

# Discussion Questions



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## Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Strengths can become weaknesses** when we depend on them instead of depending on God
2. **Self-deception distorts our reality** and prevents us from seeing our true spiritual condition
3. **God remains faithful even when we are faithless** (2 Timothy 2:13)
4. **God can redeem us after irreversible failure** - our past does not disqualify us from God's service
5. **Confession and repentance open the door to restoration** and renewed purpose

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## Discussion Questions

### Part 1: Understanding Samson's Story

**Question 1:** What stands out to you most about how Samson's story ended? What emotions does his life story evoke in you?

**Question 2:** The sermon mentioned that Samson depended on his physical strength rather than on God. What are some "strengths" or abilities in your life that you might be tempted to depend on instead of depending on God?

**Question 3:** Why do you think the Philistines didn't notice (or didn't care) that Samson's hair was growing back? What spiritual parallel can we draw from their blindness?

### Part 2: Wrestling with Self-Deception

**Question 4:** Pastor Ike challenged us to examine areas where we might be deceiving ourselves. What are some common forms of self-deception that Christians face today?

**Question 5:** Samson didn't even notice when God had left him. What are some warning signs that might indicate we're drifting from God's presence?

**Question 6:** How can we create accountability in our lives to help us avoid self-deception? What role does community play in keeping us spiritually honest?

## Part 3: Irreversible Failures and God's Redemption

**Question 7:** The sermon distinguished between sins that can be "easily undone" (like returning stolen money) and irreversible failures. Without sharing inappropriate details, can you think of examples of each type?

**Question 8:** Paul described himself as "the worst of sinners" and "the least of the apostles," yet God used him powerfully. What does this teach us about God's grace and our qualifications for service?

**Question 9:** For those comfortable sharing: Have you ever felt disqualified from serving God because of past failures? What lies or beliefs kept you from embracing God's redemption?

**Question 10:** Read 1 John 1:9 together. What does it mean that God "purifies us from ALL unrighteousness"? Why is this promise so important for our spiritual freedom?

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## Reflection Exercise

Take a few minutes of silence for personal reflection. Consider these questions individually:

1. Is there an area of my life where I'm depending on my own strength rather than God's?
2. Am I living in self-deception about any sin or pattern in my life?

3. Is there a past failure that I haven't fully believed God has forgiven and redeemed?
4. What is one step I can take this week to walk in the freedom Christ has given me?

**Optional:** Allow those who feel comfortable to share one insight from their reflection time.

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## Practical Applications

Choose 1-2 of these applications to commit to as a group:

### Individual Applications:

- **Daily Dependence:** Each morning this week, before starting your day, pray specifically: "God, I choose to depend on You today, not on my own abilities."
- **Confession Practice:** Write down one area where you've been living in self-deception. Confess it to God and to one trusted person this week.
- **Identity Reset:** Memorize 1 John 1:9 and recite it whenever feelings of guilt or shame about past failures arise.
- **Gratitude Journal:** Each day, write down one way God has redeemed something in your life or shown His faithfulness despite your unfaithfulness.

### Group Applications:

- **Accountability Partners:** Pair up with someone in the group to check in mid-week about areas of self-deception or dependence on personal strength rather than God.
- **Service Opportunity:** As a group, identify one way you can serve together that demonstrates God's redemptive power (perhaps in an area where some feel "unqualified").
- **Prayer Ministry:** Dedicate time at your next gathering for anyone who needs prayer for freedom from shame or guilt about past failures.