



BAEWATCH

GRACE TO SAVE US FROM A HOOK UP CULTURE

ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEXT STEPS:

- Downtown Launch, February 25, 6:30PM, Knox Church
- Baby Dedication, March 11, 10:30PM Vi Juba Theatre
- Leaders Lab, March 15, 6:30 Knox Church

PRAY TOGETHER FOR

- The people you will invite to Downtown.
- Mosaic Downtown plans and strategies.
- A better perspective in relationships.

GOAL FOR THIS STUDY:

To always remember who we are and what God is preparing us for.

I Corinthians 15:10 NLT, *But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me...*

ICE BREAKER: Have every attendee write on a notecard one “story” of a dumb mistake they have made in the past. After writing, put the cards in a bowl and have each person pick one out, read it and guess whose it was.

OPENING: In God’s eyes, we are all special...so special that He was willing to give up His son to die on the cross for your salvation and mine. We are special; but unfortunately, that is the first thing we forget about when we are in situations we don’t like. We forget who we are, and in some instances, we even give up who are just to please someone we like or someone who likes us; we’re willing to sacrifice what God has for us because we don’t have the patience to wait for it; we throw away our tomorrow for a few minutes of pleasure. What do you remember from last Sunday’s sermon on the life of Samson in Judges 13-16?

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES. That special strength that Samson has was part God’s plan to use him to deliver the people of Israel from the power of the Philistines, their enemy. We all have different strength—you may not be like Samson who can kill a lion with your bare hands; but you have strengths that God gave you for His purpose and glory; and so long as you use your strengths for His purpose, for His glory and for everyone’s benefit, you are undefeatable! But once you misuse your strength and your gift, your greatest strengths become your greatest weaknesses. With all that strength that Samson had, he used it to build a reputation as an extremely strong and fierce enemy of the Philistines to get what he wanted. And in doing that, it highlighted an even greater weakness in his life...his weakness with women. Do you remember what Pastor said about the two kinds of weaknesses?

PATTERNS AND POTENTIAL. Whether married or looking for someone to marry or date, we must look for patterns and not just potential. While potential is good, it can only be drawn out through patterns. Patterns are what make people reach their potential. What negative patterns in a partner (or future partner) should you be aware of? What good patterns make one attractive? What negative patterns do you have? What positive patterns must you develop?

REBOUNDS AND REVENGE. Right after a messy marriage, Samson, in Judges 16:1, saw a prostitute and went to her house to spend the night. It was a rebound. Samson did not have the maturity to address an issue in his life which resulted in this rebound. A person who is growing in Lord seeks to use failures as lessons for growth and change. Rebounds and revenge will only make matters worse. How can we know whether we are on a rebound? What must we develop in us to avoid rebounds?

CYCLES AND CONSEQUENCES. Judges 16:4, *Sometime later, Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah...* The enemy have tried and failed to discover the source of his strength; but those of you who know the whole story, this love affair with Delilah led to his final downfall. What transpired in this part of Samson’s life are classic examples of not learning a lesson well and not learning who to trust. Do you remember the process how Delilah discovered Samson’s source of strength?

RESTORED AND STAND. Judges 16:22, *But before long, his hair began to grow back.* Someone once said, “When you are down to nothing, God is up to something!” That’s what happened to Samson—he was given strength for a purpose, but he squandered God’s gift, and forgot his purpose; and when he lost everything, that was when he recaptured His purpose and His strength. No matter what you’ve done in the past that led you to where you are now, as long as there is breath in your body, God is not done with you yet! God is not mad at you, He is mad about you! And He wants you to restore what the enemy has taken away from you!

Connection and Action

Questions to promote conversation and connection

See opening Activity/Ice Breaker

Bible and Belief

Questions to help believers develop a biblical point of view.

Throughout his life Samson broke his Nazirite vows. Why do you believe Samson had such little regard for his vows and the way his parents were trying to raise him? How were Samson's decisions self-centered?

Read Judges 14:4. Even though Samson was making poor decisions God was still using him. How has God used some of your mistakes and bad choices for His greater purpose?

Samson had a weakness for women. This eventually led to his downfall. What steps can believers take to protect themselves against areas where they are weak?

Read Judges 16:20-22. Samson took for granted that God would always be with him no matter how he acted. Read Romans 6:1. How can believers gauge if they are truly seeking forgiveness or just using God's grace to live how they want?

Read Judges 16:28. Finally, at the end of Samson's life he cried out to God. Read Hebrews 11:32. Samson is mentioned for his faith. What can you learn about God and His desire to use you despite your mistakes?

Growing in Leadership

Questions to help people grow as leaders.

If you could rewrite Samson's story what would his life look like if he truly lived to honor God? What great impact could he have had?

As you read over the life of Samson it is easy to say, "I would never waste opportunities like he did". If you were able to talk with Samson at a young age what life lessons would you like for him to learn?

We all know people who seem to have every opportunity to succeed placed right in front of them and yet they make self-destructive decisions. In what ways can the blessing of great potential and success be a downfall for some?