about how to insert that bolt, because, by golly, he knew that bolts were supposed to be placed head up, not head down. In a sad commentary, Yeager says that nobody ever told the man how many pilots he had killed.

And there is the problem. He thought he knew better and that is what gets us in trouble, when we think we know better than God and in the end, not only is our relationship with God on hold, but we also see the devastating effects that can come upon family and friends, all because we know better, and we don't!

In Proverbs 13:10 we are told, **“By pride comes nothing but strife, But with the well-advised is wisdom.”**

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“By pride and insolence comes only contention, but with the well-advised is skillful and godly Wisdom.”**

The Living Bible puts this verse like this, **“Pride leads to arguments; be humble, take advice, and become wise.”**

In other words, pride leads to contentions and quarrels with others, it destroys relationships!

Why, when Solomon talks about pride and contention, does he say that they go hand-in-hand.

Because with pride comes the attitude of *“Mr. Know-it-all”* who is never wrong.

Wisdom will listen and pray instead of quarreling.

Listen to what C. S. Lewis had to say regarding pride. He wrote,

It is Pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began. Other vices may sometimes bring people together; you may find good fellowship and jokes and friendliness among drunken people or unchaste people. But Pride always means enmity – it is enmity. And not only enmity between man and man, but enmity to God.

That is what happens, even though we would never like to admit it. Pride is an ugly monster, and the more you feed it the worse it gets and the more it destroys relationships with family and friends.

One writer put it like this. He wrote,

One word in the English language describes almost every problem that almost everyone will face or faces. That word is pride.

Pride is a short five-letter word. Yet, when it is placed into action, it destroys everything in its path. Pride will destroy homes. Pride will destroy love for others. Pride will destroy nations.

Great and small nations are affected by this attitude. Important and insignificant people will be affected by pride and foolish actions of prideful individuals. Pride is like a giant boulder rolling down a mountainside. It destroys everything in its path. And no one is immune to it. So, each person must look within himself or herself and keep this emotion under control, because pride will cause people to speak when they should not, act when it is inappropriate and hurt others who are dear to them.

A prideful person is defined in the negative way as one that has an unduly high opinion of oneself. It is one who is arrogant and one who seems haughty. . . .

Pride, like many other things that God condemns, comes from within man. That area in us is our heart. Everything we do and everything we say stem from our heart (Proverbs 4:23). Have we ever stopped to notice the middle letter of the word “pride?” Just like in the word “sin,” the middle letter is “I.” Could it be said that pride and sin are always what “I” want to do, think and act?

The one thing that will stop a family from healing is a prideful attitude of a family member. The one thing that will stop communication is a prideful attitude. But on the positive side, the one thing that will help all of us to heal from the hurt of another is being proud of God's word. It will lead all men to knowledge and to truth. A family can be proud that it stands together and is united all because they are proud of each member in the family. However, care and constant lookout will need to be done to ensure Satan will not try to tempt God's people to have the negative side of pride.

- <https://bit.ly/3kBn9aw>

What is interesting today, what we see in the world, has come right into the church. Instead of being responsible for our sin, like pride, we become the victims and blame everyone else for what is happening.

And maybe we need to do a heart check and make sure our heart is right with God because if it is not right with God, then it will not be right with people. And that is an easy one to check, how are you doing in your relationships with others?

We have allowed all that psychobabble to come right into the church and I believe it was Robert Schuller who got this started and it has grown to where we see it as a normal practice in the church.

Now some may not see this as that big of a deal, but, according to Robert Schuller, "*sin is a psychological self-abuse.*" In other words, don't dwell upon sin, you are only hurting yourself. The reality is the exact opposite is true!

He also said, “*Sin is any act or thought that robs myself or another human being of his or her self-esteem.*” Wow, he believes that sin is nothing more than a loss of pride that follows such an act! That is so dangerous!

Now, in saying that, how does he get around the Scriptures that contradict what he is saying?

That is simple. In a radio interview several years ago, Dr. Schuller was asked that specific question and this is how he answered it. He said, “*Just because it’s in the Bible doesn’t mean you should preach it.*”

In other words, if what the Bible says contradicts what you believe, just ignore it and for pastor’s, don’t teach it!

I guess this is Biblical because Satan said in the Garden of Eden to Eve, “*Has God indeed said!*”

And in the end, he feels that the church should glorify every human being and don’t assault a person’s self-esteem. “*What we need,*” he declares, “*is a theology of salvation that begins and ends with a recognition of every person’s hunger for glory.*”

I think he gets that wrong. God gets the glory, we don’t! We are to be God-centered not man-centered! And thus, out of all of this we see that our pride has grown so much that there is no room for God and there is no room for others who disagree with us. It is all about me, myself and I and if you don’t like it, too bad!

Is that what the Bible says?

No, but again, according to Schuller, we are not to teach on everything that is in the Bible, especially those things that go against what we want to believe. That is ***PRIDE!***

Paul said in Philippians 2:1-3, **“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”**

It is not about us; it is about God and it is about others and then it is about us. But we have adopted so much psychobabble into the church today that we end up negating what the Scriptures say, and we believe what these so-called experts are saying.

And I don't know if you have noticed this, but these experts don't even agree on what they teach, their methods, and yet, God has not changed His Word because His Word is truth and their word, well, it can be true, it can be false, good luck!

How foolish that we look to man instead of God. And yes, what God says is hard because we have to die to self, and we have to obey Him. I guess we don't have to, but it is what is best for our lives and when we don't, there are consequences to our actions. And we will see that next with our last point!

Make no mistake about it, we are not to look too highly of ourselves, we are servants of Christ and we are not to lord over each other. Paul put it like this in Romans 12:3, **“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”**

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“For by the grace (unmerited favor of God) given to me I warn everyone among you not to estimate and think of himself more highly than he ought [not to have an exaggerated opinion of his own importance], but to rate his ability with sober judgment, each according to the degree of faith apportioned by God to him.”**

I think that is pretty clear. Don't exalt self, exalt God, treat people with the love of God!

We are to help each other grow and mature in the Lord. We are not to be the Holy Spirit, but we are to love each other and even correct each other when needed.

Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean. We are told,

Years ago, a lady, who went with a party to the British Museum, expressed contempt and dissatisfaction at everything she saw; protested it was a waste of time to continue and urged the company to hasten their departure.

Finally, they politely thanked the gentleman in attendance, and were about to leave, when he detained them by the following address to their haughty companion: “When I first saw you, madam, I was struck with your beauty and interesting appearance; but you soon gave me occasion to change my opinion. I pity the man that marries you, if any one ever will; certainly I would not; and I fear for you unless some alteration takes place in your taste, manners, and habits. Madam, I wish you a good day.”

Many years after, the same gentleman waited upon another company at the Museum: when they took their leave and thanked him for his polite attentions, a woman stepped forward, and expressed her gratitude in a manner more lively than the occasion seemed to require.

The gentleman, rather surprised, professed himself happy in having contributed to her amusement. “Sir,” said she, “my obligations to you far exceed those which you have conferred this morning.”

She then recalled to his memory the previously mentioned circumstance, and added, “I am that woman; and to you I am indebted next to this gentleman, who is my husband, for the happiest influence on my life and character, arising from the very pointed, but helpful reproof which you then administered.”

- Practical Bible Illustrations from Yesterday and Today

His words changed her life because she examined where she was at and did what was right. Sometimes we don't see our error, we don't see our pride and when it is pointed out, may we be open to what God is showing us through that person or through His Word, or by His Spirit!

If we don't change, if we are not open to what the Lord is showing us, if pride continues to grow in our lives, there will be – ***THE CONSEQUENCES!***

VERSE 18

We see that Samson's wife told these men what the riddle was about, and she found out this riddle because Samson told her the answer to it.

So these men come to Samson on the seventh day of this wedding feast and they tell Samson, “**What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?**”

And when Samson hears those words, when he sees that they figured out this riddle, something that would have been impossible for anyone to do, he knows that his wife must have told them. She was the only one who knew the answer to this riddle, besides Samson!

Great way to start out a marriage!

And Samson is mad, he is furious at what they have done and he goes and speaks to these men and tells them, “... **‘If you had not plowed with my heifer, You would not have solved my riddle!’**”

Not really terms of endearment towards his wife! I guess the love he had for her was very superficial!

Why was Samson so mad? Because of *PRIDE!*

Make no mistake about it, there are consequences to our actions. We have seen that our pride will affect our relationship with God. Pride will affect our relationship with others. And pride will affect ourselves, or, there are consequences to our actions as I have said.

In II Chronicles chapter 26 we see the story of King Uzziah in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. He was a good King; he brought the nation back together as many cities were lost to the enemies when his father Amaziah was on the throne.

He made all kinds of implements for war. He was doing well and the key to why he was doing so well is found for us in II Chronicles 26:5, the last part of that verse, and it says, “... **as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper.**”

How true that is. You see that principle is not only seen in the Old Testament, but it is woven throughout the pages of the New Testament as well.

When we think too highly of ourselves, as we have seen, God is moved out of the picture, He is not on the throne of our lives, and we are headed for trouble.

And the same is true of King Uzziah. Listen to what we are told of this King and how he prospered – *UNTIL!* And that is an important and sad word, as we will see.

In II Chronicles 26:6-16 we are told, **“Now he went out and made war against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath, the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod; and he built cities around Ashdod and among the Philistines. God helped him against the Philistines, against the Arabians who lived in Gur Baal, and against the Meunites. Also the Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah. His fame spread as far as the entrance of Egypt, for he became exceedingly strong. And Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the corner buttress of the wall; then he fortified them. Also he built towers in the desert. He dug many wells, for he had much livestock, both in the lowlands and in the plains; he also had farmers and vinedressers in the mountains and in Carmel, for he loved the soil. Moreover Uzziah had an army of fighting men who went out to war by companies, according to the number on their roll as prepared by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the officer, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king’s captains. The total number of chief officers of the mighty men of valor was two thousand six hundred. And under their authority was an army of three hundred and seven thousand five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy. Then Uzziah prepared for them, for the entire army, shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows, and slings to cast stones. And he made devices in Jerusalem, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and the corners, to shoot arrows and large stones. So his fame spread far and wide, for he was marvelously helped till he became strong. But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the Lord his God by entering the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense.”**

Now Uzziah was able to achieve success in three areas.

The first was seen in verses 6-8, which spoke about his victory in war or victories over his enemies.

The second was seen in verses 9-10, which spoke of his massive building projects and his push in the area of agriculture, making the land fruitful once again.

And thirdly we see in verses 11-15, the strength of his army and his ability to develop weapons of war to put down the enemy.

Uzziah is doing great and you read about all his success and all you can see are good things happening, it would seem like nothing can stop him. Well, that is not exactly true, because with all the good he did, there is a word that will change everything, “**But**” and that is never a good thing.

Remember in verse 15 of II Chronicles chapter 26, “**But when he was strong his heart was lifted up.**” And that is nothing more than *PRIDE!* He took his eyes off of God and placed them on himself and it is what brought him down!

You see, the one thing that changed Uzziah and not for good was his success! And this truly was a sad commentary on Uzziah’s life.

When he was weak, *then* he was strong!

But, when he was strong, *then* he was weak.

In other words, his success went to his head and made him think more highly of himself than he should have. It is a warning to all of us what pride can do in our lives, the consequences if we don’t deal with it!

For Uzziah, he got a little too big for his own good. He was a King and not a priest and thus he could not go into the Temple and offer incense to the Lord, only the priest could.

But, because of his big head, he thought he could approach God any way he wanted. Of this Selman wrote, *“Uzziah’s problem was that he was not content with the authority God had given him and wanted to add more priestly functions to his royal power. Absolute power, however, has no place in God’s kingdom.”* May we learn to be content in what God has given to us and not transgress what God has said, may we not become so prideful that we think too highly of ourselves!

Of this Morgan gives us this perspective of what prosperity can do in our lives. He wrote, *“The history of men affords persistent witness to the subtle perils which are created by prosperity. More men are blasted by it than by adversity. . . . Prosperity always puts the soul in danger of pride, of the heart lifted up; and pride ever goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”*

And in the end, for King Uzziah, because he did not listen to the warning of the priests not to go into the Temple, because he thought too highly of himself, he now faced the consequences of his actions and God placed upon him leprosy!

Listen to how pride brought him down. We are told in II Chronicles 26:21, **“King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an isolated house, because he was a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the Lord. Then Jotham his son was over the king’s house, judging the people of the land.”**

For Uzziah we saw him go from power to pride to his downfall.

You see, his strength was his weakness.

It is as Proverbs 16:18-19 says, **“Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, Than to divide the spoil with the proud.”**

And in Proverbs 18:12 we read, “**Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And before honor is humility.**”

You see, it is when we are weak that our eyes are focused on the Lord, but many times when we are strong our eyes are focused on self and not the Lord.

Let us not forget that lesson for if we do, we will reap the consequences of our actions and learn firsthand what pride can do in our lives.

God does have a way to humble us and to give us the right perspective of ourselves.

God hates pride and so should we!

We have seen *THE PRIDE OF SAMSON* and how it hindered his relationship with God.

We have seen *THE EFFECTS OF OTHERS* with our pride, how it destroys all kinds of relationships.

And we have seen *THE CONSEQUENCES* of our pride, how God will deal with us and keep us humble so that we will look to Him to be the strength of our lives. When we are weak, then we are strong in the Lord. When we are strong, then we are weak because we are thinking too highly of ourselves!

Let me close with this. We are told,

A government official who came into President Lincoln’s office was startled to find the chief executive shining his shoes. “Sir,” he gasped, “surely you do not polish your own shoes!”

“Of course,” replied the humble President. “Whose do you polish?”

The greatness of a man is evidenced by his humility.

In the words of an old Filipino saying, “The higher the bamboo grows, the lower it bends.”

All of this is illustrated in the life of Jesus. “Jesus did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt 20:28).

The highest title God ever allows in His church is “servant.” Am I willing to serve people as Jesus did? I know, I cannot die for people to save them as Jesus did, but I can “die to self” to enable me to tell people that Jesus died for their sins, and thus serve them in the greatest way possible.

When I humble myself, then God will give me the grace to grow into maturity where, I like the tall bamboo, can lower myself to serve those of “low esteem.” Notice, “Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited” (Rom.12:16).

How tall are you spiritually? Tall and flexible enough to serve people in all kinds of situations?

- A Treasury of Bible Illustrations

May we, **“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”** James 4:10.