

Samson and the Riddle of Grace

Samson was a man born to serve God. Yet even this prophesied leader failed over and over again. Sound familiar? Whether in our words or our deeds, in things we've done or left undone, we all fail to do everything that God requires of us. See God's grace at work in the story of his imperfect servant Samson and be assured that God's grace is always bigger than our failures.

AWARENESS Before listening reflect on what you already know or understand about topics we'll cover in the episode.

- Have you ever made a sincere promise, but failed to follow through? What happened?
- How do you define grace? Identify an example of God's grace in your life.



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE: [Samson and the Riddle of Grace](#)

READ [Judges 13-16](#)

REFLECTION After listening, consider the following questions:

- In *Judges for You*, Timothy Keller notes that unlike the stories of previous judges, in the case of Samson, Israel never cries out for God's help. "In short, Israel's capitulation to the Philistines is far more profound and complete than any of their previous enslavements...The Israelites do not groan and resist their "captors" now because they have completely adopted and adapted to the values, mores and idols of the Philistines" (139). Why is this fact so dangerous to Israel's faith and the existence of God's people? Do you see similarities to the condition of God's people today?
- In segment 2, hosts Dave Bast and Scott Hoezee observe that Samson repeatedly breaks his Nazirite vows (for which the detailed instructions are found in [Numbers 6:1-21](#)). Samson's observance (or lack thereof) of these outward signs certainly reflects the condition of Samson's inner faith life and relationship to God. We may not follow the strict rules of Nazirite vows today, but what outward practices do Christians engage in now that have the potential to reflect the condition of our inner faith life in a similar way? Describe *why* you think these practices function similarly.
- What did you learn about the nature of God's grace from Samson's story?
- Even though Samson was a very flawed deliverer, what similarities do you see between him and Jesus? How do Samson and his story point us to Jesus and the ultimate deliverance he provides?

RELATED PASSAGES for further study

[Hebrews 11:32-40](#), [Romans 7:15-25](#), [Ephesians 2:1-10](#), [Numbers 6:1-21](#)

CONCLUSION

Read [Ephesians 2:1-10](#). With the story of Samson fresh in your mind, what observations can you make about God's character and the nature of grace by reading this passage?

Then reflect on this quote from Keller's commentary and consider how/where God's grace enters in:

“Becoming and continuing as a Christian is about the same pattern—becoming weak to become strong. Only those who admit they are unrighteous receive the righteousness of Christ...Only those who know their own weakness are able to know God-given inner strength; the strength which enables us to avoid the pitfalls of Samson's life: pride, lust, anger, vengefulness and complacency” (165).

In prayer, talk through your thoughts and reflections with God; confess to him where you feel convicted, seek his clarity for your questions, ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance in strengthening your faith, and give thanks for his salvation and abundant grace.

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