

JUDGES 15:1-8
RING OF FIRE!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 15 as we continue our in-depth study of the book of Judges.

We are currently looking at the last Judge spoken of in the book of Judges, and that is Samson!

And, if you remember, Samson was a man who had great potential to deliver the children of Israel from the persecution that they were facing at the hands of the Philistines.

God had equipped Samson with all that he needed to do the work, but God did not control Samson like some kind of robot.

Samson had to walk by faith, he had to obey the Lord, he needed to follow the direction of the Lord and he didn't!

You see, Samson's battle, like ours, is one of the flesh against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh and whatever you feed the most will be manifested in your life.

And, as we have seen, the struggle for Samson is that he let his flesh, his bodily appetites control his life instead of the Spirit of God!

We have seen this played out for us over the last several weeks.

First of all, we saw that Samson sees this beautiful woman, in Timnah. Keep in mind that Timnah was in Philistine country. He should have never been there in the first place.

Then, because his flesh is aroused, he demands that his parents get her as his wife. Now they, in trying to be good Jewish parents, tried to persuade him to marry a woman of Israel but he refused and thus, down to Timnah they go and they make arrangements for their son, Samson to marry this woman!

On his way down, separated from his parents, he encounters this lion in the vineyards of Timnah. Keep in mind that Samson was a Nazarite and he was not to eat any grapes or drink any wine. Not a good place for him to be.

When he encounters this lion, he tears this lion apart with his bare hands and he told no one what took place.

Some time passes by and now it is time for Samson to marry this Philistine woman and as he is traveling to the wedding feast, he encounters this dead lion. But now, inside the carcass of this lion is a bee hive and, of course, in the bee hive there is lots of honey. So he reaches in and takes some honey out to eat and he even brought some for his parents, but he did not tell them where he got the honey from.

Again, Samson was a Nazarite, dedicated to God and he was not to touch a dead body, and yet, here we see Samson compromise his faith and he reaches into this carcass of a dead lion to get the honey out.

And now the wedding feast. Keep in mind that Samson had no friends in Timnah, and I don't think he even had any friends in Israel, that was the type of guy he was, a loner or maybe nobody wanted to be around him because of his behavior.

Since Samson had no friends or family in Timnah, since it was enemy territory, the Philistines provide him with 30 young men for this drunken seven-day wedding feast.

And, once again Samson compromised his faith, he was not to drink wine, and I can't imagine that he didn't even have at least one sip!

During this feast Samson gives these guys, these thirty Philistine men a riddle to figure out, a challenge and a bet and there is no way that they would be able to figure this out on their own.

So they pressure Samson's wife, they threaten her that if she does not find out what this riddle is all about and tell them, they will burn her father's house down and I get the idea they would be inside when the house went up in flames!

Thus, Samson's wife begins to cry and carry on before Samson, "***You don't love me anymore!***"

And Samson finally gives in and he tells her what this riddle is all about and she in turn goes and tells these thirty Philistine men.

When they tell Samson what this riddle was all about and they got it right, he tells these guys, "**... 'If you had not plowed with my heifer, You would not have solved my riddle!'**"

Judges 14:18.

Not a great way to talk about your wife. And keep in mind that the marriage was not consummated yet; they did not have sexual relations yet.

Then Samson, in his anger, which we talked about last time, kills thirty Philistine men, takes their clothes, and gives them to the thirty Philistine men who guessed the riddle to pay the bet off.

Then, because of what his wife had done, he is so mad that he just leaves the feast and heads back home to his father's house.

In Judges 14:20, as this chapter closed, we read last time, “**And Samson’s wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.**”

Keep in mind that this is a man of God, a man who was to dedicate his life to God, and yet, like all of us, we have choices to make and sometimes those choices don’t reflect our love for God, they just show our fleshly aspects. And here it is nothing more than anger on his part and, what we will see this morning, is more anger on the part of Samson!

I have called this study – ***RING OF FIRE!***

And the reason being is that all around Samson was this ***RING OF FIRE*** and people are getting burned!

Some of you may remember the old Johnny Cash song, ***RING OF FIRE***. It goes like this,

Love is a burnin’ thing,
And it makes a fiery ring
Bound by wild desire
I fell into a ring of fire.

I fell into a burnin’ ring of fire
I went down, down, down
And the flames went higher,
And it burns, burns, burns,
The ring of fire, the ring of fire.

- Johnny Cash, Ring of Fire

Here with Samson, this was not truly a love for a woman or women for that matter. It was a lust for them. But the love that was burning in Samson was a love for self, satisfying his pleasures, his desires, and for him, he went ***DOWN, DOWN, DOWN*** and moved away from God because of it!

And the flames of this fire, as I have said, will destroy many lives and we will see that here this morning, and I believe even Samson gets burned because you can't play with fire and not get burned!

I have broken these verses we will be looking at this morning into five main points, and they are as follows,

BLIND TO HIS ACTIONS – JUDGES 15:1

CONSEQUENCES OF HIS ACTIONS – JUDGES 15:2

BURNED WITH RAGE – JUDGES 15:3-5

CONSEQUENCES OF HIS ACTIONS – JUDGES 15:6

BURNED WITH RAGE – JUDGES 15:7-8

And I do realize that we are going to repeat two of those main points. And no, it was not because I couldn't come up with a better title.

The reason is simple. Because Samson was ***BLIND TO HIS ACTIONS*** there were ***CONSEQUENCES TO HIS ACTIONS*** as he ***BURNED WITH RAGE!***

Make no mistake about it, no matter how you try to look at the life of Samson, it is very difficult to come to the conclusion that Samson was not in rebellion against God.

I know, Samson is listed in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews chapter 11, but understand that it was not the rebellion of Samson that God was honoring, it was his faith and that faith came at the end of his life as we will see in a few weeks.

Let me share this with you, because I think we all, from time to time, have this mindset and it is not a good thing. We are told,

While listening to the song "Train Up a Child," my daughter Emily asked me what "train up" means.

I explained that it means to teach children about God and the difference between right and wrong.

“Are you and Daddy training me up?” she asked.

“We’re trying to,” I said.

Emily turned back to the stereo and muttered, “We’ll see about that.”

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Now we do laugh at that but isn’t that true. We have our own ideas, our own desires, and instead of being guided by the Spirit of God, we are letting the flesh drive us and that is never a good thing, because the destination is not towards God, but away from God, as Samson found out. God tells us to do something, and we say, “*We’ll see about that.*” Not a good thing, as I have said. God has what is best for us, He will show us, as He did Samson, and then it is up to us to walk in obedience or rebel against what God has said!

And remember that as Samson was disobeying God, he was going ***DOWN, DOWN, DOWN!***

And I do realize that this may not seem like an encouraging study, but I think it is. You see, God has these things in here for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might find hope. (Romans 15:4)

So my prayer as we go through this lesson is that we would learn what God desires us to do, maybe some changes in our lives, because we don’t want to burn people, we don’t want to hurt people, we want to bless people!

With that as our introduction, let's pick up our study in Judges chapter 15, beginning in verse 1, and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and we look at this topic –

RING OF FIRE!

JUDGES 15

VERSE 1

I have titled this verse – ***BLIND TO HIS ACTIONS!*** And I think you can see why!

Notice how this section opens up, it will set the stage for what takes place.

We are told, “**And after a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it happened that Samson visited his wife . . .**”

We don't know how long Samson waited to see his wife, but there was some time that went by.

And keep in mind that in Judges chapter 14 we saw Samson, after paying his bet he lost to those thirty Philistine men, left his marriage feast, before the marriage was consummated and he goes back to his father's house.

I don't know about you, how you see this, but I see Samson as a spoiled child and when he doesn't get what he wants, he picks up his toys and he heads home. That, in a sense, is what took place.

And it is out of what Samson did, that we are told in Judges 14:20, “**And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.**”

What that tells me is that by his actions, by what Samson did, that this woman's father thought Samson left her for good, that he was not coming back and thus, he gave his daughter to the best man of this wedding, probably one of the thirty Philistine men that they brought together to be Samson's companions at this feast, drinking companions!

Think about the situation that this woman was in. They celebrate seven days at this marriage feast and as this feast ends there is the consummation of the marriage. And before that happens, Samson leaves.

Talk about leaving this woman in disgrace. And maybe her father, trying to remove that stigma from his daughter, did the best thing he could do, and has her marry this other man.

So she is now married to this man, but that is not the end of the story, not at all!

Again, we don't know how long Samson stayed away from seeing this woman who was to be his bride, but after some time he decides to go and see her and consummate the marriage, something he did not do in the first place!

Make no mistake about it, Samson wants her back and as a love gift you might say, he brings her a goat!

Guys, I don't mind doing marriage counseling, but let me save you some time. If you are bringing a gift to your wife, don't bring her a goat and if you do, I am sure I will be seeing you.

I guess it was a popular gift back then but not too much today!

So as Samson goes to her father's house to get his bride, at least he thought she was still his bride, the father tells Samson that he can't go in to see her.

And, as we will see, her father will tell Samson that he gave his daughter to another man because he left, and we will deal with that in a few minutes.

What I want to focus on here is how blind Samson was to the things that he did. He did not think he did anything wrong. Thus, he just came back and thought he could jump in bed with her. Sorry, but that is what the text is saying.

We might call this a spiritual blind spot in our lives! Think about it. And yes, a blind spot is not a phrase you will find in the Bible, but it is a principle mentioned often in Scripture.

A blind spot is an area in our lives that is negatively impacting us and others in our lives, but that we cannot see. Like a blind spot when you are driving a car, spiritual blind spots that are ignored can also lead to massive wrecks in life. And that is what we will see here with Samson!

Blind spots are character defects that hurt others and ourselves but that we have yet to identify as real problems. Sometimes blind spots are not totally unknown to us, but the level of their dysfunction in our lives is undervalued and easily dismissed.

And when I say “*character defects*” I am speaking of things that are being manifested in our lives that go against what God has told us in His Word and they will not only hurt ourselves, but those around us. I am not speaking of some psychological mumbo-jumbo! The Bible is very clear on how we are to live out our lives and if we don’t, then we will hurt others by our actions.

Think about the person who talks behind the back of another person and yet, when they are together, they are all nice to them. That is hypocrisy and it is wrong. Do you really believe that God is going to let that go without dealing with it? Of course He won’t, but what may happen, and often does, is that it will destroy or hurt that relationship!

We will see the devastating effects of Samson’s actions as we read on this morning, and I think that is an important lesson for us.

And I realize that blind spots are dangerous, and we can’t see them with our natural eyes, that is why they are blind spots.

But please don't say, ***“Well, I guess there is nothing I can do about it. If it is a blind spot, I can't see it and thus, people will just have to deal with it. That is the way that God made me, and you can love it or leave it!”***

Well, I guess I don't have to tell you that is a wrong attitude to have, it is pride on your part and ignorance of what God's Word has to say.

You see, God, by His Spirit, as He opens up His Word to us, as He speaks to our hearts, reveals those things that we need to change.

In Psalm 139:23-24 we are told, **“Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.”**

Notice what David is doing here. David is asking God to help him apply these truths of God, the Word of God, to his life. Show me those blind spots in my life, the things that I can't see.

He is asking God to open his heart so that he may see if there is any wickedness in it.

He wants to go down that road to everlasting life.

He wants those areas of wickedness that are hidden deep down in his heart to be revealed by God so that he can purge them out of his life.

What a good principle to follow; let the all-knowing, omnipresent, and all-powerful God mold us into His image!

And when our anger, when our emotions begin to get out of control, bring it to the Lord and let Him show you your heart to see what is there so you can give it to Him!

Remember what the Psalmist said in Psalm 119:9-11, **“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.”**

Now I know some may feel that they just can't change. They have been doing this all their life, it is part of their nature, and thus, they just can't change!

First of all, you have a new nature, the nature of Christ and those old things have passed away and all things are new in Christ. So that is not an excuse that it is part of your nature.

And, I guess that is partly true, partly right, you can't change. The problem is that God never asked you to do this on your own. His Spirit will give you what you need to do. He will give you the strength, He will show you the way, but it is up to you.

Remember what we were told of Samson, **“And the Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.”** Judges 13:25.

You see, Samson had the power of God upon his life, the Spirit of God was upon him, but then he needed to allow the Spirit of God to work not only in him but through him. But, as we have seen and will see, he did not do that, he let the ugliness of the flesh work in him and through him and it was a disaster!

And we too have the Spirit of God in us, something that Samson did not have, and we have the empowerment of the Spirit of God upon us, and there is no excuse for our behavior if we are doing things that are hurting others and ourselves!

Notice what we are told in Proverbs 4:23-27, **“Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put perverse lips far from you. Let your eyes look straight ahead, And your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil.”**

What is Solomon saying here?

He wants us to ***STAY FOCUSED!***

Why is that?

Because there are a lot of wicked things in this world that want to destroy our life if we let them.

We need to be like racehorses that have those blinders on so they cannot be distracted by what is going on around them so they can finish the race. We too must stay focused on what is before us, the Lord!

Now I am not saying that we should be blind to what is happening around us, but we are not to be taken captive by it. Don't allow your eyes to dwell upon evil, or your ears to listen to it. We need to ***PRESS ON!***

That is something we must do, walk accordingly. God gives to us the power to do that, but then we must walk.

Let me share this with you. We are told,

We not only have blind spots in driving, we have them in life. Webster's Dictionary defines **“blind spot”** as: “a prejudice or ignorance that one has but is often unaware of”.

How many of you know all the areas in your life where you're not living as you should, or where you are living contrary to what the Bible teaches? If you knew you were living contrary to God's word in an area of your life, would you change? If we're honest, we'd have to say that it depends on the area. . . .

But we all have blind spots - areas of sin that we are not aware of or have pushed to the side. How do we become aware of these areas? How can we see our blind spots? Paul tells us of God's way of revealing blind spots:

Colossians 3:16 (NKJV) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

The word of Christ is to dwell in us, and then we are to teach and admonish one another. The word "admonishing" is the Greek word *noutheteo*, which is a very significant word. The verb suggests the idea of confronting believers with the error of their way of life on the basis of the Word of God. That confrontation should lead them and guide them into a correct way of life. Paul constantly warned believers:

1 Corinthians 4:14 (NKJV) I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn (*noutheteo*) you.

As believers, we are called to warn other believers who are in sin. Why is this necessary? Don't those in sin know that they are in sin? Not always! Remember, we all have blind spots; areas in our spiritual life that we can't see.

Now, you might be thinking that if a person is really a man or woman of God, they would know about areas of sin in their lives and not need someone to point them out. You're wrong! We all have blind spots. . . .

Believers, we're able to warn, but are we willing? We all have blind spots, but if we work together, we will be able to see much better, and we can avoid that damage that sin brings.

“Why is it that many Christians never change, even in some of the most ideal spiritual circumstances ever known? I don't know the answer, but Christ would ask you: “Are you willing ultimately to be confronted concerning weakness in your life, which you seem to be totally unaware?” Whether you are confronted properly or improperly, the fact remains that your reaction to that confrontation will speak volumes of the kind of person you really are.” . . .

Because we are often blind to our own faults, we need to be thankful for friends who care enough to bring our faults to our attention and are courageous enough to challenge our conduct.

And we need to be that kind of friend to others.

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Keep your eyes focused on Jesus being guided by the Spirit of God!

Now, why didn't the friends of Samson help him out?

Remember, he did not have any friends, he was a loner, and, in the end, he did what he wanted instead of what God wanted him to do and thus, Samson was – ***BLIND TO HIS ACTIONS!***

And that blindness will be seen in the – ***CONSEQUENCES OF HIS ACTIONS!***

VERSE 2

As I read this it seems that her father was trying to do what was right. He thought Samson hated his daughter and thus, was not coming back. Thus, he gave his daughter to another man.

Now that Samson has returned, the father is trying to fix the problem since he gave his daughter to another man. His solution is to give Samson his younger daughter.

Now we might not think much about the consequences here, it does not seem like a big deal. But I think it is.

First of all, and probably the biggest and the one that these other issues are born out of, is that Samson was misrepresenting God before this Gentile, this Philistine father.

In other words, this father knew that Samson was a son of Israel and he knew about the God they worshiped, and yet, Samson was acting like everyone else, there was no difference in his actions towards others.

That is a huge point for us. You see, we are representing God before the people around us, those that don't know the Lord and we are to be a witness to them of the God we serve.

And yet, if we respond in situations just like the world is responding, what difference has God made in our lives? ***NONE!*** And that is the problem.

What did Jesus say in Matthew 5:13-16? We are told, **“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”**

Salt is a preservative and thus, we should preserve the culture around us by our actions, the things that we do. If we don't, then there is no point in letting people know that we are Christian because Christ has not impacted our lives.

We are light, the light of God shines in us and through us and may we not cover our light by our fleshly words and deeds. We need to shine brightly for Jesus.

And here is the point. By our actions, by our words, by the way we live out our Christian life, people will notice and they will see that God has impacted our lives and, even if they don't agree with us, even if they don't like us, they will bring glory to God because they truly can't come against our actions or our words!

For Samson, it seems like this Philistine father has more integrity than Samson and that should not be. May we be careful as we live out our faith.

And it is out of this distant relationship with God for Samson, that his actions are manifested. His anger, his pride, his vengeance and-so-on.

And, like it or not, as our relationship with God goes ***DOWN, DOWN, DOWN***, our relationship with our fellow man will do the same and our actions will not be a representation of Christ, but of the world!

The problem for Samson is that he did not guard his heart and out of it came gushing forth all this evil.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 12:34 to the Jewish religious leaders, “**... For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.**”

We need to be careful and do a heart check. We go to the doctors and we have our check-ups. We need to go to the Great Physician, Jesus Christ, and have our heart checked by His Word opened up to us by His Spirit and then we need to respond accordingly. We have to take the medicine, in a sense, that God is giving to us.

If you don't do this, if you are going to live like Samson, then the words and actions of your life will reflect what is in your heart, and that is not a good thing!

Now maybe you think I am going too far on this. But the next point will show you that maybe I have not gone far enough.

You see, there were *CONSEQUENCES FOR HIS ACTIONS* and that led to the fact that Samson *BURNED WITH RAGE!*

Listen to what we are told.

VERSES 3-5

Now remember what we read in Judges 14:4 regarding Samson marrying this woman in the first place. We are told, **“But his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord - that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.”**

Now some will read that and come to the conclusion that God was in this and thus, Samson was doing what was right. No, he wasn't!

God was not condoning the actions, the sin of Samson, not at all!

But God used even the sin of Samson to accomplish His plan and purpose. The problem for Samson is that he did not guard his heart and out of it came gushing forth all this evil, as I have said.

Maybe some of you are struggling with that, that God uses our evil for His good, to accomplish His plan, His purposes. Let me show you that the Bible says that He does.

In Psalm 76:10 we are told, **“Surely the wrath of man shall praise You; With the remainder of wrath You shall gird Yourself.”**

The Living Bible puts this verse like this, **“Man's futile wrath will bring you glory. You will use it as an ornament!”**

Like with Samson, man can try as hard as he wants to fight against God, but he will never win. In fact, in his rebellion he is fulfilling the plan of God, just as Satan did when he thought he defeated God by having Him killed on a cross!

Yes, Samson was in rebellion against God, but God used that to come against the Philistines, something that He wanted to do, and we will see that more as we read on in this chapter.

But notice what Samson does here. Once again, he is acting like a child. He didn't get his way and now he is acting out in anger or he ***BURNED WITH RAGE!***

Samson is now going to come against the Philistines, not to kill them here, but to destroy their crops with foxes that have tied to their tails these torches and he sends them into their grain fields.

Now the word translated, "**foxes**" should really be jackals.

And that does seem to fit since jackals are known to run in large packs, sometimes up to 200 at a time.

But in either case, and I do think it is jackals, Samson caught 300 of them, tied their tails together, put a torch between them and then lit the torch on fire and let them go.

And for these animal rights groups, "***No animals were hurt in the execution of this plan!***" Anyway, as these jackals are running all over the place, they are catching the grain, the vineyards and the olive groves of the Philistines on fire, destroying them.

Like I have said, this is nothing more than a temper tantrum on the part of Samson because Samson did not get his way!

And yes, as adults, we can have temper tantrums, and please understand, this is not a gift of the Spirit, this is a work of the flesh. Listen carefully. We are told,

If you are a mother [or father] of small children or had dealings with small children, then you know this scene well. Everything is going smoothly, and your child is happy until you tell your precious child, “NO!”

All of a sudden, the child melts down into a fit, kicking, screaming, and demanding that you allow her to do whatever it is she wants to do.

As a mother of an almost two-year-old, temper tantrums are a daily occurrence in our house. Our sweet little girl all of a sudden turns into someone you do not know, and you wonder what happened to your well-mannered child. Most of the time there is no reasoning with the child, and you have to take some sort of disciplinary action.

A few weeks ago I was dealing with one of Makaylan’s tantrums when God spoke very candidly to my spirit. As adults, we like to think of ourselves as greater than a two-year-old, but many times we act just like them. We might not physically act out with kicking and screaming, but spiritually we close our hearts and resist God. We ask for something, and He says, “No” or “Wait.” And the temper tantrum begins.

The Bible calls this a battle between the flesh and the Spirit. Romans 8:5-8 says, ***“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”*** . . .

We live in a world that is constantly battling for our attention. The world tells us that we can do whatever we want because we are the ones in control of our lives. As a teenager, I remember my mother telling me to choose my friends wisely. Why? We end up acting like and becoming like the company we keep.

In this passage, Paul is reminding us that our lives will be controlled by either the flesh or the Spirit. It is our choice to make. If we want to be [people] who are controlled by God's Spirit, then we must set our minds on the things of God.

This is not just thinking about God or godly things (though that helps), but it means having a mindset that is in harmony with God. In order to know what God says and how He acts, we must be in His Word and mediate on His Word.

For example, if you struggle with gossip (or any other sin regarding your mouth), then mediate on what God has to say about how He can control your tongue (James 3:1-12).

If you struggle with anxiety, meditate on how God takes care of birds and flowers (seemingly insignificant things), so He will certainly take care of you (Matt 6:25-34).

To know God's mind, we must be in His Word.

I used to hate the word "submission." I am fiercely independent, and I did not like the thought of someone controlling me. The word "submission" has a very negative connotation in our culture.

As stated earlier, we live in a culture that teaches us that we are in complete control of our life and should submit to no one. My view of submission changed when I began to have a biblical understanding of submission.

In Scripture the word used for “submit” is usually a word that means a willful submitting of oneself to another. God has all authority to force our obedience, yet He desires for us to willfully submit to His commands out of love for Him. God knows that the world will bring nothing but death, and He wants to save us from experiencing the heartbreak that comes from living a life that is controlled by the flesh. . . .

So, I ask you . . . are you prone to spiritual temper tantrums? Do you find yourself quarrelling with God over a particular command? Are you pushing against Him because of the particular life season He has for you? If so, I want to encourage you to immerse yourself in God’s Word, and you will discover that He has nothing but life and peace to offer you.

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That is what Samson needed to do and it is what we need to do. Submit to God, surrender to His will, to His Word and then walk accordingly.

If we don’t, like Samson, we will ***BURN WITH RAGE*** and we have to understand that there are ***CONSEQUENCES TO OUR ACTIONS!***

Look at what happens next, it is shocking!

VERSE 6

Like I have said, this is shocking. As you can guess, the Philistines were not happy with what happened to their food supply. It was not like they could go to the PIG and get some food, you know, the Piggly Wiggly!

They depended upon their crops for food, and someone destroyed them by fire.

And they were not sure who did this dastardly deed, and no it was not Snidely Whiplash, but Samson!

And when they find out, they are so upset that they go, and they burn the wife of Samson and her father to death, not because of what they had done, but because of what Samson had done!

All they did wrong was get involved with Samson.

Now some feel that this was a good thing, destroying Philistines and they say that God took a bad situation and turned it out for good. Yes, He can do that, we have seen that before, but I don't think that is the case here.

Think about it, two Philistines dead, maybe a few hundred thousand to go. That is going to take some time!

No, this was a consequence of what Samson had done and notice how people he knew got burned, literally!

Sir Isaac Newton's third law of motion states: "*For every action there is a reaction.*" I think that is a Biblical principle as well.

In Galatians 6:7-8 we are told, "**Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.**"

Make no mistake about it, consequences are just the outcomes of what we do, whether negative or positive. There are always consequences to our actions.

Alfred Montepart said, "*Nobody ever did or will escape the consequences of his choices.*" Exactly!

And in Job we see Eliphaz tell Job and the Lord reminds us, in Job 4:8, **“As I have observed those who plough evil and those who sow trouble reap it.”**

Again, consequences for our actions.

And in Numbers 32:33 we read, **“You may be sure that your sin will find you out.”**

Whenever we sin, there are consequences. They may be spiritual or physical or both.

A good example is Adam and Eve. God said to them: **“But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”** (Genesis 2:17)

In the next chapter, we read about the consequences of their disobedience. The consequences were both physical and spiritual.

Your actions or decisions may affect others, and those effects may change the world around you. Sin will affect a person’s life and his relationship with God.

King David spoke about the consequences of his sins in Psalm 40:12: **“For troubles without number surround me; my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see. They are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails within me.”**

The effects of David’s sins were many. They brought death to five people: Uriah, David’s newborn son and, later on, Absalom, Amnon and Adonijah.

For every choice you make, for every action you take, there will be a reaction or a consequence, be sure of that.

A bad decision may bring disappointment. It may create unbearable responsibilities and destroy relationships. It may destroy a life!

Good decisions, on the other hand, will bring blessings and help us set obtainable goals that will enhance relationships and life in general, even in difficult situations.

We need to be careful in the things we do and not walk after our own desires or do the things that we want to do, we must surrender to the will of God for it is what is best for our lives!

And if we refuse, Paul makes it clear that it does not matter who you are, God will deal with you. He tells us in Colossians 3:25, “**But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.**”

And here’s the thing. Are we more interested in helping others, blessing others than getting back at others, as Samson was doing here?

Samson was not standing up for God. He was getting back at the Philistines and specifically at his wife and father-in-law. That is not what he was to do.

And, once again, because of the consequences of Samson’s actions, he was upset at what happened to him and not what happened to his wife and father-in-law. They were burned to death and he is feeling sorry for himself!

That is a heart that is far from God. And thus, Samson ***BURNED WITH RAGE!***

Look at what he does next.

VERSES 7-8

When Samson finds out what the Philistines did, he blows a gasket!

He took out his anger, his revenge on the Philistines. And that expression, “**he attacked them hip and thigh**” is speaking of a cruel and unsparing slaughter. That was Samson, a man out of control. He burned with fire you might say and went ***DOWN, DOWN, DOWN!***

And here’s the thing. A Judge was to lead the people but Samson, he is all alone in his actions. He never tried to lead the people like he should have, and the reality is that Samson couldn’t even lead himself!

And then we are told, after this slaughter, not for God but in revenge, for himself, we are told, “**. . . then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.**”

Why did Samson dwell in the cleft of the rock of Etam? Why didn't he just return home to his family, his parents?

Because he was now a fugitive, the Philistines were looking for him and they wanted him dead or alive!

Thus, he did not want to put his family in jeopardy!

He had no friends.

So his sin caused him to live in isolation and this is not going to help him draw close to God. In fact, I see it pushing him farther away from God, not that this is what God wanted, but it was a choice on the part of Samson!

Not an easy subject, but one I believe the Holy Spirit has for us so we can learn and grow and mature in the Lord.

May we not become ***BLIND TO OUR ACTIONS!*** May we see sin as sin and deal with it in our own lives. May we not be blind to it!

If we don't deal with that sin, if we are blind to it, then there are the ***CONSEQUENCES TO OUR ACTIONS!*** It will affect people's lives.

And what ends up happening, instead of looking out for others, we look out for ourselves and when things don't go the way we want, we have a spiritual temper tantrum and we ***BURN WITH RAGE!*** Not a good thing.

And, once again, if we don't deal with that, we will see more ***CONSEQUENCES OF OUR ACTIONS!*** And this time we may see death and destruction as our friends and family get burned by what we do!

And, even with all of that, we will continue to ***BURN WITH RAGE*** if we don't deal with our sin!

And if you are still struggling with this, let me put this into perspective for you. I hope this helps. We are told,

A young lady named Sally took a seminary class taught by Professor Smith, who was known for his elaborate object lessons.

One day Sally walked into class to find a large target placed on the wall, with several darts resting on a nearby table.

Professor Smith told the students to draw a picture of someone they disliked or someone who had made them angry - and he would allow them to throw darts at the person's picture.

Sally's friend (on her right) drew a picture of another woman who had stolen her boyfriend.

Another friend (on her left) drew a picture of his younger brother.

Sally drew a picture of Professor Smith, putting a great deal of detail into her drawing, even drawing pimples on his face! She was quite pleased at the overall effect she'd achieved.

The class lined up and began throwing darts amidst much laughter. Some of the students threw with such force that they ripped apart their targets.

But Sally, looking forward to her turn, was filled with disappointment when Professor Smith asked the students to return to their seats so he could begin his lecture.

As Sally fumed about missing her chance to throw the darts, the professor began removing the target from the wall.

Underneath the target was a picture of Jesus.

A hush fell over the room as each student viewed the mangled image of their Savior - holes and jagged marks covered his face. His eyes were virtually pierced out.

Professor Smith said only these words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt 25:40, KJV).

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I think that puts things into perspective for us. Do we want to be that person that has that ring of fire around our lives that is bringing death and destruction to those around us?

Or, do we want the love of Christ not only filling our lives but flowing through our lives and touching those around us to bless them, draw them to Jesus or build them up in the faith?

Choose this day who you will serve, the Lord or your flesh. There are consequences for both, but the Lord has blessings and the flesh, well, people will get burned!