

**Life of Samson: #4
What Friends Are For
Judges 15:15-20**

Samson illustrates for us the tragedy
of not being aware
of what God is doing in our lives.

In our first lesson we saw
the beginning of his downward spiral.

Samson failed to...

- ✓ Redeem the Time
- ✓ Benefit from spiritual influences
- ✓ Walk in the Spirit

Samson made bad decisions...

- ✓ He didn't stay close to God
- ✓ He compromised
- ✓ He failed to seek godly counsel

Samson missed the importance of God's blessings...They

- ✓ Make us Closer to God
- ✓ Make us Humble
- ✓ Make us Careful

In this lesson, we will continue
our look at Samson's life
and seek to learn
from his mistakes and failures.

Someone said,

“We don’t have to make
all the mistakes ourselves,
we can learn from others!”

That is our purpose for this study.

God has placed within the pages
of the Word of God
many characters and events
from which He desires that we learn.

¹⁵ On the fourth day, they said to Samson’s wife, “Coax your husband into explaining the riddle for us, or we will burn you and your father’s household to death. Did you invite us here to rob us?”

¹⁶ Then Samson’s wife threw herself on him, sobbing, “You hate me! You don’t really love me. You’ve given my people a riddle, but you haven’t told me the answer.” “I haven’t even explained it to my father or mother,” he replied, “so why should I explain it to you?”

¹⁷ She cried the whole seven days of the feast. So on the seventh day he finally told her, because she continued to press him. She in turn explained the riddle to her people.

¹⁸ Before sunset on the seventh day the men of the town said to him,

*“What is sweeter than honey?
What is stronger than a lion?”
Samson said to them,*

*“If you had not plowed with my heifer,
you would not have solved my riddle.”*

¹⁹ Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of their belongings and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. Burning with anger, he went up to his father’s house.

²⁰ And Samson’s wife was given to the friend who had attended him at his wedding. (Judges 14:15-20, NIV)

This evening we want to learn the lesson
of what to look for
in our companions or friends.

Peer pressure is certainly
a very real issue for most of us.

It isn’t just our teens that must deal with this.

Those we choose to surround ourselves with
impact us either negatively or positively.

So what makes for a good companion?

I. Good Companions Keep Their Word (14:15-17).

A. Samson surrounded himself
with a bunch of people
who were liars.

1. They were people
who made promises very quickly –
and then when it became hard
to keep the promise –
they just broke them.
2. There isn't any integrity
in the individuals in this passage.
3. Both the men and the wife
in this passage
made agreements,
and both broke them.

B. The men didn't have to agree
to this riddle,
and the bet
that went along with it.

1. But at the end of verse 13 –
that's exactly what they did.
2. They made an agreement.
3. They made a promise.
4. "Put forth your riddle," they said.

C. Notice this: Samson's wife was dishonest as well.

1. We don't know everything about how weddings in that day were conducted...
2. But surely her marriage to Samson would include some level of commitment to fidelity and faithfulness.
3. So everybody in the text made promises, and everybody broke them.

D. The story turns ugly fast.

1. When these men couldn't figure out the riddle,
2. and it looked like they might lose these 30 expensive garments
3. they went right to Samson's new wife and told her to entice her own husband, and get the answer for them.
4. They threatened to kill her and her family and burn their house down if she didn't get the answer.

5. She begged and cried
until he finally
gave in
and told her.

6. She, in turn,
revealed the answer
to Samson's 'so called' friends.

II. Good Companions Draw You Closer to God (14:18-20).

A. Consider the rest of this story.

1. Samson was under
tremendous pressure.
2. His fiancé
should have been honest
with him,
but she chose
to manipulate him instead.
3. Good companions
do not manipulate their friends...
4. Did you see what she did?
'You don't love me!'
5. Folks, listen to me
...if you haven't heard this yet
...you probably will.

6. Especially the young people...
these are not the words
of a good companion...
these are words of manipulation!

7. Paul said about real love,

⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. (1 Cor 13:5, NIV)

B. Samson lost his temper
and his prospective bride.

1. As soon as the ‘friends’
gave him the answer to the riddle...
he realized that
he had been manipulated!
2. Unfortunately, Samson didn’t learn
from this experience...
it would happen again
with a woman named Delilah.
3. In his frustration and anger,
Samson killed thirty men
and stripped them of their garments
to pay off the bet.

4. He went home angry,
and without his wife...
she was given to one of his 'friends'.

C. The application for us.

1. Samson brought
a bunch of people
around his life
that did not
and would not
keep their word.
2. The point is obvious –
good friends
are the kind of people
you can trust.
3. That is the kind of people
you want to be your friends.
4. Do your friends meet that qualification?
5. Do they love God enough
that they are people
who are committed
to being honest?
6. Why couldn't Samson see this?
Because that's
what he was becoming!

- a. He failed to keep his commitment to God.
- b. He chose to be dishonest with his parents.
- c. He failed to recognize
the kind of people
he was choosing
to surround himself.
- d. What kind of friends have we chosen?
 1. Do they encourage you
to love God
and serve Him
or do they make it harder?
 2. Remember the Proverb,

*²⁰ He who walks with the wise grows wise,
but a companion of fools suffers harm. (Prov 13:20)*
 3. We need to surround ourselves
with those who are godly!

Conclusion

What kind of friend are we to others?

1. Do we exert positive spiritual pressure on others, or negative spiritual pressure?
2. There are some people that every time you're around them, you're just stimulated to be more pleasing to Christ.

⁶³ *I am a friend to all who fear you,
to all who follow your precepts. (Psa 119:63)*

How do we find friends like that?

1. That is why the local church is so important in the lives of believers!
2. We need to get involved in serving the Lord.
3. We need to be faithful in our Bible classes and in other ministries of the church.
4. Develop friendships with those around us that will strengthen our walk with God.

The greatest friend and companion we can make is Jesus!

²⁴ *A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Prov 18:24, NIV)*

Invitation