





SERIES: What's Holding You Back?

Week 6: Samson – Flaws Galore

<p>Connect</p>  <p>5 – 10 min</p>	<p>Just for fun: Meet 3 year old Arat in this 5 minute video from the tv show “Little Big Shots”. He’s super strong, can climb anything, and he’s got an impressive ponytail! youtu.be/0cXT5sjlAU8</p> <p>OR</p> <p>What’s the longest your hair has ever been?</p>
<p>Gratitude</p>  <p>10 – 15 min</p>	<p>Focus on faithfulness. Give thanks for someone who has been a faithful friend or influence.</p> <p>Unfortunately, human faithfulness is always fallible. God’s faithfulness is totally reliable. Give Him praise and worship for this. Song suggestions you could choose from* include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forever (Chris Tomlin) youtu.be/7eZoibrmDik • You Never Let Go (Matt Redman) youtu.be/NM14VZVu0og • You Will Never Run (Rend Collective) youtu.be/RvvRsJgMfaA • One Thing Remains (Brian Johnson) youtu.be/OKv7n_mvZTc • Great is Thy Faithfulness (Shane & Shane version) youtu.be/kNScR2AXZgU <p>The linked videos above all include lyrics. Lyrics are also attached to this document to use with an audio playlist (eg. Spotify, iTunes) or live musicians.</p> <p><i>* Definitely don't try and do all of them, that's not the idea!</i></p>
<p>Discover</p>  <p>and</p> <p>Act</p>  <p>35 mins</p>	<p><u>Series Context</u></p> <p><i>What's holding you back? Most of us experience a lack of confidence or competence at different times or in different situations. But 2 Corinthians Chapter 3, verses 4-6 remind us that our confidence and our competence to be God's good news bearers comes from Jesus, not from ourselves.</i></p> <p><i>So what's holding you back?</i></p> <p><i>In this series we look at some less familiar characters from the Old Testament. We'll see how their stories can encourage us to have confidence in God and not hold back on what he wants to do in us and through us.</i></p> <p>THIS WEEK: Samson – Flaws Galore</p> <p>(See attached teaching and discussion guide)</p>

For Kids Slot or family devotions:

Preview first to check suitability for your particular kids. Work out what message you want to highlight at the end.

- *Samson Bible Story in Lego* youtu.be/XBvcJO2PgY0 (2:40 mins), **OR**
- *The Story of Samson* youtu.be/TeMBfTNCCiw (5:50 mins) Uses a lot of humour. More suitable for older children but probably OK for some younger kids **OR**
- *Samson, A Judge in Israel*. This cartoon stays close to the bible text of Judges 13 -16 youtu.be/ykakRBXtSOE (11:19 mins)

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Samson – Flaws Galore

Judges 13 - 16

These notes are intended to be read aloud, pausing for Bible reading, discussion & prayer as you go.

1. Introduction

The story of Samson takes up 4 chapters of the Book of Judges, so of course we won't be able to cover it all today in depth. If you haven't read Judges 13-16 recently, it would be great to do that in the coming week. The story details are extremely interesting, and it's actually quite an easy read. (You could also listen to an audio version on Bible Gateway site <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/> or via the Bible Gateway app. If you have YouVersion Bible on your device that also gives you an option to have the bible read aloud to you.)

For today though, let's just get a high level overview of the story to get started.

- Watch the 2 ½ minute animation *Samson Bible Story in Lego* youtu.be/XBvcJO2PqY0

OR

- Take turns to read aloud the "Samson Story in Summary" attached to these notes. (*This will take about 4 minutes.*)

2. Think About It

The Bible makes clear that Samson was created by God for a special purpose.

READ: Judges 13: 1-5

- What was Samson's purpose?

The Bible also makes clear that the Spirit of the Lord was at work through him.

READ: Judges 13: 24-25, 14:5-6, 14:19, 15:12-15, 16:27-30

Yet Samson has flaws galore. He's self-centred, arrogant, and a slave to his passions. He's belligerent, creating rather than calming conflict. He is shown to be angry, vengeful and violent. He violated all of the requirements of his call to be set apart as a Nazirite. All these qualities and choices could well have held him back from fulfilling God's ordained purpose.

The empowerment of the Holy Spirit was not an endorsement of Samson's character or human choices. He was not free from the consequences of his choices. However, God did use Samson to take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines. Whether Samson's motives and actions were right or not, the Lord God of Israel was shown to be stronger than the god of the Philistines. Even though his people and their leaders had turned away from him, the Lord God remained committed to them.

It is worth noting that it isn't just Samson who is obviously flawed but still enabled to be a crucial part of the mission of God. Look at the opening verse of Judges 13.

"Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, so the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years."

Again. Again they did evil in the eyes of the Lord. It's a recurring pattern, but God keeps loving his people, calling them to repentance and providing them with a way to be reconciled and journey with him. It's the same today.

- "In the end, Samson understood the true source of his strength, but he never understood his true purpose."
 - What do you think of this statement? Refer back to Judges 16:28.
 - Do you think people pray this kind of prayer today? What are the consequences if the person praying claims to be a follower of Jesus? What about if the praying person is not yet a Christian?
- "God's will was done, but the many blessings Samson might have seen were never realized."
 - Have you been aware of this principle at work in your world?

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4. So.... What's holding you back?

“Such confidence we have through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (2 Corinthians 3:4-6)

- If people haven't watched Ian Freestone's 3 min video **“Skinny Samson”** that was included in the Ruach e-Newsletter on 12.10.17 you might like to watch it during your meeting if you have time.
youtu.be/OkNRQPmaDiU (Or encourage people to check it out at home.)
- Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to move for anyone who feels they may be being held back by things such as:
 - The type of people you are hanging out with or being influenced by
 - Anger management or desire for revenge
 - Not understanding your true purpose
 - Forgetting that you are “skinny Samson” and your strength comes from God.
 - Anything else that the Spirit is prompting you on through this look at Samson

5. Bonus Bits

For people to check out at home:

- **Bible Project's “Read Scripture: Judges”** youtu.be/kOYy8iCfJ4
This is a 7½ minute video that is very helpful to get your head around the structure and purpose of the book of Judges.
- Some adults and youth may also enjoy the videos that we recommended for Kids Slot or Family devotions. Each is a slightly different length and style. (The first one is the one recommended at the beginning of the teaching notes.)
 - *Samson Bible Story in Lego* youtu.be/XBvcJO2PqY0 (2:40 mins)
 - *The Story of Samson* youtu.be/TeMBfTNCCiw (5:50 mins) Uses a lot of humour. More suitable for older children but probably OK for some younger kids
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THE SAMSON STORY IN SUMMARY

By Katherine Hawkins

Judges 13

Verse 1 tells us, "Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, so the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years."

An angel appears to a childless woman, the wife of Manoah, and promises her a son. He is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. One of the stipulations is that his hair must never be cut. His mother is also told that her son will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines. Manoah asks God if the angel could come again so he too could speak to him. This happens. In due course Samson is born. In verses 24 and 25 we are told that Samson grew and was blessed by the Lord, and that the Spirit of the Lord began to stir in him.

Judges 14

Samson gives his parents attitude. He insists he wants to marry a certain Philistine woman in Timnah. While he is on the way to Timnah with his parents, Samson confronts a young lion and tears it apart with his bare hands, leaving the carcass on the side of the road. On a subsequent trip he sees that bees have made a hive in it, and he takes some of the honey. He uses this scene as the basis for a riddle, which he uses to set up a bet with thirty of the Philistine men who are supposed to be his new companions.

That all turns sour. The men and Samson's wife get extremely upset about not being able to solve the riddle. His wife betrays Samson's trust and tells the men the answer to the riddle. This means Samson loses the bet and owes the men 30 sets of clothes. So he goes to a neighbouring town, kills 30 Philistine men and gives their clothes to the men who won the bet. Burning with anger he goes back to his father's home and his wife is given to one of his companions.

Judges 15

Samson wants to go back and see his ex-wife. When her father won't let him, he gets mad and he is determined to seek revenge and really harm the Philistines. He cruelly uses foxes to burn the grain fields, vineyards and olive groves of the Philistines. They retaliate by burning his wife and her father to death. Samson fights back, slaughtering many. His own people from Judah can't believe what he is doing, and want to hand him over to their Philistine rulers for punishment. But the strength given to him by the Spirit of the Lord meant that he could not be bound. Instead, he is able to kill a thousand men using the jawbone of a donkey. He is determined not to succumb to the enemy. He goes on to lead Israel for 20 years in the days of the Philistines.

Judges 16

Samson goes to Gaza to visit a prostitute overnight. The people of Gaza plot to wait until dawn to kill him, and wait at the locked city gate. But locked gates didn't keep Samson in. In the middle of the night he got up to leave and tore the city gates and their posts out of the ground and carried them away.

Sometime later he fell in love with a woman called Delilah. The Philistines approach her to help them find out the secret of his great strength and how they can overpower him. After much badgering and giving false answers on 3 occasions, he finally gives in and tells her that if his hair is cut he would become as weak as any other man. Delilah betrays him to the Philistines, who come in at night, shave his head, overpower him and take him captive to Gaza. For good measure they also gouge out his eyes. His eyes are permanently damaged, but his hair begins to grow back.

The rulers of the Philistines celebrate their victory in the temple, and wheel Samson out to entertain them. He leans against the pillars for support, and offers up a prayer to God to strengthen him one more time so that he can take revenge on the Philistines. God hears his prayer and Samson pushes down the central pillars, causing the temple to collapse, killing all the people in it, including himself. He killed more Philistines when he died than while he lived. His family took his body back to be buried in the tomb of his father.

House Church Guide



Song Lyrics for Week 6

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Forever

Chris Tomlin © 2001 sixsteps Music

Give thanks to the Lord our God and King,
His love endures forever.
For He is good He is above all things,
His love endures forever.
Sing Praise, Sing Praise.

With a mighty hand and outstretched arm,
His love endures forever.
For the life that's been reborn,
His love endure forever.
Sing Praise, Sing Praise.

Chorus

Forever God is faithful,
Forever God is strong.
Forever God is with us,
Forever

From the rising to the setting sun,
His love endures forever.
And by the grace of God we will carry on,
His love endures forever.
Sing Praise, Sing Praise

Chorus (repeat)

Sing Praise, Sing Praise.(repeat)

Chorus (repeat)

You Never Let Go

Beth Redman, Matt Redman © 2005 Thankyou Music

Even though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death
Your perfect love is casting out fear
And even when I'm caught in the middle of
the storms of this life
I won't turn back
I know You are near

And I will fear no evil
For my God is with me
And if my God is with me
Whom then shall I fear?
Whom then shall I fear?

Chorus

Oh no, You never let go
Through the calm and through the storm
Oh no, You never let go
In every high and every low
Oh no, You never let go
Lord, You never let go of me

And I can see a light that is coming for the
heart that holds on
A glorious light beyond all compare
And there will be an end to these troubles
But until that day comes
We'll live to know You here on the earth

Chorus

You Will Never Run

Rend Collective © Thankyou Music

You will never run away
You're forever mine
You will never run away
You're by my side

Love wide as galaxies
Love deeper than the sea
Countless as all infinity
Love like a shooting star
Tearing apart the dark
Shining for all eternity
Shining for all eternity

Chorus:

You will never run away
You're forever mine
You will never run away
You're by my side
You will never run away
You forever shine
You will never run away
You're by my side

Love stronger than the grave
Love rolled the stone away
Rising with endless majesty
Love takes us by the hand
Love is the wildest dance
You are the joy and fight in me
You are the joy and fight in me

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Chorus

Hearts open wide
Hands lifted high
Over the clouds up into the blue sky
Hearts open wide
Hands lifted high
Over the clouds up into the blue sky

Chorus

One Thing Remains

Brian Johnson, Christa Black, Jeremy Riddle 2010 Bethel Music

Higher than the mountains that I face
Stronger than the power of the grave
Constant in the trial and the change
One thing... Remains

Chorus

Your love never fails, never gives up
Never runs out on me (repeat)
Your love

On and on and on and on it goes
It overwhelms and satisfies my soul
And I never, ever, have to be afraid
Cause this one thing remains

Chorus

In death, in life, I'm confident and
covered by, the power of Your great love
My debt is paid, there's nothing that
Can separate my heart from Your great love

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Thomas Obediah Chisholm, William Marion Runyan. Words © 1923. Renewed 1951 Hope Publishing Company

Great is Thy faithfulness
O God my Father
There is no shadow
Of turning with Thee
Thou changest not
Thy compassions they fail not
As Thou hast been
Thou forever wilt be

Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning

New mercies I see
All I have needed
Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness
Lord unto me

Summer and winter
Springtime and harvest
Sun moon and stars
In their courses above
Join with all nature
In manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness
Mercy and love

Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning
New mercies I see
All I have needed
Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness
Lord unto me

Pardon for sin
And a peace that endureth
Thy own dear presence
To cheer and to guide
Strength for today
And bright hope for tomorrow
Blessings all mine
With ten thousand beside

Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning
New mercies I see
All I have needed
Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Lord unto thee.