

3. Samson allowed himself to become gullible.

• *Delilah – woman number three – had no real love for Sampson*

• *Sampson’s vulnerability and susceptibility to trickery*

• *Sampson had become utterly naïve and open to deception*

• *Sampson grieved the Holy Spirit – miraculous strength withdrawn*

• *Yet it is at this point that Samson showed the greatest faith he ever had!*

4. Samson gained victory amidst defeat

• *Still a man of faith - restored hair – restored Naziriteship*

3. **Samson allowed himself to become gullible.** Samson had twice used a woman to find a way to provoke the Philistines. His brief marriage to the woman of Timnah was (among other things) his chosen way of getting into the society of the Philistines. He went to the girl at Gaza, intending to use her to provoke the Philistines. He had twice ‘mixed business with pleasure’ and used a girl to fulfil his own purposes. But now there is a girl who is also mixing business (five thousands pieces of silver and more) with pleasure (having Samson as a lover). This time it is not Samson using the girl; it is the girl using Samson. She has no real love for Samson. All along she is working only for her silver. She pretends she wants an assurance of his love ^{☐1} and nags him daily, pestering him until he tells her what she wants to know ^{☐2}. There is not the slightest love or sincerity in her; she only wants the reward of silver. Samson had become gullible. Before he had his own schemes when he used the two women in his life. Now this third woman in his life has her schemes to use him. He has become susceptible to trickery. True love is wide awake; Samson’s kind of love for Delilah made him vulnerable to Delilah’s counterfeit affection.

Previously, Samson had his own schemes when he used the two women in his life. Now the third woman in his life has her schemes to use him. He believes her utterly but he has become naïve. How trustworthy is a woman who loves money too much? Samson is open to deception. He reveals what he should not reveal ^{☐1}. She has no love for him and is quite willing to hand him over to the brutality and vindictiveness of the Philistines. She gets her money ^{☐2}, arranges for the shaving of Samson’s head ^{☐3}, and –just in case he should be deceiving her again! – playfully calls for the Philistines ^{☐4}.

By letting the sign of his call be removed Samson grieved the Holy Spirit without even knowing about it. He learned from painful experience that God had left him to his own strength and that his miraculous gift of strength had been withdrawn ^{☐1}. His enemies soon began to torment him ^{☐2}.

In the New Testament Samson is portrayed as a hero of faith ^{☐1}. Despite his wild ways he was a man who believed God, and believed that he would fulfil his calling. He came to the greatest height of faith in the last days of his life. He had ruined his life. God had left him. His strength was withdrawn. The sign of his being a Nazirite had been removed. Yet it is at this point that Samson shows the greatest faith he ever had. He still believed God could use him! Despite all that had happened to him and the tragedy of his betrayal by Delilah he was still trusting God and looking for God to work on his behalf.

4. **Samson gained victory amidst defeat.** His hair was growing again ^{☐1}! Why should not restored hair mean restored Naziriteship? Samson was still a man of faith. He had trusted God many times before. God had always given him strength when he needed it. Did he really have to believe that he was finished for ever and that God would never use him again. No, he believed the opposite. He believed that God could restore him and that he could be used by God again.

☐1 16:15
☐1 16:16

☐1 16:17
☐2 16:18
☐3 16:19
☐4 16:20a

☐1 16:20b
☐2 16:21

☐1 Hebrews 11:32

☐1 16:22

• *Chained to the pillars of the Philistine temple of Dagon*

• *God continued to use Sampson's own wishes for vengeance*

• *Sampson's greatest victory at the cost of his own death*

• *God's purpose for Sampson's life achieved – the beginning of deliverance from the Philistines*

• *The purposes of God served by a man with serious character weaknesses – because he continued to believe God*

The day came when the Philistines were thoroughly enjoying their victory over Samson. The various rulers of the Philistine towns came together to celebrate their victory and give praise to their god, Dagon ¹. They give the honour for their victory to Dagon ². They want to gloat over Samson's defeat and get him to entertain them while he is in his chains. They put him near the pillars holding up the temple ³.

But Samson is still a man of faith despite all that has happened to him. He is blind but he still has an idea for defeating the Philistines, and he has an instinctive faith that God will hear him. He asks to be placed closer to the pillars holding up the temple so that he can feel them ¹. There are thousands of Philistines present with their leaders ². Samson still believes God is with him. He continues to be a man of faith despite his failures and mistakes. He still is praying, still wants to mix his own wishes (vengeance) with the needs of God's kingdom (defeat of the Philistines). He pulls the two columns between which he is standing and – accepting that his death will be the price of victory – pulls the building down ³. It was his greatest triumph ever against the Philistines. For many years their power to harass the Israelites would be severely reduced. He had fulfilled his life's calling! God had said 'he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines' ⁴ and Samson had achieved God's purpose for his life. His dying moments achieved more than his entire previous life ⁵. He received an honourable burial ⁶ and went down in history as one of the men of faith who had contributed to the progress of God's kingdom.

Samson had weaknesses of character. His overbearing, self-willed, arrogant ways might make us think he was unsuited to the kingdom of God. His powerful sexuality might seem to be one of his weak points. But when the story is all over we can see that God used Samson as he really was. Samson achieved something for the kingdom of God while being just the sort of person he was by nature. One thing was in his favour. He believed God again and again, even to the very end. And a man who goes on believing God will in the end achieve something for God.

¹ 16:23
² 16:24
³ 16:25

¹ 16:26
² 16:27

³ 16:28-30a
⁴ 13:5

⁵ 16:30b
⁶ 16:31



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