

Faith or Failure? A Biblical Tale

1. Warm up: Pastor Tandy spoke of a theater her family visited in Alpine, Texas, to watch movies, especially Marvel movies. What is your favorite movie and why?
2. If you could be any superhero, who would you choose and why?
3. Tandy shared an overview of the book of Judges, including a spiral that gave a visual explanation of what happened with each judge.



- a. As you look back on your own life, can you identify that same cycle at any point? If so, share when that was and if you're comfortable, share the circumstances around it and how God has used it in your life.
 - b. Read Romans 8:28-39, as printed on p. 2. How do these verses related to the experience you just shared? How do they relate to Samson?
4. To remind ourselves of Samson's basic story, lets read the excerpts from Judges 13 and 16 found on p. 3.
 5. What was the significance of Samson being a Nazarite? If you're not familiar with the term, have someone Google it and read a the group a brief description.
 6. We see four judges listed in the book of Hebrews calling them heroes of our faith, including Samson, who was arguably the worst of them. Why would God include Samson in this list?
 7. Compare and contrast the difference between faith and being faithful. Can you have faith and NOT be faithful? Give examples of what that would look like.
 8. Here is the curious thing about Samson: He's chosen by God, but he's entirely ungodly. Samson marries a "pagan" – which the Old Testament repeatedly declares to be a death-penalty offense. He invariably takes excessive revenge. And he is not all

interested in helping the Lord. He delivers the Israelites from the Philistines not out of any passion for his people. On the contrary, he prefers Philistine women, and seems to be partying with Philistine men. The only reason he overthrows the Philistines is that he is seeking personal revenge. He is entirely self-interested. Yet we see in the story of Samson that God continues to bless him with incredible strength, even though Samson does not acknowledge God.

- a. Why do you think God does this?
 - b. Have you ever known someone who God has blessed and wonder why? Share your experience with the group.
9. Judges 21:25 says, “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.” What do you believe is the significance of that verse? Why do you think the writer pointed out there was no king?
 10. What did you learn about Samson and/or the book of Judges that you did not know? Why do you think this book is included in scripture?
 11. To sum up our conversation, what do you think we can learn from Samson?

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Please take the LifeJourney Pride Day survey found at:
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Romans 8:28-39

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Judges 13: 1-5; 24

1 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.

2 A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was childless, unable to give birth. **3** The angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, “You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son. **4** Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean. **5** You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines.”

24 The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the Lord blessed him with great strength

Judges 16:4-6; 15-22

4 Sometime later, Samson fell in love with a woman whose name was Delilah. **5** The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, “See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels[a] of silver.”

6 So Delilah said to Samson, “Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued.” **15** Then she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when you won’t confide in me? **16** *With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was sick to death of it.* **17** So he told her everything. “No razor has ever been used on my head,” he said, “because I have been a Nazirite dedicated to God from my mother’s womb. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man.”

18 When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines, “Come back once more; he has told me everything.” So the rulers of the Philistines returned with the silver in their hands. **19** After putting him to sleep on her lap, she called for someone to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him.[c] And his strength left him. **20** Then she called, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!” He awoke from his sleep and thought, “I’ll go out as before and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the Lord had left him.

21 Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding grain in the prison. **22** But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.