

Judges 14:4 (ESV) ⁴His father and mother did not know that it was from the Lord, for he was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines. At that time the Philistines ruled over Israel.

Life Principle: God May Use Sinful People Doing Sinful Things To Accomplish His Righteous Purposes.

Judges 14:11–14 (ESV) ¹¹As soon as the people saw him, they brought thirty companions to be with him. ¹²And Samson said to them, “Let me now put a riddle to you. If you can tell me what it is, within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes, ¹³but if you cannot tell me what it is, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes.” And they said to him, “Put your riddle, that we may hear it.” ¹⁴And he said to them, “Out of the eater came something to eat. Out of the strong came something sweet.” And in three days they could not solve the riddle.

Judges 14:17–20 (ESV) ¹⁷She wept before him the seven days that their feast lasted, and on the seventh day he told her, because she pressed him hard. Then she told the riddle to her people. ¹⁸And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down, “What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?” And he said to them, “If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have found out my riddle.” ¹⁹And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon and struck down thirty men of the town and took their spoil and gave the garments to those who had told the riddle. In hot anger he went back to his father’s house. ²⁰And Samson’s wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.

Judges 15:9–19 (ESV) ⁹Then the Philistines came up and encamped in Judah and made a raid on Lehi. ¹⁰And the men of Judah said, “Why have you come up against us?” They said, “We have come up to bind Samson, to do to him as he did to us.” ¹¹Then 3,000 men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, “Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you have done to us?” And he said to them, “As they did to me, so have I done to them.” ¹²And they said to him, “We have come down to bind you, that we may give you into the hands of the Philistines.” And Samson said to them, “Swear to me that you will not attack me yourselves.” ¹³They said to him, “No; we will only bind you and give you into their hands. We will surely not kill you.” So they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock. ¹⁴When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him. Then the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and the ropes that were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands. ¹⁵And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men. ¹⁶And Samson said, “With the jawbone of a donkey, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of a donkey have I struck down a thousand men.” ¹⁷As soon as he had finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone out of his hand. And that place was called Ramath-lehi. ¹⁸And he was very thirsty, and he called upon the Lord and said, “You have granted this great salvation by the hand of your servant, and shall I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?” ¹⁹And God split open the hollow place that is at Lehi, and water came out from it. And when he drank, his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore the name of it was called En-hakkore; it is at Lehi to this day.

Life Principle: Spiritual And Moral Wimps Will Typically Side With The Majority Rather Than Fight Difficult And Risky Battles.

Life Principle: Some People Only Get Spiritual (Or Religious) And Turn To God When They Have Problems They Cannot Handle.

Judges 16:1–6, 15-21 (ESV) Samson went to Gaza, and there he saw a prostitute, and he went in to her. ²The Gazites were told, “Samson has come here.” And they surrounded the place and set an ambush for him all night at the gate of the city. They kept quiet all night, saying, “Let us wait till the light of the morning; then we will kill him.” ³But Samson lay till midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts, and pulled them up, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that is in front of Hebron. ⁴After this he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. ⁵And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, “Seduce him, and see where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to humble him. And we will each give you 1,100 pieces of silver.” ⁶So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me where your great strength lies, and how you might be bound, that one could subdue you.”.... ¹⁵And she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and you have not told me where your great strength lies.” ¹⁶And when she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death. ¹⁷And he told her all his heart, and said to her, “A razor has never come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb. If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man.” ¹⁸When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, “Come up again, for he has told me all his heart.” Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hands. ¹⁹She made him sleep on her knees. And she called a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. ²⁰And she said, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” And he awoke from his sleep and said, “I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the Lord had left him. ²¹And the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes and brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles. And he ground at the mill in the prison.

Life Principle: We Should Count Our Blessings And Quickly Repent When We Do Not Experience The Consequences Of Sin.

Judges 16:22, 28 (ESV) ²²But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.²⁸Then Samson called to the Lord and said, “O Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me only this once, O God, that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes.”

Life Principle: Forfeited Spiritual Blessings Can Be Regained By A Genuine Renewal Of Our Commitment To The Lord.

Joel 2:12–13, 25-26. (ESV) ¹²“Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster..... ²⁵I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent among you. ²⁶“You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

Life Principle: Forfeited Spiritual Blessings Can Be Regained By A Genuine Renewal Of Our Commitment To The Lord.

Judges 17:1–6 (ESV) There was a man of the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Micah. ² And he said to his mother, “The 1,100 pieces of silver that were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse, and also spoke it in my ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it.” And his mother said, “Blessed be my son by the Lord.” ³ And he restored the 1,100 pieces of silver to his mother. And his mother said, “I dedicate the silver to the Lord from my hand for my son, to make a carved image and a metal image. Now therefore I will restore it to you.” ⁴ So when he restored the money to his mother, his mother took 200 pieces of silver and gave it to the silversmith, who made it into a carved image and a metal image. And it was in the house of Micah. ⁵ And the man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and household gods, and ordained one of his sons, who became his priest. ⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Life Principle: People Who Disregard, Or Just Don't Know God's Word, Will Experience The Worst Kind Of Spiritual And Moral Degeneration.

Judges 17:13 (ESV) ¹³Then Micah said, “Now I know that the Lord will prosper me, because I have a Levite as priest.”

Judges 18:18–20 (ESV) ¹⁸ And when these went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the household gods, and the metal image, the priest said to them, “What are you doing?” ¹⁹ And they said to him, “Keep quiet; put your hand on your mouth and come with us and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be priest to the house of one man, or to be priest to a tribe and clan in Israel?” ²⁰ And the priest's heart was glad. He took the ephod and the household gods and the carved image and went along with the people.

Judges 18:30 (ESV) ³⁰And the people of Dan set up the carved image for themselves, and Jonathan the son of Gershom, son of Moses, and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land.

Judges 19:11–12, 20-30 (ESV) ¹¹When they were near Jebus, the day was nearly over, and the servant said to his master, “Come now, let us turn aside to this city of the Jebusites and spend the night in it.” ¹²And his master said to him, “We will not turn aside into the city of foreigners, who do not belong to the people of Israel, but we will pass on to Gibeah” ²⁰ And the old man said, “Peace be to you; I will care for all your wants. Only, do not spend the night in the square.” ²¹ So he brought him into his house and gave the donkeys feed. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank. ²² As they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, worthless fellows, surrounded the house, beating on the door. And they said to the old man, the master of the house, “Bring out the man who came into your house, that we may know him.” ²³ And the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, “No, my brothers, do not act so wickedly; since this man has come into my house, do not do this vile thing. ²⁴ Behold, here are my virgin daughter and his concubine. Let me bring them out now. Violate them and do with them what seems good to you, but against this man do not do this outrageous thing.” ²⁵ But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine and made her go out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until the morning. And as the dawn began to break, they let her go. ²⁶ And as morning appeared, the woman came and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was, until it was light. ²⁷ And her master rose up in the morning, and when he opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his way, behold, there was his concubine lying at the door of the house, with her hands on the threshold. ²⁸ He said to her, “Get up, let us be going.” But there was no answer. Then he put her on the donkey, and the man rose up and went away to his home. ²⁹ And when he entered his house, he took a knife, and taking hold of his concubine he divided her, limb by limb, into twelve pieces, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel. ³⁰ And all who saw it said, “Such a thing has never happened or been seen from the day that the people of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt until this day; consider it, take counsel, and speak.”

Judges 21:25 (ESV) ²⁵In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.