

## MISCONCEPTIONS

“It’s Too Late...”

July 19, 2015

### Why people in the Bible felt like “it’s too late?”

- Peter: Failure
- Job: Loss
- Elijah: Discouragement
- Jonah: Ran from God
- Abraham: Age
- Woman at well: Rejection (anybody ever felt rejected by spouse, friend, family?)
- Jacob: dysfunctional Family
- Timothy: Insecurity
- Lazarus: Death
- Jehoshaphat: Odds stacked against him

*“After this, the armies of the Moabites, Ammonites, and some of the Meunites declared war on Jehoshaphat. Messengers came and told Jehoshaphat, “A vast army from Edom is marching against you from beyond the Dead Sea. They are already at En-gedi.” ...Jehoshaphat was terrified by this news.”*

2 Chronicles 20:1-3 (NLT)

### Negative effects of Fear:

- Robs you of precious time\energy
- Magnifies your problems
- Distorts your perspective
- Paralyzes you \ blocks constructive action
- Leads to many syndromes and illnesses

*“Jehoshaphat was terrified by this news and begged the Lord for guidance. He also ordered everyone in Judah to begin fasting. So people from all the towns of Judah came to Jerusalem to seek the Lord’s help.”*

2 Chronicles 20:3-4 (NLT)

### What to do when you feel like it’s too late:

1. Get to God and get with God’s people
2. Pray

\* Praise God for who He is.

*“O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you.”*

2 Chronicles 20:6 (NIV)

\* Thank God for what He has done.

*“O our God, did you not drive out those who lived in this land when your people Israel arrived? And did you not give this land forever to the descendants of your friend Abraham?”*

2 Chronicles 20:7 (NLT)

\* Now Ask God to do it again.

*“O our God, won’t you stop them?”*

2 Chronicles 20:12 (NLT)

### 3. Focus on God

*“We have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.” All the men of Judah, with their wives and children and little ones, stood there before the LORD.”*

2 Chronicles 20:12-13 (NIV)

"If you look at the world you'll be distressed. If you look within you'll be depressed. If you look at Christ, you'll be at rest." -Corrie Ten Boom.

*“This is what the Lord says: Do not be afraid! Don’t be discouraged by this mighty army, for the battle is not yours, but God’s.”*

2 Chronicles 20:15 (NLT)

### 4. Thank God in advance

*“The king appointed singers to walk ahead of the army, singing to the Lord and praising him for his holy splendor. This is what they sang: “Give thanks to the Lord; his faithful love endures forever!” At the very moment they began to sing and give praise, the Lord caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to start fighting among themselves...”*

2 Chronicles 20:21-22 (NLT)

*“King Jehoshaphat and his men went out to gather the plunder. They found vast amounts of equipment, clothing, and other valuables—more than they could carry. ...they gathered in the Valley of Blessing, which got its name that day... The fear of God came upon all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard how the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel.”*

2 Chronicles 20:25-29 (NLT)

### **The results:**

- You get blessed.
- God gets glory.

**Leadership Tip!**

Empower others! Take the time to invest in other people to help share the load. There are various responsibilities you have as a Life Group Leader. Give others ownership of the group and then step back and empower them to lead (even if it is different from how you would do it!).

## Misconceptions - It's Too Late

### STARTER QUESTION:

**What ways have you been challenged to work on your faith? How did you do this past week at trusting God?**

### MAIN IDEA:

This series is helping to bring to surface some of the larger things that we might not be aware of that are impacting us. This week we discussed the misconception of it being too late. Too late for us to make a difference, change a habit, work on improving in a particular area, fix a problem, mend a relationship, etc. This week we are going to talk about why it's never too late!

Let's look at a popular character in the Old Testament, Samson:

#### **Judges 13:24 (NLT)**

***When her son was born, she named him Samson. And the Lord blessed him as he grew up.***

### **What do you know about the story of Samson? What are some of the highlights?**

Samson is well known for his superhuman strength and for being seduced by Delilah but there is so much more to this story, especially as it relates to our topic this week. Here is a little bit of background on Samson:

- Samson's parents were unable to have children but Samson came as a miracle child. An angel told them they were going to have a baby and he will belong to the Lord from the day he is born.
- Samson was raised a Nazarite and took a strict vow to belong totally to the Lord.
- Part of the vow was that he was to never cut his hair.
- His hair was also the source of his strength.

Unfortunately, Samson controlled his life and never fully gave it over to God. He was controlled by his feelings and desires, especially as it pertained to women.

**Judges 14:1 (NLT)**

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

**Why is it so hard to not appease our sinful desires sometimes?**

As you read this story it is not hard to see that he was headed down a path that was destructive. Samson allowed himself to wander and be led by his appetites. His life was out of control and Judges 14-16 depict a story of someone who was only interested in his path instead of what God had for him.

In this story of Samson we see that sometimes God's mercy means that He allows us to discover what life is like without Him. Samson was on a mission to find anything and everything that would quench his appetites but sadly he didn't turn to the One who would have fully satisfied him.

**Why does God not jump in sometimes and save us from ourselves?**

The downward spiral eventually leads to Samson being engulfed by his desires and losing everything before he realized what really mattered. This may be how you feel at times. You may feel like you have hit rock bottom and it's too late. Whether or not your location right now and feelings are a result of your actions like Samson, or something that is out of your control, the God of the Bible makes it clear over and over again that it is never too late.

**Can you think of time when you have felt like you were down for the count?**

**What is something in your life right now that you think is too late to fix, change, or improve?**

The truth is that if we are still breathing there is still hope! It wasn't too late for Samson and it is not too late for us! Samson had been thrown into prison by the Philistines. His hair had been cut by Delilah, the Philistines gouged out his eyes and his life was literally nothing but darkness. Seems like the downward spiral is not coming back up right?

Judges 16:22 says that the hair on Samson's head began to grow back. The hair growing back wasn't just a sign of his strength returning but it was a reminder of his calling and the vow he had taken as a child to follow the Lord. Samson remembers the One who gives and takes away and says,

**Judges 16:28-30 (NLT)**

***"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.” Then Samson put his hands on the two center pillars that held up the temple. Pushing against them with both hands, he prayed, “Let me die with the Philistines.” And the temple crashed down on the Philistine rulers and all the people. So he killed more people when he died than he had during his entire lifetime.***

Samson’s life ends with a bang! He not only remembered who he was as a child of God but he took every bit of his life to kill thousands of Philistines and did more damage to the enemy than he ever did throughout his entire lifetime! This alone says that it’s never too late for us. Samson was blind, humiliated, and left to be a mocking target for the enemy, but instead he made a difference and decided to live out his calling. It may have been the eleventh hour of his life, but this story definitely makes it clear that it is never too late. The icing on the cake is that Samson is remembered in the New Testament as well, for his decisions -

**Hebrews 11:32 (NLT)**

***How much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets.***

Samson’s decisions didn’t disqualify him from God using him or from the family of God. He is listed with some pretty awesome men for his faith. If it wasn’t too late for Samson, it’s not too late for you. You don’t have to give up on your “fill in the blank”. The enemy, Satan, wants you to stay on the ground and wait out the count, but even when it feels like there is no hope in getting up and trying to fight back Samson reminds us that there is always hope!

**What can we learn from Samson’s life?**

**What is God saying to you through this story and His Word?**

**FINAL THOUGHTS:**

You can change. You can be different.

The truth to all of this though is that we cannot do this on our own power. It is only the Holy Spirit who can help us take steps forward each day. Surrendering our life fully to God allows Him to pick us up and fight for us. We are never out of the game while we still have breath and the most beautiful piece is that we are get to play on the winning team.

It wasn’t too late for Samson, and it’s not too late for you! You don’t have to resign yourself to the way you are today, fearing you’ll never change. You can be different—

not by your own power but by the power of the Holy Spirit when you surrender fully to Him.

**What is a next step for you based on what God has spoken to you?**