

Judges 13-16

I'm teaching up at C.B.I. – & I LOVE it

Justo is there – & the class is incredible this year

& I see these students at the Bible College

MAKING Determined Decisions to MOVE THEMSELVES  
TOWARD God's Plan for them

& it blesses me SO MUCH – to see them

Committing their lives to SEEK GOD

& Follow HIS Great PLAN for their Lives

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But today – I want to Look at the OPPOSITE EXAMPLE  
of what I see - in the Lives of the Bible College Students

I think MAYBE the BEST Example in Scripture  
of Direction Setting Decisions – Would be SAMSON

SAMSON made Decision, after Decision

That ultimately led to the Destruction of his life

So – Let's look at SAMSON'S Decision Making –

for us to know - How NOT to do it – in our own lives

Let's Pray

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In Judges 13:5 - The Angel of the Lord  
appeared to Samson's Mother

& told her to Dedicate Samson  
to the Lord from his birth - AS a NAZIRITE

The NAZARITE VOW included  
Avoiding Alcohol & Dead Bodies  
& Allowing your Hair to grow

Which were all SYMBOLS – of Samson  
being SET ASIDE - for God's USE

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Now – the “Lesson within a Lesson” - in Samson's life  
Is about God's SOVEREIGNTY

& about How God Worked - FOR Israel's GOOD  
IN THE MIDST of SAMSON'S Bad Decisions

& the First Vs about Samson – actually POINTS  
to God's Sovereignty in SAMSON'S Life

The END of Judges 13:5 (NLT)  
*5 . . . He will begin to rescue Israel from the Philistines.”*

Even tho we will see Samson  
Destroy his life by his own choices

God will STILL BE “At Work” in it all  
To BEGIN to Rescue Israel from the Philistines

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**Samson** Becomes the **LAST** of the **Judges of Israel**

**Who were** to be

The **Deliverers** & **Leaders** of **the Nation**

& the **Time** that **Samson** was a **Judge** of Israel  
was **Especially Difficult**

The **Philistines** (arch enemies) had **CAPTURED the ARK**  
& they had **totally DISARMED** the **Nation** of **Israel**

& **Israel** was **Living in Subjection** to the **Enemy**  
They were **Oppressed & Dominated** by the **Philistines**

& **SAMSON** was **Called by God**  
& given **Miraculous Strength** – From God

In order to **DELIVER Israel** - **FROM** the **Philistines**

**BUT** – instead of **Delivering Israel**  
**FROM the Philistines**

**Samson** got himself **Deeply Entangled**  
**WITH the Philistines**

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**In Judges Ch 14**

**we see Samson begin**  
to Make the **Decisions**  
That **would** ultimately **Set the Direction** of his **LIFE**

## **Judges 14:1 (NLT)**

**1 One day when Samson was in Timnah, one of the Philistine women caught his eye.**

If you **know ANYTHING** about **Samson**

**You know** he was **ABSOLUTELY CONTROLLED**  
by his **desire for women**

**But Pls - don't turn** this into **JUST** a **lesson**  
About **LUST & SEXUAL Sin** – *(altho it is great for that)*

**Women ARE** what **Caused** Samson  
to make the **Decisions**  
that **SET THE DIRECTION** of His **Life**

**BUT . . . WHAT** is it for you ?

What **causes YOU** to Make **Decisions**  
that MIGHT **Set the Direction** of **YOUR Life** ?

**I Promise - Whatever** it is

it has **something** to do with **What YOU WANT**  
it has **something** to do with **What YOU THINK** is **BEST** for **YOU**

So - the **OBJECT** May **Be Different**  
**But** believe me – the **LESSON** is **The Same**

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**Cont'g - Judges 14:2 (NLT)**

**2 When he returned home, he told his father and mother, “A young Philistine woman in Timnah caught my eye. I want to marry her. Get her for me.”**

**Samson SAW what he Wanted**

**& He DEMANDED to HAVE what he Wanted**

With **ZERO consideration** - of **what God Wanted**

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So – **Samson’s Parents** try to **Nudge him** in the **right direction**

**Judges 14:3 (NLT)**

**3 His father and mother objected. “Isn’t there even one woman in our tribe or among all the Israelites you could marry?” they asked. “Why must you go to the pagan Philistines (who are the enemy) to find a wife?” But Samson told his father, “Get her for me! She looks good to me.”**

***It seems that Samson had a BIT of “Spoiled-brat-itis” on top of his other problems***

The **Israelites** were **FORBIDDEN** by **GOD** to **MARRY** the **Philistines**

**AND** Samson had been “**Set-Apart**” by **God** to be **A DELIVERER** of **God’s People** – **FROM the Philistines**

**But** Samson **WANTED**

To **SET the Direction** of **His Own Life**

& so he says to his Father  
“Get her for me! She looks good to me.”

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Then – in the God’s Sovereignty Lesson  
that is inter-woven here

IN the Very Next Vs (v.4) it says God was AT WORK  
WITHIN Samson’s Selfish Demand

**BUT – this is STILL the beginning – of the Decisions  
that set the Direction of Samson’s Life**

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So - Cont in Ch 14

Samson & His parents head to TIMNAH  
(Philistine Territory) - to “GET” this woman for Samson

& Along the Way (in V.6)  
Samson KILLS a Lion with his bare hands  
(*Due to the Miraculous Strength God had given him*)

Then Samson’s Dad  
works out this Marriage with the Enemy for Samson

& when they’re headed back later - for the Wedding

Samson finds the Lion he’d killed  
& some BEES were making HONEY  
INSIDE the Carcass of the LION

So Samson scoops out  
some of the HONEY & eats it

WHICH was AGAINST

His NAZIRITE Vow to God - to not touch a corpse

But Samson wanted some Honey from his Trophy

So he set aside his Vow to God

& makes Another Decision – FOR HIMSELF

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Then – still in Judges 14 - Samson throws a Big Party

That V.10 says – “*was the custom for Elite young men*”

& this party would have certainly included - Good WINE  
Which was also AGAINST Samson’s Vow to God

& so - just knowing what we know about Samson so far

It’s highly likely - Samson Set Aside

his commitment to God - for this Decision as well

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& then - The Bride’s Father sent 30 Philistine Men  
to join Samson in his Party

& so Now Samson is Partying with the Enemy,  
before Marrying the Enemy

**Here's the MATH for what we've seen so far**

**One Decision + One Decision + One Decision  
= ONE DIRECTION (*not the Boy Band*)**

& so (in **Judges 14:12**) Samson decides  
to tell these 30 Philistine men a RIDDLE

Designed to get Samson 30 SETS  
of FINE Linen Garments (1 from ea of the men)

Because what person DEDICATED & SET APART to God  
Doesn't want 30 sets of Fine WORLDLY Garments

So He tells the men a Riddle based on his Lion & Honey  
& he gives them 7 days of Partying to figure it out

But instead - they go to the Bride-to be  
(who has ZERO Commitment to Samson)

& they tell her they'll BURN her alive  
if she doesn't get the answer for them

So she goes to WORK on Samson  
to get the answer to the Riddle

**& in - Judges 14:17 we read (NLT)**

***17 So she cried whenever she was with him and kept it up for the rest of the celebration. At last, on the seventh day he told her the answer because she was tormenting him with her nagging. Then she explained the riddle to the young men.***



**EVERY Decision the Bible Records for Samson**

Shows him **Setting the Direction** of his life  
toward **DESTRUCTION**

**So** – the **Philistine men** **ANSWER the Riddle**  
(**Thanks** to his **Bride-To-Be**)

Which **Brings On** another  
**Direction Setting Decision** for **Samson**

**Remember** – **God** had given **Samson**  
**Miraculous STRENGTH**

To be **USED** to **FREE Israel**  
**from the Oppression** of the **Philistines**

**& so we read in Judges 14:19–20 (NLT)**

***19 Then the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him. He went down to the town of Ashkelon (Philistine town), killed thirty men, took their belongings, and gave their clothing to the men who had solved his riddle. But Samson was furious about what had happened, and he went back home to live with his father and mother.***

***20 So his wife was given in marriage to the man who had been Samson's best man at the wedding.***

So – Even tho God is AT WORK  
IN Samson's SELFISH Decisions

Samson's Decisions are STILL  
setting the Direction of his life – toward Destruction

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In Judges 15 - Samson decides to go back to the Philistine  
Woman & Give her a GOAT to make up with her

But when He gets there

She's already Married  
to the Best man from Samson's Wedding

Which again – KICKS IN Samson's  
Direction Setting Decision – of ANGER

Judges 15:3 (NLT)

*3 Samson said, "This time I cannot be blamed for everything I am going to do to you Philistines."*

& this time - Samson takes 300 Foxes  
ties their tails together in pairs  
& puts a torch between each pair

& has them run thru the Philistines Grain Fields

& Samson also destroyed  
their Vineyards & their Olive Groves

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**But . . . Vengeance BEGETS Vengeance**

& **so (Judg 15:6)** the **Philistines**  
**take** this **woman** & her **father**

& **this time** they **DO BURN** them both - to **death**

& **then** – **THAT Vengeance**

Which **came from** the **PREVIOUS Vengeance**

**Brings** - **MORE VENGEANCE** from Samson

So - Here's another MATH Equation

**Vengeance + Vengeance + Vengeance = Vengeance**

**Judges 15:7–8 (NLT)**

***7 “Because you did this,” Samson vowed, “I won’t rest until I take my revenge on you!”***

***8 So he attacked the Philistines with great fury and killed many of them. Then he went to live in a cave in the rock of Etam.***

Now - the **Leader of Israel**

is **Living in a CAVE** - **Nursing** his **Pride**

& again - **Vengeance BEGETS more Vengeance**

& so the **Philistines RETALIATE**  
to **Samson’s Retaliation**

& they **set up camp** in **Judah** - & begin **attacking Israel**

& they're making life miserable for Israel  
UNTIL Israel Turns Over Samson to them

Then we read in Judges 15:11 (NLT)

*11 So 3,000 men of Judah went down to get Samson at the cave in the rock of Etam. They said to Samson, "Don't you realize the Philistines rule over us? What are you doing to us?" But Samson replied, "I only did to them what they did to me."*

You have GOT to be KIDDING me

Really BIG of you - Oh Deliverer of Israel . . .

*I only did to them what they did to me - (which is not true)*

Samson is a man

Who had been dedicated to God

But was ENSLAVED by His Own Desires

AND by His Own VIEW of things

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& Even tho God "Still Worked" - IN his Dysfunction

& We can learn a TON from him

About how NOT to Set the Direction of OUR Life

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& so (V.12) the Israelites convince Samson

to allow them to turn him over to the Philistines

**But when the Israelites**  
bring **Samson** to the **Philistines**

**Again** – His **Miraculous Strength** - **KICKS IN**

**& then we read in Judges 15:15–16 (NLT)**

***15 Then he found the jawbone of a recently killed donkey. He picked it up and killed 1,000 Philistines with it.***

***16 Then Samson said, “With the jawbone of a donkey, I’ve piled them in heaps! With the jawbone of a donkey, I’ve killed a thousand men!”***

**Notice** Samson gives **NO CREDIT** to the **Lord** – **AT ALL**

**Samson is Consumed** with “**I**”

**“I”** have piled them in heaps

**“I”** have killed a thousand men

**Samson** is **CONSUMED** with **Himself**

He **WANTS** what he **WANTS**

He **DOES** what he **WANTS**

He **SEES** Himself as **ALWAYS RIGHT**

& He **ALWAYS** Gives **Himself** All The **CREDIT**

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**As a Side-Note - in the King James Version**

**This Vs** says Samson **killed 1,000 men**  
with the **Jaw Bone of an Ass**

**& there's a saying in the Ministry**

***Samson killed 1,000 men with the Jaw Bone of an Ass - & many more churches than that - have been destroyed by the same thing***

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**So Then - At the Beginning of Ch 16**

**Samson goes the Philistine town of GAZA**

*(still to this day - home of the Enemies of Israel)*

**& he spends the Night with a Prostitute**

*(another "Decision" of Lust)*

**& The Philistines try to KILL him there**

But **Samson makes a Dramatic escape – (16:3)**

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**& then, Finally - Samson Falls in love - with DELILAH**

Who is **ALSO a Philistine woman (16:4)**

He's **Following the SAME – Direction-Setting Path**

**& so the Philistines offer Delilah - a ton of money**

to **Devise a Plan - to take Samson down**

**& Samson manages to put her off 3 Times**

**But eventually we read in Judges 16:16–17 (NLT)**

***16 She tormented him with her nagging day after day until he was sick to death of it.***

***17 Finally, Samson shared his secret with her. "My hair has never been cut," he confessed, "for I was dedicated to God***

*as a Nazirite from birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as anyone else.”*

Samson’s hair was NOT actually his strength

His VOW to God was

But his hair was a symbol of his VOW

& so – While Samson sleeps – Delilah Cuts his hair

& Judges 16:20 says (NLT)

*20 . . . When he woke up, he thought, “I will do as before and shake myself free.” But he didn’t realize the Lord had left him.*

*He didn’t realize the Lord had LEFT HIM*

Samson had been Making Decisions

However HE wanted - for so long

That He thought the Lord

would ALWAYS Put UP with it

But the Lord will NOT ALWAYS Put up with it

& It is only by God’s GRACE

that He puts up with it at all

& Eventually - God WILL Make things - RIGHT

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& **So (16:21)** the **Philistines Capture Samson**  
& **then** they **GOUGE** His **EYES OUT**

& they **Turn him** into a **HUMAN OX**  
to **Grind GRAIN** in their **Prison**

**Then - Before Long**

The **Philistines** held a **Great Festival**

to **celebrate** their **idol god DAGON**  
& **MAKE FUN** of the **God of Israel**

& they **brought Samson** out for **SPORT**  
- to **make fun** of **him** - & of **His God**

& **it's here we see the closest thing**  
to a **Prayer of Repentance**  
that **ever comes** from **Samson**

& **Actually** – it's the **First REAL PRAYER**  
**Recorded** in **Samson's Life**

**Judges 16:28 (NLT)**

***28 Then Samson prayed to the Lord, "Sovereign Lord, remember me again. O God, please strengthen me just one more time. With one blow let me pay back the Philistines for the loss of my two eyes."***

**Samson** asks **God** to **Remember him**  
& **give him strength** one more **time**



But notice - it's NOT for God's Glory  
it's actually for MORE REVENGE

But God does give Samson strength 1 more time

& Samson pushes over Two Pillars  
that held the Temple up

Killing HIMSELF & 3,000 Philistines

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What a LIFE !!

Dedicated to God - But constantly SERVING Himself

Called by God - to Care for God's People

But Consumed with Care ONLY for Himself

& Ultimately

The Decisions that set the Direction of Samson's life  
Led to His Shameful Destruction

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Our Decisions DO SET the Direction of Our Life

BUT - That Direction CAN BE CHANGED

By us Changing our DECISIONS

God - is the AUTHOR - of U-TURN'S

Jesus Christ – Lived & Died on this Earth  
So that YOU could CHANGE the Direction of your LIFE

BUT - For that to happen

We've got to TURN FROM the Decisions  
THAT Take us AWAY - from God's Plan

& TURN TO the Decisions  
THAT Take us TOWARD - Gods' Plan

& the Words that Start it all  
are REPENT & BELIEVE

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To REPENT is to make a U-TURN  
in The Direction your life is going

To BELIEVE means to put your  
Full FAITH & TRUST in Jesus Christ  
AND in GOD'S PLAN for your life

& both Faith & Trust in Jesus Christ  
Are NOT One-Time Decisions

Faith & Trust in God's Plan for your life  
is One DECISION - after Another - after Another

& those DECISIONS will SET the Direction of your Life

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Let's **MAKE** our Decisions **FOR CHRIST** – **One** at a **Time**

**AS EACH Decision COMES** to you  
**MAKE** that **Decision** for Christ

**& Don't Worry** about **what might happen**

**Don't Worry** that you **can't see**  
what **might come** from **that Decision**

**2 Corinthians 5:7 (ESV)**

*7 for we walk by faith, not by sight.*

**The word WALK**

means to **Set the Direction** of your life

**Set the Direction** of **your Life**  
**BY FAITH** – **NOT** by **Sight**

**Set the Direction** of your **Life**  
**TOWARD God**

By **Making your Decisions**  
**TOWARD God** – **BY FAITH**

**Because**

**Your Decisions Will Set - The Direction Of Your Life**

**Let's Pray**