



I Coulda Been a Contender (Judges 16)

"I coulda been a contenda." Those words of Marlon Brando, the washed-up boxer in *On the Waterfront*, reflect so many who agonize over choices they've made that changed the entire vector of their lives. It was also true with one of the well-known people in the Old Testament's book of Judges. His choices determined the tragic course of his life, but his life also comes to show a key principle that offers hope to those who live with regrets.

Judges' theme verse: *In those days, everyone did what was right in his own eyes.* 21:25

The Calling (Judges 13)

"Nazirite": One _____ by God to live a _____ so that God's _____ will show in their life.

Ephesians 4:1 *...I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*

Parenting 101 principle: You probably have _____ with your children's _____ than you think.

The Compromises (Judges 14, 15)

1. He grew _____ with the world. (14:1-5)
2. He touched some _____. (14:8-9)
3. He chose _____ over _____. (14:10-18)
4. His sin _____. (14:19-20; 15:1-19)
5. He's not getting his real _____

Samson judged during the period when the Philistines dominated *the people of the Lord.*" Judges 15:20

The Conclusion (Judges 16)

He gave in to his _____, and his weaknesses _____ him.

God loves us _____, but he loves us too much to _____.

Samson's *Asterisk* 16:22 *"But the hair on his head began to grow again..."*

The end of his story (16:23-31)

The Point:

It is not too _____ becoming the person _____.

Is something holding you back?

1. Tell the Spirit, I need to _____, _____.
2. If it's sin, _____ NOW.
3. If it's laziness, end _____ new one.
4. If it's a person, pray _____ an open door.
5. Don't go _____. _____ someone today.

FOR THOUGHT & TALK

Take no more than 5 minutes to quickly review the main points from Pastor Jeff's message. As you discuss the questions, don't expect to answer all of them. Just discuss the ones your group would most like to explore together. Remember, the goal of your small group is to grow together relationally, to **apply** God's Word to our daily living, and to pray for one another and our church.

1. Take a moment and look back on your life. Can you share what you might have been/done had life taken different turns? Are there regrets that haunt you about choices you've made that shaped your life?
2. As a group, just walk through Samson's life, describing key points of what happens through Judges 13-16. What choices shaped his life?
3. Paul wrote about what could be a positive impact of "regret" in 2 Corinthians 7:10-13. What do those verses tell you about 'regret'?
4. What is God telling you through Samson's story and the main point that Pastor made in the sermon?