

**The Life of David:  
No Vengeance:  
Surrendering All “Getting Even” to God  
I Samuel 23:29-25:1; Psalms 35, 36, 7 & 39**

God has given us an inspired record of over 2900 hundred different people in the Bible, for a purpose.

God through those lives captured by Him in His Word wants to show us through their lives how to live right (for doctrine), how to live wrong (for reproof), how to get right (for correction), and how to stay right (instruction in righteousness).

One of those lives captured on the pages of Scripture is Samson, an example of a man who was a hero of the faith, but lived WRONG. His life was characterized by life-long struggles with two big sins: lust and vengeance. We all struggle to some extent with both of those temptations. But, Samson gave into those temptations on a regular basis until they DOMINATED his life.

Romans 12:19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,”[Deuteronomy 32:35] says the Lord.

**Consequences of  
Bad Choices**

The life of Samson is a tragic story of the cost of yielding to sin.

His life is recorded in Judges as a picture of the destructive power of sin. The greatest enemy Samson had was himself. What a warning to each of us who have the same problem—it is called our flesh. Within each of us a traitorous inclination against God never slumbers, and always smolders. Given any amount of fuel either through the desires of the body, the desires of the eyes or the pride of life—and it blazes to life in a conflagration of destruction.

Samson’s history is an illustration of Paul’s warning in 1 Cor. 9:27:

But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Samson was disqualified. In Heaven he was remembered as a man of faith. On earth he was remembered as a man who was disqualified. Hebrews 11:32 cites him for his faith in God’s Word, but apart from this, very little can be said on his behalf.

As a young man probably in his teens, we get the first indicator that Samson was not going the direction the Lord had pointed him. He begins to live by his desires and not God’s. He begins to serve his own lusts and not God’s Words. A string of women begin to parade through his life. In fact **seven times** Samson is guided by the lust of his eyes when he sees women that please him. That was a dangerous choice each time. Here is the list: Judges 14:1, 2, 3, 7; 15:1, 2; 16:1.

The final, and deadliest woman is Delilah in Judges 16.4. Her name has become synonymous with lust, deceit, betrayal and ruin. She tries to find the secret of his strength for an enormous bribe. She finally wears him down. Samson knows it is his hair and in a series of three lies he slowly gives clues.

### **Sin Binds, Blinds, And then Grinds**

Samson's soiled life is recorded. His defeats are unvarnished and clear for all to see. Practicing of sin blinds us, then sin slowly binds us with its fetters and finally blinded and bound we have to go grinding through life because of sin. Talk to anybody that's lived an immoral life that's come to Christ: ask them how empty and briefly exciting, sin really was.

Sin has a passing pleasure that slowly blinds, then it binds us with cords that we forge for ourselves that we cannot break; and finally we become the one who is grinding out an existence totally the captive of sin. God forgives, God restores, and God uses Samson one final time.

What was Samson's problem?

1. First, Samson<sup>1</sup> was **dominated by lust**. That passion led Samson to desire a Philistine woman as a wife, which was strictly forbidden by God's Law. In addition, that passion led him to liaisons with prostitutes, like the one with the woman Delilah who betrayed him for money. How many times do men say no, no, I'm doing that because I love her. No- love can wait to fulfill a legitimate desire, lust can't. Lust always fulfills legitimate desires in an illegitimate way. You want to know the difference between love and lust? Can you wait? If you can't it's lust. Love always waits.

2. Second, Samson was **driven by pride and revenge**. He was more moved by anger at personal affronts to strike out at the Philistines, than he was moved by the suffering of the people he was supposed to lead (cf. 14:19-20; 15:7-8; 16:28).

Judges 14:19-20 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes of clothing to those who had explained the riddle. **So his anger was aroused**, and he went back up to his father's house. 20 And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.

Judges 15:7-8 Samson said to them, "Since you would do a thing like this, I will **surely take revenge on you**, and after that I will cease." 8 So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

Judges 16:28 Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, "O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow **take vengeance** on the Philistines for my two eyes!"

### **Unforsaken Sin Is Very Costly**

The rest of the story shows the tragic end of the believer who will not let God have his way with his life. From 16.20 on, Samson does nothing but lose. What exactly did Samson lose?

1. **Samson loses his hair**, the symbol of his Nazarite dedication; for that dedication had long

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<sup>1</sup> Richards, Lawrence O., *The Teacher's Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1987.

since been abandoned. God allowed the outward symbol of it to be taken away from him.

2. **Samson loses his strength**, but doesn't even know it until he is overpowered. Judges 16:20 And she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" So he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!" **But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him.**
3. **Samson loses his sight**, as the Philistines put out his eyes.
4. **Samson loses his freedom**, for they bind him with fetters of brass.
5. **Samson loses his usefulness to the Lord**, for he ends up grinding corn instead of fighting God's battles. What a picture of sin. 1<sup>st</sup> sin blinds, then sin binds, and finally sin grinds.
6. **Samson loses his testimony**, for he was the laughingstock of the Philistines. Their fish-god Dagon, not the God of Israel, was given all the glory.
7. **Samson loses his life**. Samson was a castaway he had committed sin unto death, and God had to take him off the scene. His loved ones claimed his body and buried him "between Zorah and Eshtaol"—the very place where he had started his ministry (13:25).

So mighty Samson was crippled by his temptations fed until they became raging lusts that drove him to disobedience, sin, and ultimately his own destruction. But God forgave him as his last words were cried out to the Lord; apparently during the grinding at the mill, Samson repented of his sin.

God offered him one more chance to act by faith. His hair had begun to grow and Samson remembered his calling. He asked God for strength to win one more victory over the enemy. God answered his prayer, but in defeating others, Samson lost his own life.

Samson is a powerful illustration of friendship with the world through the lusts of the flesh—and those destructive powers that the lusts of the flesh wield.

- Samson illustrates people who have power to conquer others, but who cannot conquer themselves.
- He could easily break the bonds that men put on him, but the shackles of his own sin gradually grew stronger on his soul.
- He could have been remembered for what he built up, but instead everyone but God only remembers what he destroyed: lions, foxes, fields, gates, soldiers, women's purity, and his own life and ministry.

Samson is a powerful reminder of God's grace. Though he descended into wandering far from his calling and consecration—the Lord never let go of him.

God's grace tells us that even if we have lived like Samson—anyone can who will turn in faith and repent and look to God.

As a lost person, turn while you hear His voice.

As a believer, there is no one who has gone too far to miss God's grace if you'll respond while you hear His voice.

### **The Man who Would Not Get Even**

Now think of what a contrast Samson's life is to David. David's choice repeatedly through life was to surrender his desire for vengeance to the Lord. His motto was NO REVENGE.

David and Samson were mighty warriors. Samson was clearly stronger and able alone to face armies and defeat them alone. But Samson was his own worst enemy and barely makes it to the list of God's servants. David on the other hand had many flaws but none of them dominated his life. Some dominated moments or days, but none were life-long defeating sins.

We left off last time with David, we were in First Samuel 23:29 he is hiding in the cave at En-Gedi, as King Saul goes off to fight the Philistines. Turn there with me as we see what is going on in David's life.

I Samuel 23:29-25:1 Then David went up from there and dwelt in strongholds at En Gedi. 24:1 Now it happened, when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, "Take note! David is in the Wilderness of En Gedi." 2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats. 3 So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.) 4 Then the men of David said to him, "This is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.'" And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe. 5 Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe. 6 And he said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD." 7 So David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on his way. 8 David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down. 9 And David said to Saul: "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Indeed David seeks your harm'? 10 Look, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and someone urged me to kill you. But my eye spared you, and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's anointed.' 11 Moreover, my father, see! Yes, see the corner of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the corner of your robe, and did not kill you, know and see that there is neither evil nor rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against you. Yet you hunt my life to take it. 12 Let the LORD judge between you and me, and let the LORD avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you. 13 As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Wickedness proceeds from the wicked.' But my hand shall not be against you. 14 After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A flea? 15 Therefore let the LORD be judge, and judge between you and me, and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand." 16 So it was, when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. 17 Then he said to David: "You are more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil. 18 And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me; for when the LORD delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me. 19 For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. 20 And now I know indeed that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. 21 Therefore swear now to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father's house." 22 So David swore to Saul. And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold. 25:1 Then Samuel died; and the Israelites

gathered together and lamented for him, and buried him at his home in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the Wilderness of Paran.

What ever else the Lord was doing, we know one thing for sure, the Lord was giving David the grace to not give in to revenge.

While living in the cave at En Gedi, or near that time, David seems to have written Psalm 35 about the Lord being the avenger of His people.

Open there with me to this public and eternal declaration by David.

**Psalm 35:  
Pouring out My Troubles to God  
Instead of Choking on Them Myself**

A Psalm of David.

**Point One: Give Your Hurts to God, Let Him Deal with them:**

v. 1-8 Plead my cause, O LORD, with those who strive with me; Fight against those who fight against me. 2 Take hold of shield and buckler, And stand up for my help. 3 Also draw out the spear, And stop those who pursue me Say to my soul, "I am your salvation." 4 Let those be put to shame and brought to dishonor Who seek after my life; Let those be turned back and brought to confusion Who plot my hurt. 5 Let them be like chaff before the wind, And let the angel of the LORD chase them. 6 Let their way be dark and slippery, And let the angel of the LORD pursue them. 7 For without cause they have hidden their net for me in a pit, Which they have dug without cause for my life. 8 Let destruction come upon him unexpectedly, And let his net that he has hidden catch himself; Into that very destruction let him fall.

**Point Two: Let the Lord Comfort you**

v. 9-10 And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD; It shall rejoice in His salvation. 10 All my bones shall say, "LORD, who is like You, Delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, Yes, the poor and the needy from him who plunders him?"

**Point Three: Be Honest with God about how much it hurts:**

v. 11-21 Fierce witnesses rise up; They ask me things that I do not know. 12 They reward me evil for good, To the sorrow of my soul. 13 But as for me, when they were sick, My clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting; And my prayer would return to my own heart. 14 I paced about as though he were my friend or brother; I bowed down heavily, as one who mourns for his mother. 15 But in my adversity they rejoiced and gathered together; Attackers gathered against me, And I did not know it; They tore at me and did not cease; 16 With ungodly mockers at feasts They gnashed at me with their teeth. 17 Lord, how long will You look on? Rescue me from their destructions, My precious life from the lions. 18 I will give You thanks in the great assembly; I will praise You among many people. 19 Let them not rejoice over me who are wrongfully my enemies; Nor let them wink with the eye who hate me without a cause. 20 For they do not speak peace, But they devise deceitful matters Against the quiet ones in the land. 21 They also opened their mouth wide against me, And said, "Aha, aha! Our eyes have seen it."

***Point Four: Ask the Lord to Take over your Situation:***

v. 22-28 This You have seen, O LORD; Do not keep silence. O Lord, do not be far from me. 23 Stir up Yourself, and awake to my vindication, To my cause, my God and my Lord. 24 Vindicate me, O LORD my God, according to Your righteousness; And let them not rejoice over me. 25 Let them not say in their hearts, “Ah, so we would have it!” Let them not say, “We have swallowed him up.” 26 Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion Who rejoice at my hurt; Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor Who exalt themselves against me. 27 Let them shout for joy and be glad, Who favor my righteous cause; And let them say continually, “Let the LORD be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.” 28 And my tongue shall speak of Your righteousness And of Your praise all the day long.

Don't you love the liberty David feels to express negative emotions to the Lord?

Whenever he voiced complaints and appeals, however, he consistently reigned in his wayward emotions and put his focus on the Lord instead—and that usually caused David to break forth in praise.

When God is at work in us it is not theoretical, it is real-time, daily life that the Lord wants to change in us. So while living in the refreshing oasis at En Gedi, David has summarized his reflections on the character of God in the inspired songs that make up Psalms 35 & 36. But now I Samuel 24 is the “road test”.

Classroom instruction is one thing, steering the car around corners, through traffic, and into parking spaces is a whole different matter.

So to deepen these truths and make them a part of the fabric of David's life, the Lord allows Saul to start hunting David again.

Remember Psalm 35, and decide now that you will **Pour out your troubles to God** instead of choking on them yourself.

***One: Give Your Hurts to God, Let Him Deal with them;***

***Two: Let the Lord Comfort you;***

***Three: Be Honest with God about how much it hurts;***

***Four: Ask the Lord to Take over your Situation.***

David obeyed the truth of Dt. 32 we have in Romans 12 and was the man of God who would not get even. As Psalm 35 shows us, so should we:

Romans 12:19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,”[Deuteronomy 32:35] says the Lord.

Psalm 36, also written at this time, presents a contrast between man's wickedness and God's perfections.

**Psalm 36:  
Seeing God More Perfectly  
Contrasted to Man's Wickedness**

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD.

- 1 An oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked:  
There is no fear of God before his eyes.
- 2 For he flatters himself in his own eyes,  
When he finds out his iniquity and when he hates.
- 3 The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit;  
He has ceased to be wise and to do good.
- 4 He devises wickedness on his bed;  
He sets himself in a way that is not good;  
He does not abhor evil.
  
- 5 Your mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens;  
Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.
- 6 Your righteousness is like the great mountains;  
Your judgments are a great deep;  
O LORD, You preserve man and beast.
  
- 7 How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God!  
Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings.
- 8 They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house,  
And You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures.
- 9 For with You is the fountain of life;  
In Your light we see light.
  
- 10 Oh, continue Your lovingkindness to those who know You,  
And Your righteousness to the upright in heart.
- 11 Let not the foot of pride come against me,  
And let not the hand of the wicked drive me away.
- 12 There the workers of iniquity have fallen;  
They have been cast down and are not able to rise.

After describing the characteristics of the wicked, mid-Psalms David couldn't help but burst forth, praising God's infinite attributes:

*Your **mercy**, O LORD, is in the heavens; Your **faithfulness** reaches to the clouds. Your **righteousness** is like the great mountains; Your **judgments** are a great deep; O LORD, You preserve man and beast. How precious is Your **lovingkindness**, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures. **For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light** (Psalm 36:5-9).*

When God is at work in us it is not theoretical, it is real-time, daily life that the Lord wants to change in us. So while living in the refreshing oasis at En Gedi, David has summarized his reflections on the character of God in the inspired songs that make up Psalms 35 & 36. But now is the "road test". Classroom instruction is one thing, steering the car around corners, through traffic, and into parking spaces is a whole different matter. So to deepen these truths and make them a part of the fabric of David's life, the Lord allows Saul to start hunting David again.