

CONFIDENCE

WEEK 3

LIVING LIKE YOU BELIEVE WHAT GOD SAYS IS TRUE

Samson
Judges 13–16

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 27:13

A man named **Manoah** lived in the land of Israel during difficult times. The Philistines had been harassing God’s people for decades. And Manoah and his wife had been unable to have children. But one day an angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah’s wife.

“You will have a son,” the angel announced. “The hair on his head must never be cut. . . . He will be set apart to God [and] . . . take the lead in saving Israel from the power of the Philistines.”

Sure enough, months later, Manoah and his wife had a baby. God blessed the boy, Samson, as he grew. God’s Spirit began to work in his life, making him strong and powerful.

One day, as Samson hiked along a road toward Philistine territory, a lion came plunging toward him, ready to attack. The Spirit of the Lord came on Samson. He rushed at the lion and wrestled it down, tearing it apart with his bare hands!

Another time, Samson punished the Philistines by capturing 300 foxes, tying flaming torches to their tails, and setting them loose in the Philistine fields and vineyards.

The Philistines became so angry with Samson they set up camp to attack the Israelites.

“We haven’t done anything to you!” protested the Israelites.

“Well, Samson has!” barked a Philistine. “We’ve come to take him prisoner.”

Samson’s own people were so scared that they tied him up and took him to the Philistine camp. But when the Philistines tried to grab Samson, the Spirit of the Lord came on him, and he burst free from the ropes. Then he grabbed the jawbone of a donkey and attacked, striking down one thousand Philistines.

“By using a donkey’s jawbone, I’ve made them look like donkeys!” he announced in triumph.

For twenty years, Samson led the Israelites and kept the Philistine armies at bay. He never once cut his hair. But though Samson was strong, he wasn’t always wise—especially when he fell in love with a Philistine woman named Delilah.

“Your hair is soft and shiny like the wing of a raven!” he flattered her.

***“Tell me what makes you so strong,”
Delilah begged.***

Delilah surveyed Samson’s wild, shaggy mane of hair, which had never been cut. “Well, your hair is totally. . . um, like a really, really, really long. . . hairy. . . hair rope,” she said at last.

The Philistine rulers saw Samson’s crush as the perfect opportunity to trap him. They cornered Delilah.

“Make him tell you why he’s so strong!” they ordered. “Then we can get him. Oh, and we’ll give you a lot of silver,” they added.

Delilah waited for the perfect opportunity and batted her long eyelashes at Samson. “Tell me what makes you so strong,” she begged. “How could

someone tie you up so you couldn't get away?"

"Tie me up with seven new bowstrings," Samson said. "Then I'll become as weak as any other man."

Delilah told the Philistine rulers, and they brought her seven new bowstrings. Later, while Samson was napping, Delilah tied the heavy strings tightly around him while men hid in the room.

When Samson was completely entangled, Delilah pretended to panic. *"Samson! The Philistines are attacking you!"* she screamed.

"What? Where?!" cried Samson. Leaping up, he flexed. The thick strings snapped instantly.

Later, Delilah tried again. *"You've made me look foolish,"* she pouted. *"You told me a lie. Come on. Tell me how you can be tied up."*

"Okay," Samson agreed. *"Tie me with new ropes."*

Delilah and the Philistines tried again. But Samson busted free from the ropes, just as easily as the bowstrings. So Delilah tried yet another time.

"Weave my hair into the cloth on a loom," Samson told her.

Delilah tried that, too, but Samson freed himself again. Nothing could trap him.

"How can you say you love me when you won't tell me your secret?" whined Delilah. And when Samson still wouldn't tell her the truth, she kept at him, day after day.

"Please?"

"C'mon, just say it."

"Pretty please?"

"You're so mean."

"You don't loooooove meeeeeee!"

"Fine!" snapped Samson at last. *"Just stop nagging!"*

Delilah stopped crying immediately and batted her long eyelashes again.

“My hair has never been cut. That’s because I’ve been . . . set apart to God,” Samson explained. *“If you shave my head, I won’t be strong anymore.”*

Delilah could barely contain her glee. As soon as Samson was sleeping, she called someone to come shave off all his hair. Then she cried out, *“Samson! The Philistines are attacking you!”*

“What? Where?!” he cried, jumping up.

Philistines poured into the room and grabbed Samson. But this time, he couldn’t escape. He had become so careless he believed he could get out of any trouble on his own. But now his strength was gone.

The Philistines poked out Samson’s eyes to keep him from causing any more trouble for them. They took them to their country and tied him with bronze chains.

Some time later, thousands of rulers of the Philistines gathered at the temple of their false god to celebrate their triumph. They even brought Samson in to mock him.

***“God,” Samson prayed.
“Please make me strong
just one more time.”***

“Put on a show for us!” they mocked.

What they didn’t realize was that Samson’s hair had begun to grow back.

“Let me . . . lean against . . . the pillars,” he begged.

Samson’s jailers led him to stand near the heavy pillars that held up the

entire temple. And at last, Samson remembered the true source of his strength.

“God,” he prayed, “show me that You still have concern for me. *Please make me strong just one more time.*”

Samson reached out his left hand and found one pillar. He searched with his right and found another.

“*Let me die together with the Philistines!*” he shouted.

Then he shoved hard with all his might.

The pillars toppled. The temple caved in all around. Samson and the Philistines were crushed beneath the rubble. Though Samson died that day, at the end, he had turned back to God for strength to save God’s people.



Let's
Talk!

Who's the strongest person you know?

Share with each other. Strength can mean physical strength like Samson's, but it can also mean the will and power to face difficult situations. Samson was strong for sure . . . but that didn't mean he was wise. He grew so confident in his own strength that he forgot God was the true source of his strength. You will probably never have your hair woven into a loom, but you'll definitely face difficult circumstances. And because God is stronger than anyone, He can give you His strength to stand tall and live with confidence, no matter what comes your way. Each of you share something difficult you're facing right now. Then pray for each other, that God will help you live with confidence in His strength this week.