

XXXIX

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Leader Conversation Guide – XXXIX: Judges - Part 1

Main Idea

Have you ever found yourself drifting away from God, not in one giant leap, but in a series of small, seemingly insignificant steps? The story of Samson in Judges 13-16 serves as a powerful reminder that spiritual compromise often happens gradually. Samson was set apart from birth for God's purposes, yet his choices—taunting his enemies, rationalizing sin, and assuming his disobedience would have no consequences—led him down a path of destruction.

Judges 21:25 sums up the state of Israel during this time: “In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.” This wasn't just Israel's problem—it's a struggle we all face. When we follow our own desires instead of God's ways, we step into dangerous territory. Yet, even in Samson's failure, we see a thread of hope. His story reminds us that no matter how far we fall, God's grace is still at work, calling us back.

As we dive into this discussion, we'll reflect on the small steps that lead us away from God, the consequences of compromise, and the faithfulness of God even when we fail. Let's lean in and allow His Word to challenge and change us.

**There is a way that appears to be right
but in the end it leads to death.**

PROVERBS 14:12

Make It Practical

Samson taunted his enemy:

- Judges 16:1-3 – Samson repeatedly put himself in dangerous situations, assuming he could handle them.
- He underestimated the consequences of his actions and overestimated his own strength.

Samson rationalized the same old sin:

- Judges 16:5 – The Philistines used Delilah to exploit Samson's weakness, but he continued to play with temptation.
- Instead of fleeing from sin, he justified his actions, believing he was in control.

Samson assumed his disobedience would never cost him:

- Judges 16:20 – He thought he could shake himself free, but he didn't realize that the Lord had left him.
- He took God's presence and power for granted, learning too late that disobedience has consequences.

Talk About It

- Samson didn't ruin his life all at once; he did it one step at a time. Can you identify any small compromises or patterns in your own life that could be leading you away from God's best? How can you course-correct before they lead to bigger consequences?
- Judges 21:25 says, "All the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes." Where do you see this mindset at work in today's culture? How can we guard against making decisions based on what feels right instead of what aligns with God's truth?
- Even after Samson's failure, Judges 16:22 notes that "the hair on his head began to grow again." What does this detail reveal about God's grace? How have you seen God restore or redeem a situation in your own life despite past mistakes?

**Godliness makes a nation great,
but sin is a disgrace to any people.**

PROVERBS 14:34

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word and the lessons we can learn from Samson's life. Help us to recognize the small steps that can lead us away from You and give us the wisdom and strength to turn back before it's too late. Holy Spirit, reveal any areas where we've been compromising, and guide us to walk in obedience to Your truth. Thank You for Your grace that meets us even in our failures. We trust in Your power to restore and redeem. Strengthen us to follow You wholeheartedly this week. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Next Steps

Identify Your Weak Spots – Take time to reflect on areas where you might be compromising spiritually. Ask God to reveal any patterns of sin or self-deception in your life.

Set Up Guardrails – Don't flirt with temptation like Samson did. Establish boundaries that help you avoid situations where you're likely to struggle. This might mean accountability, limiting certain influences, or making intentional choices to pursue holiness.

Stay Rooted in God's Word – Judges 21:25 reminds us that when people do what seems right in their own eyes, they drift away from God. Commit to reading Scripture daily and letting His truth shape your decisions.

Be Honest with Yourself and Others – You are only as strong as you are honest. Share with a trusted friend or mentor where you need help, and invite accountability into your life.

Turn Back to God – No matter how far you've strayed, God's grace is still available. Like Samson's hair growing back (Judges 16:22), restoration is possible. If you need a fresh start, take a step toward repentance and realign your heart with Him.

Pray for Strength and Wisdom – Ask God for the strength to resist temptation and the wisdom to make decisions that honor Him. Lean on His power, not your own.