

Luscious Locks! – Samson and Delilah



Judges 13-16



Samson was a strong, powerful man chosen by God to defeat the Philistines. Throughout his life, he carefully followed God's instructions right up until he met the seductive temptress, Delilah. At that moment, he turned away from God, lost his supernatural strength and his life fell apart! Hold on. Is that right? In this week's Bassline session, we'll explore the children's version of Samson's story and discover how it aligns with the original version found in Judges 13-16.

You will need:

- Paper and pens/pencils



Beat

Ask:

Our Bassline session today centres around a Bible character known for his luscious locks. Who do you think it is?

Leader's notes:

Watch the following clip together and discuss what it would be like to have the longest hair in the world. What would the advantages/disadvantages be? Would the young people like to hold this world record? If not/why not?

Watch:

NEW: World's Longest Hair – Guinness World Records (1:58)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cms4Zu9iG-Y>

 Bridge**Ask:**

If you could try to achieve a world record, which one would be most suited to you, your talents and your character? Explain your choice.

 Amplify**Leader's notes:**

Give each group member a sheet of A4 paper and a pen/pencil. Ask the group to write down everything that they already know about Samson. Share their responses together. Watch the clip and gather as much information as you can about Samson. Discuss how he is presented in the children's version of this story.

Watch:

The Story of Samson Bible Story – Kids on the Move (6:37)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TonT5Ulh9s>

Ask:

How is Samson presented in the children's version of this story?

Say:

When Bible stories are presented to children, they are often simplified and told in a way that makes them accessible and easy to understand. The problems start when we fail to revisit these stories later in life as our faith grows and matures. The aim is not to criticise the clip we have just watched, but to take a moment to see if there is more to the story.

Say:

The clip suggests that Samson was chosen by God to do amazing things, which is exactly what the Bible says.

Read:

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.'

⁶ Then the woman went to her husband and told him, 'A man of God came to me. He

looked like an angel of God, very awesome. I didn't ask him where he came from, and he didn't tell me his name. ⁷ But he said to me, "You will become pregnant and have a son. Now then, drink no wine or other fermented drink and do not eat anything unclean, because the boy will be a Nazirite of God from the womb until the day of his death."

— (Judges 13:2-7)

Ask:

What specific rules was Samson called to follow throughout his life?

Say:

As a Nazirite, Samson was chosen to follow specific rules throughout his life. This is where his supernatural strength came from. His hair was a symbol of that strength, but his power came from the Holy Spirit. The clip suggests that Samson followed these rules carefully right up to the point where he met Delilah. Let's see if that is true!

Leader's notes:

Divide the young people into two groups. Give each group one of the following Bible references and ask them to report back on what they have found. The Scripture and key discussion points are outlined below; however, the group's findings will guide the discussion. This does not need to be a lengthy discussion but should confirm that Samson did what he wanted to do, when he wanted to do it.

Reading One: Judges 14:1-4

¹ Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman. ² When he returned, he said to his father and mother, 'I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife.'

³ His father and mother replied, 'Isn't there an acceptable woman among your relatives or among all our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?'

But Samson said to his father, 'Get her for me. She's the right one for me.' ⁴ (His parents did not know that this was from the Lord, who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines; for at that time they were ruling over Israel.)

— (Judges 14:1-4)

The Philistines were the enemy of the Israelites. Samson was chosen by God to defeat the Philistines, not to marry one of them! He ignored God's command and dishonoured his father and mother. His comment, 'She's the right one for me', clarifies his motivation. She isn't the one God has chosen; she is the one Samson wants! Verse 4 does not suggest that God orchestrated this match, as it clearly went against his commands. Instead, it suggests that God will still use Samson to achieve his purpose, despite the mistakes he has made.

Reading Two: Judges 14:5-9

⁵ Samson went down to Timnah together with his father and mother. As they approached the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion came roaring toward him. ⁶ The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as

he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done. ⁷ Then he went down and talked with the woman, and he liked her.

⁸ Some time later, when he went back to marry her, he turned aside to look at the lion's carcass, and in it he saw a swarm of bees and some honey. ⁹ He scooped out the honey with his hands and ate as he went along. When he rejoined his parents, he gave them some, and they too ate it. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey from the lion's carcass.

— (Judges 14:5–9)

The Spirit of the Lord empowered Samson to kill the lion and protect his family. The point of discussion here is found in verses 8–9. Samson was not permitted to eat anything unclean. The honey wasn't the issue, but scraping it out of the carcass of a dead lion and lying to his parents about it was a huge problem! Again, we see that Samson had no problem disobeying God, even before he met Delilah.

Say:

There are many more examples of Samson abusing his power and the gifts God had given him. Delilah wasn't the terrible influence she is often portrayed to be. Samson repeatedly did what he wanted to do when he wanted to do it.

Read:

⁴ Some time later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek 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 of silver.'

— (Judges 16:4–5)

Ask:

- What choices were available to Delilah?
- Was she in a position of strength or vulnerability? Or both?

Say:

The story continues as Delilah repeatedly asks Samson to reveal the source of his strength. Each time, Samson gives Delilah the wrong information, and the Philistines come to capture him.

Ask:

Samson knew that Delilah was working with the Philistines. Why do you think he stayed with her and continued to follow this pattern?

Say:

Maybe Samson was genuinely in love with Delilah. Maybe he was confident he could overcome any attack from the Philistines. Either way, he stayed in a situation that put him in grave danger and his main weakness was revealed.

Read:

¹⁵ Then she said to him, ‘How can you say, “I love you,” when you won’t confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven’t told me the secret of your great strength.’ 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. 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.

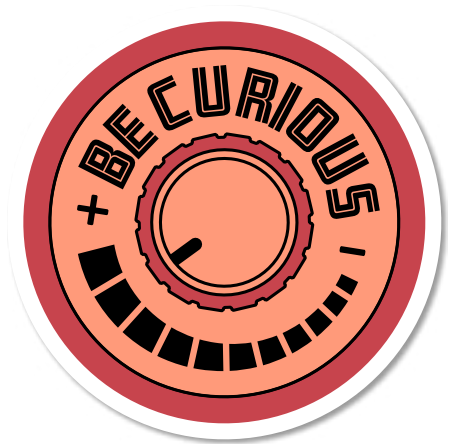
— (Judges 16:15-22)

Ask:

- What finally drove Samson to reveal the secret of his strength? What does this tell us about Samson’s character?
- How did Samson react when he realised that God had left him?
- Do you think the children’s story clip is a fair representation of the characters of Samson and Delilah? Explain your thoughts.

Say:

Throughout his life, Samson repeatedly disobeyed the vows he had made to God. His luscious locks were the final symbol of his sacred commitment to God, and once it was removed, he no longer had God’s strength. Everything he had achieved to that point was through the power of the Holy Spirit, and despite his disobedience, God used him to protect the Israelites.



Bridge

Ask:

How is Samson often depicted in children's books? What does he look like?

Say:

We often see Samson depicted as a tall, muscular man who never missed a leg day in his life! He is often depicted with huge, strong arms, throwing aside a ferocious lion. Pastor Paul LeBoutillier questions this depiction. In Judges 16:5, we read, 'See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength.' Pastor LeBoutillier points out that if Samson was a tall, muscular man, then there would be no secret to his strength. Instead, he suggests that Samson looked like an everyday bloke! In his view, the Philistines wanted to know where this very average man gained his strength.

Ask:

- What is your response to Pastor LeBoutillier's interpretation of Judges 16:5?
- Do you agree/disagree with his claims about Samson's appearance?
- How does this change your perception of Samson?

Sound Check

Say:

For our Sound Check activity today, we're going to think about what we can learn from Samson's story. Let's refresh our memory and listen to the main take-home message from the clip we watched earlier.

Leader's notes:

Watch the clip from 4:15 to 6:37. Discuss the final moments of the clip with the group. What is presented as the key message of Samson's story? Does the group agree/disagree with this interpretation?

Watch:

The Story of Samson Bible Story – Kids on the Move (6:37)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TonT5Ulh9s>

Say:

The key lesson taken from the clip is that we need to choose our friends carefully, but this isn't the only thing that we can learn from Samson's story.

Leader's notes:

Working in pairs or small groups, ask the young people to write as many alternative endings to the clip as they can think of. What are all the other learning points that children (and adults) can take from Samson's story? Ask the group to present their ideas in the same style as the clip. They may want to explore how we use the gifts God has given us, or how we follow our own way despite God's guidance. There are many aspects of the story they could explore. Give the group time to create their alternative endings and then share them together.

Ask:

What happened to Samson after the Philistines captured him?

Read:

²³ Now the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate, saying, 'Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands.'

²⁴ When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying,

'Our god has delivered our enemy
into our hands,
the one who laid waste our land
and multiplied our slain.'

²⁵ While they were in high spirits, they shouted, 'Bring out Samson to entertain us.' So they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them.

When they stood him among the pillars, ²⁶ Samson said to the servant who held his hand, 'Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them.' ²⁷ Now the temple was crowded with men and women; all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform. ²⁸ Then Samson prayed to the Lord, 'Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.' ²⁹ Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, ³⁰ Samson said, 'Let me die with the Philistines!' Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived.

³¹ Then his brothers and his father's whole family went down to get him. They brought him back and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. He had led Israel twenty years.

— (Judges 16:23-31)

Ask:

- How did Samson regain his strength?
- How did Samson fulfil God's purpose for his life?

Bridge

Ask:

What key learning point do you take away from Delilah's role in this story?

Selah

Say:

It can be challenging to draw out personal lessons from a story like this! How can we relate to a supernaturally empowered man who defeated his enemies by collapsing a building on them after they gouged his eyes out? Having said this, Samson's story does teach us a valuable lesson of the importance of following God's guidance and recognising the source of our strength.

Leader's notes:

Allow the group time to reflect on the story of Samson. What personal challenge does it bring to their faith journey? As the music plays, encourage the group to spend time in prayer responding to the story.

Questions they may consider in prayer are:

- How am I drawing on God's strength to fulfil his calling on my life?
- Where are the places that I have moved away from God's will?
- What promises have I made to God that I no longer take seriously?

Watch:

Strength of My Heart- Scripture Lullabies (5:13)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfMtgFz-VUQ>

Say:

We can take reassurance in the fact that despite his disobedience and all his faults, God was still able to use Samson. He even makes an appearance in the Hebrews list of the faithful.

Read:

³² **And what more can I say? Time is too short for me to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, ³³ who by faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the raging of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, gained strength after being weak, became mighty in battle, and put foreign armies to flight.**

— (Hebrews 11:32-34)

Coda

Say:

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.

Ask:

As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?

What is the one thing you will take away from Samson's story?

Leader's notes:

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.

