

JUDGES 16:4-21
SAMSON BETRAYS HIMSELF!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 16 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. Here was a man who was called by God, empowered by the Spirit of God to deliver the children of Israel from their bondage by the hands of the Philistines. And keep in mind that the Philistines had the children of Israel in bondage for forty years, the longest period of time in bondage for the children of Israel in the book of Judges.

And yet, Samson came far short of delivering the children of Israel from their bondage. He let the flesh control his life instead of the Spirit of God. He let his feelings get the better of him and direct his life instead of the Word of God. And, in the end, it will bring Samson into bondage as the flesh always does as we succumb to it.

Let me share these words with you, kind of a summary of this man Samson. We are told, Few men in the Bible exhibit such a contrast of strength and weakness. When we think of Samson, we ordinarily think of *his strengths*. He killed a lion with his bare hands (Judg. 14:6).

He killed thirty Philistines single-handed (14:19).

He broke the cords with which the men of Judah had bound him, and slew 1000 Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey (15:14-16).

In escaping from a trap which the Philistines had laid for him, he walked away with the gates of Gaza (16:3).

Three times he escaped the treachery of Delilah – once by breaking the seven fresh bowstrings that bound him, once by snapping the new ropes as if they were a thread, and once by pulling out the pin that fastened the seven locks of his hair to a loom (16:6-14).

Finally, he pulled down the pillars of the house in which the Philistines were being amused by him, killing more in his death than he did in his life (16:30).

But Samson's *weaknesses* were even more apparent. He had a weakness for women, and was willing to disobey God in order to get a woman who pleased him (14:1-7).

He also disobeyed his parents (14:3).

He practiced deceit (14:9; 16:7, 11, 13b).

He fraternized with thirty Philistines, the enemies of God's people (14:8-11).

He gave way to temper and vindictiveness (14:19b; 15:4, 5).

He had a cruel streak in his nature (15:4, 5).

He consorted with a harlot (16:1, 2).

He dallied [lingered] with evil (16:6-14).

He revealed the secret of his strength to the enemy (16:7, 8).

He was too cocky and self-confident (16:20b).

Last, but not least, he broke his Nazirite vow (14:9).

- William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary, p. 279

That was Samson, a riddle wrapped up in a mystery inside an enigma. A powerful man before men and weak before women and it brought him down. And please understand that Samson had choices to make, no one forced him to do these things, he was not a product of his society or his upbringing, these were choices, plain and simple.

I guess you can call Samson a double-minded man, and as James points out for us, “**he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.**” James 1:8.

Listen to how The Amplified Bible puts this verse, James 1:8. We are told, “**[For being as he is] a man of two minds (hesitating, dubious, irresolute), [he is] unstable and unreliable and uncertain about everything [he thinks, feels, decides].**”

Make no mistake about it, that was Samson. And even when he went against the Philistines, he did not do so in the honor of God or to defend his people, the children of Israel. No, he went after them because they did something to him, they hurt his feelings, or whatever.

And, as we have seen, Samson never gathered the children of Israel together, like the other Judges did to defeat the enemy. He did this on his own and he began “**... to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.**” Judges 13:5.

All the potential was there for God to use Samson in a powerful way, but Samson allowed the flesh to get in the way, to trip him up and finally, his flesh brought him into bondage, as we will see this morning in our study!

I have called our study this morning – ***SAMSON BETRAYS HIMSELF!***

And the reason I have done that is because, as we will see, Samson did this to himself. No one forced him to do it, it was a choice on his part. He turned from God, he tried to satisfy his flesh, which never will happen. You may get some satisfaction for a time, but in the end, you will always seek more and more and more and it will never end because the flesh is like an ugly monster and the more you feed it the more it will want, until it consumes your life! That was Samson, he kept feeding that monster and it is going to bring him down!

I have broken down these verses we will be looking at this morning here in Judges chapter 16 as follows,

MOVING AWAY FROM GOD – JUDGES 16:4-5

THE TEMPTATION – JUDGES 16:6

THE LIE OF SAMSON – JUDGES 16:7-9

THE TEMPTATIONS KEEP COMING – JUDGES 16:10-14

GIVING INTO TEMPTATIONS – JUDGES 16:15-18

SIN BLINDS, BINDS AND GRINDS US – JUDGES 16:19-21

So with that as our introduction, let's pick up our study in Judges chapter 16 beginning in verse 4 and let's see what the Lord has for us this morning as we study through the book of Judges and we look at the topic of – ***SAMSON BETRAYS HIMSELF!***

JUDGES 16

VERSES 4-5

As you read this you may be thinking, ***“What in the world is Samson doing? He should have learned his lessons and surrendered to God. Every time that Samson went against the Lord, it did not turn out well for him and he is going to find that out again. What is wrong with this guy?”***

Before we are too harsh on Samson, keep in mind that these stories are here for our learning, even their mistakes so we don't go down that same path.

And let me give you a little warning here. If you think you are above any sin, look out! Pride will bring you down. We walk by the grace of God and the key is we need to keep our eyes upon Him, or we will be drawn away from Him and start living to satisfy the flesh, like Samson did.

And like I have said, the flesh is never satisfied!

For Samson, remember in our last study, how Judges chapter 16 opened up, **“Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her. When the Gazites were told, ‘Samson has come here!’ they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They were quiet all night, saying, ‘In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him.’ And Samson lay low till midnight; then he arose at midnight, took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two gateposts, pulled them up, bar and all, put them on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.”**

Judges 16:1-3.

And then we come to Judges 16:4, which just matter-of-factly says, **“Afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.”**

Now we don’t know how long after he laid with the prostitute that he fell in love with this Philistine woman named Delilah who lived in the Valley of Sorek.

Also, we are not told that she is a prostitute, but by her actions, it would seem to point in that direction.

And please understand that this is not love, this is lust and that was the life of Samson, the lust of the flesh, it controlled his life instead of the Spirit of God controlling his life.

Why is this such a problem for Samson and for us at times?

Because we don't love righteousness, the things of God more than we do with the satisfaction of the flesh!

God has created things with beauty, and we are drawn to them, that is not the problem. The problem comes when that love of beauty is without a corresponding love of righteousness!

Remember the story of Adam and Eve. God had placed them in a beautiful garden. Everything was theirs for the taking except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God said not to partake of the fruit of that tree, which I am sure was very beautiful!

And we know what happened. Adam and Eve loved the beauty, they desired to have that fruit, it was good for them they thought, and, because they did not love righteousness they gave into their fleshly desires and brought sin into the world!

It is as John reminds us in I John 2:15-17, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”**

In other words, who or what are you going to love more? Are you going to love righteousness, doing the right thing, following God or are you going to be drawn away by the lusts that this world is putting forth, dangling before you so that you can take a bite of it?

There is nothing wrong with beauty, but we need to clearly understand that with that beauty the Devil places those temptations before us, they are entwined together you might say!

But without righteousness, we can allow that beauty to draw us away from God. And when I speak of righteousness, I am talking about doing what is right according to what God has said in His Word, not how I feel or what I want to do, that is not righteousness!

And when we don't have that kind of righteousness, we will do just like Adam and Eve did, we will break the laws of God so that we can have what we desire, not what God desires, and we see that here with Samson.

I think we can clearly see that what Samson was involved with was not righteousness, but his desire to satisfy the flesh!

Let me show you what I mean, besides the obvious of him falling in lust with this Philistine woman, or really, a prostitute!

First of all, this Valley of Sorek is the valley of choice red grapes. Think about that for a minute. Samson was a Nazirite and thus, he should have stayed clear of this valley, but he didn't. How often do we go into those valleys that we should stay clear? What a lesson to learn here. Walk in righteousness and not in the flesh!

And that is not the end of it.

Like I have said, Samson falls in love with a Philistine woman named Delilah. Her name comes from the Hebrew root that speaks of making poor or to impoverish!

Isn't that interesting?

That is what she will do with Samson and she will take whatever he will give to her and steal it away!

Folk's, what Delilah's do you have in your life that are robbing you, making you impoverished spiritually speaking? Because whatever it is, if you give into it, it will take whatever you give to it! Be careful, be on guard, do not go down to the enemy's camp, don't go where you don't belong and don't go after things that will leave you spiritually impoverished!

And think about this, how many people call their daughters Delilah? I don't know any and for good reason! What a lesson to learn here. Walk in righteousness and not in the flesh!

And what we see here, again, is the weakness of Samson's flesh, a woman, and that would finally break him, Samson will fall and fail at the hands of a woman named Delilah.

This is another example of the pain and ruin that came into Samson's life because he did not guard his heart. He did not walk in righteousness.

When the Philistines find out what is happening, that Samson is going after one of their own, they hire her as sort of a hit man or in this case, hit woman, to find out where Samson's power came from and how they could overcome his great strength.

That is why I have said that Samson did not look that strong, he was probably an average looking guy because they want to know where his strength came from. If he looked like Arnold Schwarzenegger, they would have known it was because he was so strong, but that was not Samson!

And here's the thing. As much as Samson lusted after Delilah, Delilah was not in love with Samson. She was more interested in the profit that she could make off of Samson by coming against him, what she would get in return for her information, ***MONEY!***

These 1,100 shekels made up more than 140 pounds of silver! And it seems as you read this that she was going to get 1,100 shekels from each of the five lords of the Philistines!

Thus, Delilah was more in love with money and she was going to take from Samson, making him poor, impoverish him spiritually speaking!

That is what sin will do in our lives and we will see that played out for us as we get to the end of our study this morning.

But what we see here with Samson, even though he did not even realize this because he was so consumed with self, is that Samson was – ***MOVING AWAY FROM GOD!***

And as that happens, make no mistake about it, the enemy will bring forth – ***THE TEMPTATION!***

VERSE 6

Keep in mind that Satan loves to tempt us to sin but also understand that Samson had placed himself in a situation that is causing him to be tempted. That is a foolish thing to do.

And think about this question that Delilah asked Samson, “**Please tell me where your great strength lies, and with what you may be bound to afflict you.**”

I don’t know but don’t you think that alarms should have been going off in Samson’s brain? I think so. Something is wrong here and Samson does not see it because the temptation is too strong for him and I think he was prideful as well. I don’t think Samson felt that this was a problem and we will see that in a few minutes with our next point.

And here’s the thing. If you play with fire, you are going to be burned and that is what is going to happen with Samson, he is going to let sin consume him, he is not seeking after righteousness but the satisfaction of his flesh, and thus, he is going to lose big time.

When Delilah said this to Samson, he should have fled for his life, but again, he didn’t. Paul reminds us in II Timothy 2:22, “**Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.**”

And The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, “**Shun youthful lusts and flee from them, and aim at and pursue righteousness (all that is virtuous and good, right living, conformity to the will of God in thought, word, and deed); [and aim at and pursue] faith, love, [and] peace (harmony and concord with others) in fellowship with all [Christians], who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.**”

That is what we have been talking about this morning, to pursue righteousness, seek after the things of God, and the things of the flesh, we are to flee from them!

You see, you don't play games with the enemy. You may think you are in control of the situation, and you may think that nothing can stop you.

But it will, these lessons are in here so we can learn from them and if you go down this path, if you don't pursue righteousness, you will become spiritually impoverished. Don't go down that path!

We have to understand that we are in a war and not playing games and thus, may we act accordingly, for as Proverbs 16:18 says, "**Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.**"

May we be wise in the Lord and walk accordingly!

And yes, through these temptations God will use them to test our faith. But we must be willing to seek after righteousness, to do those things that God has called us to do and avoid those things that God wants us to stay clear of.

For Samson, he put himself in this situation and I think he is pretty prideful in that he thought he could deal with this without a problem. But with this *TEMPTATION* we see what it does in the life of Samson, for we see – *THE LIE OF SAMSON!*

VERSES 7-9

First of all, why did Samson lie to her?

Because he knew what she was doing and thus, he was not going to succumb to this plan to be captured by the Philistines.

And, by his actions, Samson is just playing games with her, and like I have said, if you keep playing with fire, you will get burned!

When she asked what is the source of his strength and how can he be bound so that they may afflict him, Samson tells her, **“If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man.”**

This is how far away from God Samson is. Samson tells Delilah that she needs to get seven fresh bowstrings and tie him up with them and then he will be weak.

That was a lie. So now this man of God is lying to Delilah instead of running away from her.

Now some don't see this lie as a big deal, but to me, it is a huge deal because it just shows who you are following.

You may be taken back by that, maybe offended by that, but I will even make it more convicting. If you lie, you are following Satan for Satan is the father of lies. Now don't get mad at me, that is what Jesus said to the Jewish religious leaders.

Let me show you what I mean. We are told in John 8:44-45, **“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.”**

Notice the contrast that Jesus is giving these Jewish religious leaders. The Devil is a liar, that is his natural language, he does not speak the truth. So if we are lying are we following Jesus? No, we are not!

Is that speaking of any lie?

I believe it is. Think about it. If Jesus speaks the truth, if there is no darkness in Him at all, and a lie is darkness, then if we are lying, if we are not telling the truth, we are not following Jesus but the Devil. We are not imitating Christ, we are following the Devil and his language – a lie!

Now some may feel it is not as simple as that, but I think it is. How can you say you are following Jesus if you are lying? You can't!

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

To sin is to fall short. Sinning doesn't just mean committing crimes, like theft and murder. It also means *not* doing things that are good. To sin is to miss the standard of perfection set forth by God and lived out by Jesus.

Now that we have a working definition of sin, is lying a sin?

The Bible has a lot to say about lying. It's helpful to look at a few specific verses in context.

God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill. (Numbers 23:19)

God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. (Hebrews 6:18)

These two verses reveal that not only does God not lie, but it is impossible for God to lie. If sinning is missing God's mark, then we miss God's mark of not lying when we tell falsehoods.

This points to an answer to our question of whether lying is a sin:

There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community. (Proverbs 6:16-19)

Interestingly, these verses differentiate between “a lying tongue” and “a false witness who pours out lies.” The Lord was so vehemently against lies in general and false witness (gossiping, lying in court, lying in a way that hurts others) that Proverbs includes them as two out of seven things that the Lord hates.

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44)

These harsh words from Jesus were directed toward Pharisees who were accusing him of lying about His identity, and claiming they were true followers of God. The important part for us to note, however, is what Jesus says about the devil.

Jesus calls the devil “the father of lies” and He says that those who lie “belong to [their] father, the devil.” If lies are directly related to the devil, we had better take note. . . .

If we are attempting to follow in Christ’s steps, and God does not lie, it follows that to live like Jesus did, we should not lie.

Even when Jesus was taken before a corrupt court, He refused to lie. He continued to tell the truth that He is the Son of God. For this, He was put to death. At the time, it probably seemed to many that He should have lied and gone free. But the fact that Jesus told the truth even in this terrible situation is the very reason that we have the hope of salvation. His truth-telling paved the way for Him to conquer sin and death.

Sometimes we might think a lie will bring about a greater good. But the Bible never says, “Don’t lie unless you think it will be beneficial.” It is a blunt, unequivocal “don’t.”

Jesus didn't lie, and He saved the world. The martyr Stephen in Acts 6-7 could have lied about being a Christian, but he didn't, and he was stoned to death for it. However, God used this to send the Gospel to the Gentiles and even reach out to the apostle Paul, at the time one of the onlookers was condemning Stephen to death. Meanwhile, Stephen received a glorious vision of heaven right before his death and went to be with his God.

Ultimately, lying shows that we do not trust God to take care of us. In our own pride, we think we can maneuver a situation by ourselves toward our best interest, or even for the greater good.

Instead, we must cling to the truth, do what God has commanded, and trust Him to take care of the situation. . . .

. . . the Bible calls us to live in honest fellowship with one another and with God. In Ephesians 4:15 we find that 'speaking the truth in love' is a mark of spiritual maturity. God knows we can sin. But He offers something more: choosing truth instead of lies, and saying the truth in a way that builds others up.

Jesus calls Himself "the way and the *truth* and the life" (John 14:6, emphasis mine). As followers of Christ, let us follow that truth with all of our hearts.

- <https://bit.ly/3k5k6GF>

The question if you think that lying is okay is this, "***How big is your God?***" God can do anything; we just need to trust in Him and obey Him! You see, once you begin a walk down that path, where does it end? For Samson, he is going to continue on down this path and ultimately it is going to bring death and destruction to his life, as we will see.

We now see Delilah tie Samson up, and he allowed it, just playing games, playing with fire, thinking that he was in control.

And when she is done, she yells that the Philistines are upon him and he breaks those bowstrings and is freed and the secret of his strength is still a secret, at least at this point!

THE LIE OF SAMSON does not mean that these temptations will stop, not at all. And that brings us to our next point – ***THE TEMPTATIONS KEEP COMING!***

VERSES 10-14

As you read this aren't you amazed how Samson kept playing with fire here?

You know the old saying, "***Fool me once, shame on you, fool me twice, shame on me!***"

Samson is either fooled or again is just playing games and now Delilah is turning up the heat. And more the likely, the biggest issue for Samson was his lust of the flesh. It is controlling his life and no matter what, he was going to satisfy those fleshly desires he had with Delilah. But again, you will never be satisfied, there will always be more, bigger, better and the only true satisfaction will be in the Lord as we follow after Him in righteousness or doing what is right, what God has told us. But Samson is not doing that!

Notice how she turns up the heat on Samson. She is basically saying to him, "***Samson, how can you lie to me? Don't you know I love you? Now tell me what the secret of your strength is 'sugar cakes' and what can you be bound with that you will not be able to break free!***"

And what does he do here? He lies once again. He told her, "**If they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man.**"

Maybe he is just having fun now, but he does not realize that downward spiral he is in, he does not realize how far away from God he is moving!

This second plan is to bind Samson with new ropes, but again that does not work.

Now these could have taken place over a period of time, hopefully not one right after another. And as you look at the text, it was a period of time. But whatever the case, it was very dangerous!

And we see that Delilah does not give up, but she keeps coming at him and what a great lesson for us.

Don't give the enemy a foothold in your life to impoverish you. Don't play with the enemy because the enemy will not give up until he has destroyed you!

For Samson, again, I think he believed that he was in control, but he wasn't!

And keep in mind that temptations will come upon us, the enemy really never gives up. That is not the issue. The issue for us is that we, like Samson, don't place ourselves in situations that will cause us to compromise our faith.

Let me give you a couple of examples in my own life.

For years I worked as a Registered Nurse in the Intensive Care Units at hospitals. And they would have their annual Christmas party. The problem was that they did not invite the spouses, only the employees.

Now many may not see that as a big deal, but I did. You see, they had food, they had dancing and they had alcohol, and why they had alcohol I will never know, but that to me is a dangerous combination, especially when your spouse is not with you.

So I would decline the invitation and I told them the reason, that I would not go unless my wife could go with me.

You see, I did not want to put myself in a situation where my faith could be compromised.

Also, as a pastor, I will not counsel any women alone, I always bring my wife with me. I think that is just being wise.

Think about it. The reason many times they are coming to me is because of problems with their husband. Thus, I listen to them, I am compassionate to them, and their husband isn't, and that can lead to trouble.

So my wife and I counsel together and it works and it is a blessing to have her there at my side, for the wisdom she can share in these meetings.

All I am saying is that we need to be wise and not place ourselves in situations that will compromise our faith. Don't put yourself in a situation where you will be tempted, I don't care how pure you make it sound, because, like Samson, you will get burned. And think about it, don't we have plenty of temptations in our lives already, don't put more of them in there!

As we move on here, we see the third time she is pestering him, badgering him wanting to know the secret of his strength!

And Delilah is told by Samson that if his hair is braided into seven braids, he will be just like any other man.

This too was a lie. Samson is guilty of compromise; he should have just told her it was none of her business and exit stage left. But he doesn't and each time he is getting closer to telling her the truth, the secret of his strength!

As Christians, if someone asks you to go out for a drink or to do something that you know is wrong, don't tell them, *"I'm too tired"* or *"I don't feel good."*

Just tell them that you are a Christian and that you love the Lord and don't want to feed your flesh. They will never ask you to go out for a drink or probably anything else again.

But if you make an excuse why you can't go, then they will keep asking you until you finally give in and it will become to you a Delilah, leaving you spiritually impoverished.

Learn the lesson; don't tease the enemy, for the enemy can destroy you.

Draw close to God and the Devil will flee!

So we have seen that – ***THE TEMPTATIONS KEEP COMING*** and that will finally lead to the complete compromise of Samson – ***GIVING INTO TEMPTATIONS!***

VERSES 15-18

As I have said in the beginning of our study, Samson is a riddle wrapped up in a mystery inside an enigma. A powerful man before men and weak before women and it brought him down.

Here is a guy who could kill 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey and yet fall to the nagging and tears of a woman.

We don't know how long this took, all this pestering day in and day out, but she kept coming back until he finally gave in and he spills the beans. He tells her the secret to his strength!

He told her, **“No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazarite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.”**

Now does this mean that those who have long hair are in the will of God and those that are bald are not?

Of course not!

The strength of Samson was not in his hair, but in his vow, that he was separated unto God. His hair was just a symbol of that vow.

And at this point, I am not sure how, but Delilah knew that Samson was telling her the truth. And the men she was doing business with knew it too for they brought her the money for her information!

Also, what I want you to see here is that Samson knew his calling, that he was to be consecrated to God all his life, a Nazarite.

He also knew that obedience was the secret to his strength and that obedience was to God, not to his flesh.

But what we see here is that Samson tells her that if you shave my head, cut off my hair, then I will be weak like any other man.

In other words, Samson tells Delilah all that is in his heart.

And what we see here is that his faithfulness to his flesh was stronger than his faithfulness to God!

And, again, this lesson is for us as well. Are there things in our life, temptations that we are allowing in? If there are, be warned, because, like Samson, you will eventually give into those temptations!

It is as Jesus said in Luke 6:43-45, **“For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”**

Where is your heart at because wherever it is at, that is what will come flowing out of your life!

Here are some things that we should be thinking about in regard to how we are living out our faith, are we moving towards righteousness or are we allowing the flesh to control our lives.

First of all, are we allowing the world to desensitize us to its evil? Are things that once caused us to be embarrassed or shocked us but now we don't even blink when we see them or do them?

Make no mistake about it, the world wants to conform us to its image and God wants to transform our lives from the inside out! What are you filling your life with?

One writer put it like this. He wrote,

Conformity is an ever-present danger. I recently found myself considering it and thought of two ways that we can be conformed to this world - we can actively pursue the world and worldliness or we can simply be passive and allow the world a slow but steady eroding influence.

The first way to be conformed to the world, then, is to be drawn to it, to be enamored by it and to imitate it. This is a great temptation to many people and perhaps especially to young people who have been raised in Christian homes.

When I was a teenager I saw many of my friends get swept up in this kind of worldliness. We had all been raised in Christian families, but when my friends began to experience the independence of young adulthood, as they began to distance themselves from their parents, many decided they wanted to experience what the world had to offer.

So they studied how the world acted and acted that way. They studied how the world dressed and they dressed that way. In a hundred little ways they conformed to the world until they were indistinguishable from the world. Some eventually experienced a work of God to draw them back. Many others never did. They were deliberately completely conformed.

For most of us, though, the conforming power of the world comes in a much subtler form. We become conformed to the world by just lowering our guard, by neglecting to maintain a watchful demeanor, by failing to hold an offensive posture against the encroachment of the world. If full-out pursuing the world is the equivalent of being instantly crushed in a giant industrial mold, then this other kind of conformity is being slowly, slowly squeezed in that mold, one little crank at a time. Eventually both methods will conform you to the shape of the mold, but one will happen much slower - so slowly that you might not even notice some of the changes as they are taking place.

We can be conformed to the world this way through our *entertainment*, by not being cautious about what we see, hear, and read and about how much of it we consume. We can be conformed through our *education*, by being influenced too much by people who are opposed to God and too little by those who love him. We can be conformed through our *friendships*, maintaining our best and most formative relationships with unbelievers or outright antagonists. We can be conformed to the world through our *apathy*, neglecting God's ordinary means of grace dispensed through the local church, failing to engage in private and family worship.

And what happens? Over time, our understanding of our purpose is shaped by whatever is on the bestseller list instead of by what God says in his Word. Our understanding of the world's origins is set by the classroom instead of being measured against the Bible. Our understanding of sexuality owes more to movies or pornography than to the Creator of both our bodies and our sexuality. We are conformed slowly through carelessness, through lack of attention, through plain neglect. Where are you tempted to lower your guard? Where are you allowing the world just a crack into your heart and your mind? This may be the means through which you are being conformed to the world.

Worldliness is like gravity, always there, always pushing down on you, always exerting its influence on you. As a Christian you are charged with resisting it day by day. You must and you can. You must because your spiritual life and health depend on it. You can because you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit whose joy is to transform you by the Word of God into the image of the Son of God. Do not be conformed to this world!

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

Not only that, but where does our mind wander to when we have free time? Be careful and fill yourself up with the things of God. Paul put it like this in Philippians 4:8-9, **“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”**

Fill your mind up with the Word of God, let the Word of God dwell in your richly. Be careful what you are filling your mind with because if you fill your mind with the things of this world, you will not find that peace that only God and His Word can give to you!

And this goes along with what we are filling our minds with. What books are you reading? What movies or television shows are you watching?

Now think about that. Some of you may not like this but I think when you really think about it, you will understand why you are not finding the peace of God that you are looking for.

How many adulteries did you watch on television or in the movies last week? How many homosexual activities did you watch? And the list can go on. What are you filling your mind with? Be careful.

And this is important, and I don't want you to think I am being legalistic here or do I want you to be legalistic about this. But how often do you read your Bible?

I know that what is important to me I will make the time for! Are you making time to spend in God's Word so that you can hear from Him, so you can be guided by Him, so you can be corrected by Him, so you can live as He wants you to live?

Remember what we are told in II Timothy 3:16-17, "**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**"

May we not forget that, and may we fill ourselves up with the things of God and not give ourselves up to temptations because if we do, we will eventually give in to those temptations!

Let me illustrate it like this, because this is deadly, as we give into temptations. We are told,

In the Australian bush country grows a little plant called the “sundew.” It has a slender stem and tiny, round leaves fringed with hairs that glisten with bright drops of liquid as delicate as fine dew.

Woe to the insect, however, that dares to dance on it. Although its attractive clusters of red, white, and pink blossoms are harmless, the leaves are deadly.

The shiny moisture on each leaf is sticky and will imprison any bug that touches it.

As an insect struggles to free itself, the vibration causes the leaves to close tightly around it.

This innocent-looking plant then feeds on its victim.

- Our Daily Bread, December 11, 1992

That is temptation and as we are lured into it, we become trapped in it, and it is deadly.

Now, we may feel strong, like Samson, but he found out that he was weak and as we see Samson ***GIVING INTO TEMPTATION***, we will then see that – ***SIN BLINDS, BINDS AND GRINDS US!***

VERSES 19-21

I am not sure why Samson went after this woman, she was evil, but it was probably because she was beautiful and thus, he became blind to what she was doing to him.

We see here that she lulls him to sleep with the intention of having his hair cut off so the Philistines could capture him.

And, it then says she was tormenting him, really, I think she started tormenting him a long time ago and he was not aware of it or didn't care!

Thus, after he was asleep, she had the local Philistine barber come in and cut off his hair!

At this point, as Samson heard the commotion he awoke and thought he would be able to do as he did before, but his strength had left him, he was like any other man!

You see, Samson had reached a point in his life where he did not even recognize that the Lord had departed from him. He had walked so far away from the Lord, was so accustomed to his sin that he did not even recognize that the Lord was gone, the power, the strength that he once had in the Lord was not with him any longer!

We are told in II Chronicles 15:2, “**. . . The LORD is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.**”

Samson found that out the hard way! You see folk's, as you play games with the enemy; it is possible that you can be totally unaware that the anointing of God is no longer upon your life. Don't play with fire!

And like I have said, there was nothing magical about Samson's hair. It was just a symbol of what his life was to be about, dedicated to the Lord. And he had broken this vow many times before but now God was going to give him what he wanted, a life apart from God!

So the Philistines capture Samson and they put out his eyes.

He then is brought to Gaza to work as a slave, like an animal, grinding at the millstone, which was a job that was usually reserved for a donkey or mule.

Here is this mighty man of God who has been brought down to the pit because he did not take God seriously and now he was suffering the consequences of his actions. God was very merciful with Samson, very gracious but now judgment came and as we will see when we finish this story, this judgment was to bring Samson back to God if Samson would allow it.

And this is our last point we will be looking at this morning – ***SIN BLINDS, BINDS AND GRINDS US!***

And I want to spend a few minutes looking at this because this is what happens as we give into temptation and we allow sin into our lives. This is the result!

You see, as you allow sin to continue in your life, it will begin to ***blind*** you to the truths of God. And as you continue down that path you will awaken one day and not even realize that you are blind, that the anointing of God is gone in your life. And you will become aware of this only when the enemy has overtaken you.

We see that in Samson's life as he continued in his downward spiral into sin not even aware that the Lord had departed from him until it was too late, and the enemy had defeated him.

There are many Christians today who are blinded to the truths of God and are walking around, being guided by the world. And because they are using the world as their ***Seeing Eye Dog***, to lead them where they should go, we see them involved in all kinds of activities that are contrary to the Word of God.

We also see that sin ***binds*** us by its power and places us in bondage. Sin has the power to bind us and make us ineffective in our walk. Samson had bronze fetters applied to his hands and feet. The enemy made him immobile.

But God says that He has broken those chains that bind us and has set us free through Jesus Christ. We should no longer be slaves to sin and carry that heavy weight around with us.

In Hebrews chapter 12 Paul says, **“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”** Hebrews 12:1.

You see, you would never run a race carrying weights around with you. Thus, Paul is saying that sin in our lives is like a heavy weight that entangles us and makes us ineffective in the race we are in.

Remember what Jesus said in John 8:36, **“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”** And I am so thankful for that, that Jesus has set us free from the bondage of sin!

And we also see that sin *grinds* at our lives and makes us miserable. What a miserable place to be in - to have sin just grinding at your life.

Samson knew exactly what it felt like for he was the one at the millstone grinding the wheat, a job that was usually done by a mule or donkey. And it must have just eaten him up on the inside. This was a constant reminder of his failure before God and his people.

In Psalm 32, David is confessing his sin with Bathsheba, and David shares with us what it was like to live in sin. How sin affected his entire life. He says, **“When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into drought of summer.”** Psalm 32:3-4.

David is saying that as he lived in unconfessed sin, that his whole being was affected. When he sinned against God not only did it affect his spiritual relationship with God, but it also affected his physical well-being. His strength was taken away and he felt old and weak. His life was dry and barren, and the joy of the Lord was gone!

And for one-year David tried to hide this sin, but God was working on him the whole time. God was convicting David of this sin and trying to draw him back to Him.

God was breaking David of his condition, but like us, it takes time. David fought God and kept silent about his sin.

But under the grinding of this constant convection, David came to see his sin and repent of it.

Psalm 51, also speaking of this time in David's life, we read, "**Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which you have broken may rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. . . .The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart - these O God, you will not despise.**" Psalm 51:8-9, 17.

David is saying that the Lord's conviction upon his life has brought him to a place of brokenness. That he recognized his sin and has confessed it before the Lord. And he asks God to make him holy, to cleanse him as white as snow, to restore that joy that he once had with the Lord.

And when David acknowledged his sin, Psalm 32:5 says that the Lord, "**. . . Forgave the iniquity of My sin.**" And the Hebrew implies that as soon as David confessed in his heart his sin, God was standing there with forgiveness.

Samson was a broken man at this point in his life. He had great potential to be used by God to deliver Israel from the Philistines but because he let his flesh control his life, he was now a captive; **BLIND**, in **BONDAGE** and **GRINDING** at the millstone.

But keep in mind that God did not bring him to this place to leave him there.

In our last study in the life of Samson we will be looking at – **THE GRACE OF GOD!**

I don't know where you are at this morning, if sin in your life has blinded you, has you bound and it is just grinding you, but please understand you can repent before God and receive that forgiveness that only He can give. And, as we will see next time, it is not because we deserve it, it is because of His wonderful grace!

Let me close with these words from Paul in Romans 6:1-2, "**What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?**"

May we learn the lesson and seek after righteousness, doing the right things, following after God!

Don't betray yourself by falling into sin like Samson did, and he really walked into sin. If the Son has set you free you are free indeed!