



THE BOOK OF JUDGES: SAMSON

Text: Judges 13–16

Series focus: Exploring Judges through deeply gifted yet deeply flawed deliverers. God works through broken instruments.

Opening Illustration: The Jenga Tower

- Each block removed represents a moral compromise
- No single action causes collapse — erosion is cumulative
- Integrity weakens slowly before it fails suddenly

Historical & Narrative Setup

- Israel again does evil and falls under Philistine oppression
- God raises Samson as a divinely appointed deliverer
- Samson's life mirrors Israel's moral decline

Samson's Calling and Vow

- Miraculously conceived and set apart from birth
- Called to lifelong Nazirite devotion
- Symbol of Israel's distinct calling among the nations

A Pattern of Compromise

- Driven by desire rather than obedience
- Breaks his Nazirite vow piece by piece
- Uses God's gift for personal revenge rather than rescue
- Gradual erosion precedes sudden collapse

Competency Without Character

- Samson's gifting opens doors his character cannot sustain
- God delivers Israel despite Samson's failures
- A widening character gap leads to destruction

Samson's Fall and Final Act

- Delilah exploits repeated compromise
- Hair cut marks final breach of devotion
- Captured, blinded, enslaved
- God grants strength one final time

Theological Emphasis

- God remains faithful even when leaders fail
- Calling does not replace obedience
- God's purposes outlast human weakness

Practice: Guarding Integrity

- Notice the small compromises you tolerate
- Strengthen character where no one sees
- Choose obedience when it costs you
- Ask: *Which block am I removing right now?*

Connect Group Discussion Warm Up:

1. Do you have a habit, hobby, or routine where you've noticed how small choices over time make a big difference? Share briefly.
2. What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon? Was there a moment, phrase, or image that stayed with you?

Study & Discussion:

1. Samson is chosen and gifted by God from birth, yet his character does not develop at the same pace as his calling.

What do you think the story is saying about the relationship between gifting and character?

Where do you see the tension between the two in everyday life?

2. Samson's downfall is not the result of one sudden failure, but a long pattern of small compromises.

Why are small compromises often easier to justify than obvious disobedience?

How can repeated "minor" decisions shape the direction of a life?

3. The book of Judges ends by saying that everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

In what ways does Samson embody that mindset?

Where do you see this way of thinking reflected in our culture today?

4. God still brings deliverance through Samson, even though Samson's motives are often selfish and flawed.

What does this reveal about God's faithfulness?

How should this shape the way we respond when we experience failure — in ourselves or in others?

Practice: Guarding Integrity in Small Things

This week, pay attention to moments when you're tempted to think,

"It's not a big deal," or "This doesn't really matter."

Not major moral failures — small, everyday moments:

- Cutting corners when it would be easier
- Speaking carelessly about others
- Choosing comfort over obedience
- Ignoring a nudge from the Holy Spirit

Each time you notice hesitation or justification, recognize it as a small compromise moment.

Instead of negotiating with it, practice responding with a simple prayer:

"God, help me choose what is right here."

At the end of the week, reflect on two questions:

1. Where did I respond quickly with integrity?
2. Where did compromise seem small, but cost me something?