

The Man Who Didn't Cut His Hair

Overview



Materials You'll Need

- pens
- potato chips



Scriptures

Judges 16

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God is the source of all power

Behavioral Objective(s)

To identify things we can pray to God about and ask for His help

Memory Verse

"O Lord God, remember me, I pray."
(Jdg 16:28)



Bible Knowledge

The Philistines

The Philistines were organized into a federation under five lords, or rulers, of the five big cities: Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron and Gath. Dagon, sometimes known as Dagan, was the chief god of the Philistines, the god of grain and harvest. Many temples were built to honor Dagon, and the worship there included human sacrifice. These temples were also the local entertainment centers. Just as people today crowd into movie theaters, they would flock to the temples, to be entertained.

Delilah

Delilah was the third Philistine woman Samson was involved with. The first was his dead wife (Jdg 15:6), and the second was a prostitute he met at Gaza (Jdg 16:1). Delilah was a cunning woman with honey on her lips and poison in her heart. Cold and calculating, she toyed with Samson, pretending to love him while looking for personal gain. Each of the five Philistine lords promised her eleven hun-

dred pieces of silver. The total would have weighed more than one hundred pounds. Delilah had to try four times before Samson revealed the true source of his strength. He allowed himself to be deceived by flattery and gave in to temptation and wrong beliefs.

Samson's Relationship With God

Samson's relationship with God had deteriorated so much that he didn't even realize God had left him. By the time he met Delilah, he had already broken two of the three Nazirite rules: he drank wine at his wedding and touched the carcass of the lion he had killed. When he finally told Delilah about his uncut hair, God departed from him. For his whole life, Samson took his strength, as well as God's presence, for granted. Later, the Philistines humiliated him by gouging out his eyes and making him grind grain.

In spite of Samson's past, God still answered Samson's prayer and destroyed the temple and the worshippers of Dagon. God was willing to hear his prayer of confession and used him one final time. The Bible records that Samson had judged Israel for twenty years.



Understanding Your Students

Negative peer pressure is something all children experience. Most of the time, your students will face peer pressures at school or among their friends. Remind your students that they must always do what God wants of them. They should never allow themselves to be talked into doing things they know are wrong.

Use Samson's example to illustrate the importance of overcoming pressure. Both times the women in his life nagged him and he gave in. With his wife, he told her the answer to the riddle after seven days of badgering. He later allowed Delilah to constantly nag and prod him. When he gave into the pressure, he had to pay a heavy price: he lost the strength God had given him and

God left him. He really disappointed God in the way he dealt with his situations.

Tell your students that when they feel like they are being asked to do something they think might be against God's teachings, they should think about what Jesus Christ would do. (Take the time to brainstorm what some of those situations might be; e.g. taking something that doesn't belong to them, lying, etc.) They could also go to their parents or even RE teachers for advice on what to do. Another option they have is to pray to God for His guidance. Because peer pressure can be the downfall of many Christians, it's important to lay down a foundation of understanding very early on. Your students must know that it is important to resist negative peer pressure, and always obey God's commands.



Vocabulary

Victory

to win something

Selfish

to always wants things for yourself and not care about other people or their feelings

Weak

not strong

Prisoner

someone who is taken by the enemy

Pillars

large columns that hold up the roof of a building or house



Before You Teach

When Samson finally revealed the source of his great strength to Delilah and she had his locks cut off, the Bible says that "his strength left him." When she woke him to test him, he thought that he could just get up as usual and use his power to overcome any situation. Samson's biggest mistake was trusting in himself. He was so confident his strength could get him out of any mess that he didn't care he told Delilah the truth, knowing that the Philistines would likely find out. Moreover, he was completely insensitive to the fact that God had departed from him. What does this tell us about Samson's faith?

Samson was dedicated to be a Nazirite even before his birth. This means that Samson would have known about his special status from the time he was old enough to understand what having faith was all about. And he obviously did not forget that he was a Nazirite (Jdg 16:17), even as he was

about to be captured by the enemy. His actions and attitude demonstrate the little regard he had for God and the gift he had been given. Instead of allowing God's presence to strengthen him both physically and spiritually each day, his faith actually became weaker with every decision he made. But even so, God did not leave him right away. In fact, God gave him many chances to turn back because His Spirit did not depart from Samson until his hair-cutting.

We know that our life of faith is like a journey. It takes time and a lot of effort to make it to the final stop, the heavenly kingdom. From Samson's life, we can learn not to take our faith for granted. Even though we are the chosen ones, we still have a role to play. We don't want to wake up one morning and realize that God is no longer a part of our lives. While we may not engage in the kind of drastic events as Samson did, we want to be sure we are moving closer to God's kingdom, and not away from it, as we live out each day.



Bible Story

Samson's Great Strength

Do you remember Samson from the last lesson? He was one of the strongest men ever, and he was set apart for God from birth. He had special rules he had to follow. Do you remember what they were? He could not drink wine, he could not touch any dead bodies, and he could not cut his hair. Because he did not cut his hair, God gave him great strength so that he could help the Israelites fight the Philistines.

Samson had several great victories over the Philistines and killed hundreds of their people. But sometimes, he also used his power for his own selfish reasons. When he was mad at the Philistines for answering his riddle, he went and killed thirty men for their clothes. He didn't always use his strength in the right way. But because he was so strong, the Philistines were beginning to be afraid of him. They wanted to know where Samson's great strength came from so that they could find a way to kill him. They didn't know it was because he didn't cut his long hair.

Samson and Delilah

Now, sometime later, Samson fell in love with a Philistine woman named Delilah. But Delilah didn't really love Samson. When the leaders of the Philistines knew that Samson really liked Delilah, they thought of a plan to get Samson to tell them the secret behind his strength. They would pay Delilah a lot of money and she would try to find out for them. They thought that because Samson loved Delilah so much, he would tell her anything she wanted to know. Delilah agreed to this plan because all she wanted was the money. She didn't really care about Samson. So she went to Samson to see what she could find out.

It wasn't easy to find out Samson's secret. At first, Delilah just asked Samson, "How come you are so strong? Tell me the secret of your great strength. How can you be made weak?"

Samson was not going to tell his secret so he lied and said, "If I am tied up with bowstrings, then I will become weak." When Delilah heard this, she went and told the Philistine rulers. Then the Philistine rulers gave Delilah bowstrings and she

used the bowstrings to tie up Samson while he was asleep. With the Philistines hiding in the room, she called out, "Samson, the Philistines are coming to get you!" When Samson woke up, he snapped the bowstrings easily. Therefore Delilah and the hiding Philistines knew he was not telling them the truth.

After this, Delilah said to Samson, "You lied to me. Come now, tell me your secret. You can tell me what really makes you so strong and how you can be made weak."

Samson knew he should not tell his secret so he lied again and said, "If I am tightly tied up with new ropes that have never been used before, then I will become weak." So Delilah took new ropes and tied Samson with them. With the Philistines hiding in the room again, she called out, "Samson, the Philistines are coming to get you!" But Samson easily broke the ropes off his arms this second time.

Once more Delilah told Samson, "You keep lying to me. Tell me your secret." Samson knew Delilah wanted to know because the Philistines asked her to help them. He wanted to play a trick on the Philistines, so he lied again and said, "If you weave the seven braids of my hair into the cloth on the loom, then I will become weak." (Note to teacher: It may be helpful to have a picture of a loom so that the students will have an idea of what this test involved. Basically, Samson had his hair weaved into the cloth.) So while he was sleeping, Delilah took Samson's seven braids of hair and wove them into the fabric. Once again, Delilah called out, "Samson, the Philistines are coming!" But Samson woke up and he was still as strong as ever and easily broke away.

Delilah Continues Asking Samson

For the third time, Delilah knew Samson had not told her the real reason he was so strong. But she kept asking, day and night, to get Samson to tell her the truth. She told Samson, "How can you say 'I love you' when you won't tell me your secret?" She kept nagging Samson day after day. In the beginning, it was fun to trick the Philistines. But now, Samson was tired of Delilah asking him all the time. Finally, one day, to get her to stop bothering him, he told her the secret—that he was set apart for God since he was born, and if all his hair was cut off, he would become as weak as any other man.

When Delilah heard this, she knew it was the truth. She told the Philistines to come back one last time. That night, Delilah asked Samson to put his head on her lap and he fell asleep on her. Then Delilah called a man to cut off all of Samson's hair. Samson's seven braids were shaved off! Then God left Samson and his strength was gone. When Delilah shouted, "Samson, the Philistines are coming to get you!", he woke up but he could not free himself this time. He was tied up and captured by the Philistines because he had lost all his strength.

Samson's One Last Request

The Philistines made Samson a prisoner. They took out his eyes, put him in chains and made him work very hard. The Philistines did this to him because they really hated him. Now that Samson had no more power, they could do whatever they wanted with him and he could not fight back. Do you know why? God had given him special rules to follow but Samson did not listen to God. He told Delilah the secret to his strength and now God was not with him anymore.

One day, the Philistines gathered together at the temple for a great feast. They were in such a good mood that they shouted, "Bring out Samson!" They brought out Samson so that they could laugh and make fun of him. Samson was taken out of prison and he stood between the pillars that supported the temple. Even though Samson couldn't see, he knew this would be his one last chance to do something to the Philistines. So Samson prayed to God, "O Lord, remember me. Please make me strong again so I can die with the Philistines." When Samson was in prison, his hair began to grow back. He hoped God would hear him and help him one more time. Then Samson placed his right hand on one pillar and his left hand on the other pillar. He pushed with all his might. The pillars cracked and suddenly the temple roof came crashing down. All the Philistine rulers and people in the temple were crushed to death, including Samson. Three thousand Philistines were killed that day.

Even though Samson didn't spend his life doing the things God wanted him to do, in the end, he asked God to help him one last time.



Check For Understanding

1. **Who did Samson fall in love with?** (He fell in love with Delilah, a Philistine woman.)
2. **What did the Philistine rulers ask Delilah to do?** (They wanted her to find out how to make Samson weak so they could capture him.)
3. **What did Samson tell Delilah the first time she asked him? The second time she asked him? The third time she asked him?** (He told her to tie him up with bow-strings. He told her to tie him with fresh ropes. He told her to weave his hair into the cloth on the loom.)
4. **What did Delilah do after Samson finally told her the truth?** (She asked the Philistines to come and cut his hair while

he was sleeping so that they could capture him.)

5. **What happened to Samson when his hair was cut off?** (He lost his power and God left him.)
6. **What did the Philistines do to Samson?** (They took out his eyes, put him in chains and made him work hard.)
7. **What did Samson ask God when he was brought out to the temple?** (He asked God to help him. He wanted to have strength to push the pillars down so all the Philistines there would die with him.)
8. **Do you think Samson obeyed God?** (Allow students to answer.)
9. **What can we learn from Samson?** (Allow students to answer. We should always follow God's teachings and obey His commands. We should not do things selfishly or use God's gifts for our own gain.)



Life Application Story

What Would You Do?

After the Sabbath the Marsh family was driving home from church. In the car, Mrs. Marsh asked Michelle, "What did you learn in class today, Michelle?"

"We learned about the death of a very strong man named Samson!" Michelle answered.

"Tell us about it!" said John excitedly.

"Well, there was a very brave strong man called Samson. He was a Nazirite. This means that he was set apart to serve God," began Michelle proudly.

"That is a hard word. What did you say? A Nazirite?" asked John.

"A Nazirite," Mrs. Marsh jumped in. "A Nazirite had to follow three important rules. One was to never cut his hair. The second was to never drink wine. The last was never to touch any dead bodies."

"That doesn't sound too hard to do, except your hair would be super long if you never cut it!" said John.

"Yes, that's true. Why don't we let Michelle finish telling the story," answered Mrs. Marsh.

"Thanks, Mom. God told Samson's parents never to cut his hair because Samson's strength would come from his hair. God gave him great strength to help the Israelites fight the Philistines, who were their enemy. But Samson did not listen to God. He used his power for his own desires. Then one day he met a woman who tried to trick him into telling her the secret of his strength."

"Did he tell her?" asked John impatiently.

"At first, he didn't. But after many days of asking, Samson didn't want her to bother him anymore. So he told her. Then she went and told the Philistines. They waited until he was asleep and came to cut his hair off. And do you know what happened next?"

"He really lost his strength?" asked John.

"Yes. Once the hair came off, God's power left him and the Philistines tied him up and put him in prison. They also did something really gross. They took his eyes out so he couldn't see," explained Michelle.

"Ouch, that must have hurt a lot!" said John, as he squirmed in his seat.

"But after a while, his hair started to grow back.

One day, the Philistines brought Samson out to make fun of him during a big feast they were having. There were thousands of people there. Samson prayed to God and asked Him to give him strength one more time. Then he pushed really hard on the pillars and the whole building came crashing down."

"So, everyone died?" asked John.

"Everyone died, including Samson," said Michelle.

"That's kind of a sad story," John said.

"Why?" asked Mrs. Marsh.

"Because Samson was so powerful but he still had to die like that, and God left him too," John explained.

"Wait, John, what would you have done if you were Samson?" Mr. Marsh asked.

"I would have listened to God and never tell anyone the secret," John said.

"What do you think, Michelle?" Mrs. Marsh asked.

"I agree with John. I would thank God for giving me the strength. Also, I would obey God and serve Him with the power He gave me," Michelle answered.

"Both of you answered well," Mrs. Marsh said.

"Always remember to put God first in your lives. Also, obey God no matter what you do. If you know that what you do might make God unhappy, then do not do it."

"We know, Mom," answered the kids.

"You were a good story-teller today, Michelle," said John.

"Thanks," said Michelle, as she smiled all the way home.

Questions to Think About

1. **What story was Michelle telling everyone in the car?** (The story of Samson.)
2. **Was Samson's strength really from his long hair?** (The power didn't come from the long hair. It came from God.)
3. **How can we not be like Samson?** (Allow students to answer.)
4. **God gave Samson the special gift of strength. Share one gift or talent that God has given you or to one of your family members.** (Allow students to share. Even when they think they have no talents, as long as they trust and obey God, He will give us the special gift when He thinks we are ready for it.)



Activity 1

The Story of Samson

Do you remember the story of Samson? Put the pictures in the correct order by writing the numbers from 1 to 4. Which one happened first?



Activity 2

Prayer Booklet

Samson did not pray or ask God for help when he should have. We can always pray to God and ask Him for help. Below are some things we can pray to God about. In the blank page, write and draw one more thing you can pray to God about. (Note to teacher: Cut out the page and fold it to create a booklet.)

1. I can pray and ask God to help me decide what to do when I am not sure.
2. I can pray and ask God for the Holy Spirit.
3. I can pray and ask God to forgive me for something I did.
4. I can pray and ask God for...



Activity 3

Role-Play

Materials:

1. nice-looking pens
2. potato chips

Directions:

1. Have two volunteers come up to the front of the room and take turns saying the simple dialogue.
2. After the mini-performance, ask the rest of the class a different way to approach the same situation that would be according to God's will.
3. Discuss after each scenario that it is important to not give into pressure or temptation, like Samson did. It almost always has consequences.
4. If it is too difficult for the students to act it out, ask for one volunteer while the teacher plays the other role. Or another teacher helper can

take on the role so that the students can just observe. This type of role-playing makes the situations more real to the students and can help them understand what they should or shouldn't do.

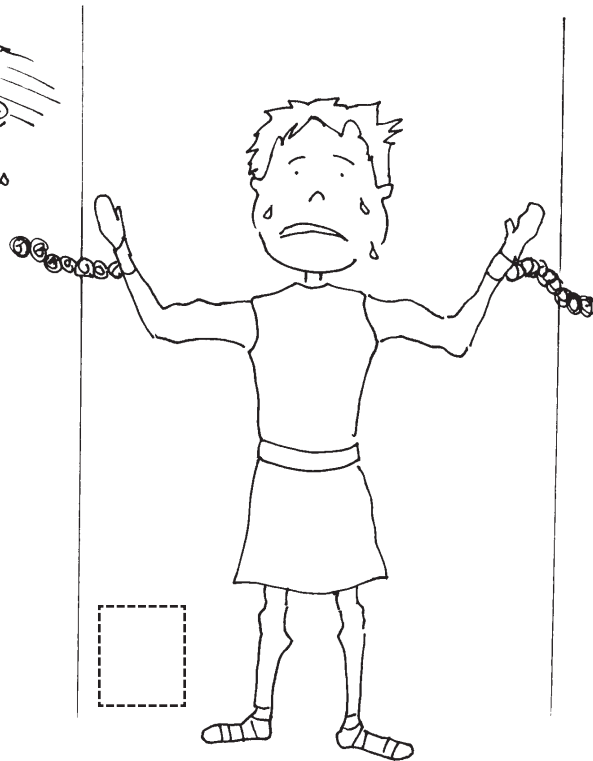
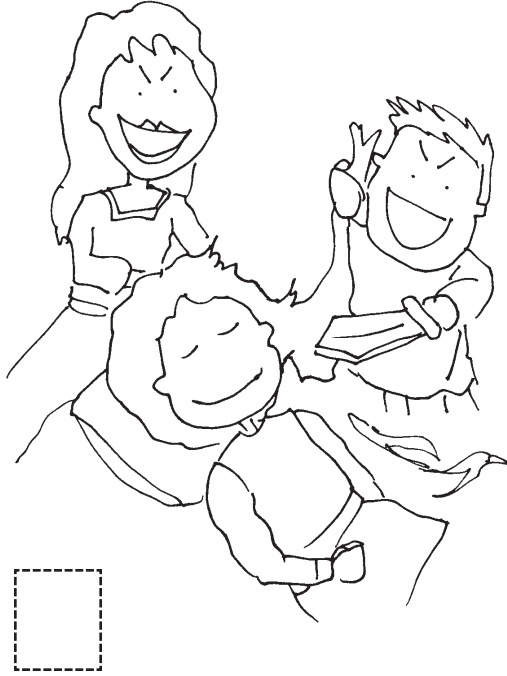
Possible scenarios:

1. A person sees two beautiful pens. He grabs one and puts it in his pocket. The friend says, "Hey, that's not yours." The first person says, "No one saw me, it's okay. You can take the other one. It's really pretty. Maybe no one wants it." The friend grabs the pen and they walk away. What should they have done?
2. A child eats some chips without asking. His mom or dad sees some crumbs on his shirt. The parent asks, "Did you eat chips? I asked you not to eat them before dinner." The child says, "No, I didn't," and walks away because he doesn't want to get into trouble. What should the child have done?
3. Teacher can come up with other possibilities.

Activity 10:1

The Story of Samson

Do you remember the story of Samson? Put the pictures in the correct order by writing the numbers from 1 to 4. Which one happened first?



Activity 10:2

Prayer Booklet

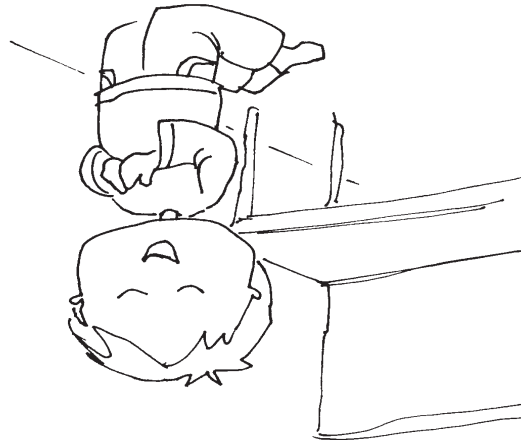
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cut along thick line

cut along thick line



I can pray and ask God to forgive me for something I did.



I can pray to God and ask for the Holy Spirit.

fold

I can pray and ask God to

fold



I can pray and ask God to help me decide what to do when I am not sure.