

A GREAT LOSS

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

TRUST UNDERSTANDING CONSEQUENCES SUBMIT DECISION FOOLISH

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Judges 16:4-31.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To understand that making foolish decisions always brings about bad consequences.

MEMORY VERSE

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

It is good for preadolescents to know that the decisions they make will always have consequences, and some of them will affect their whole lives.

The story of Samson began full of great promises, but ended in tragedy. His bad decisions had negative effects. He forgot what the purpose of his life was, and by losing his focus, he was not careful about his actions.

Young people should reflect on the decisions they make, especially when choosing their friends.

Through the story of Samson, they will learn that when decisions are not submitted to the will of God, they always produce painful consequences. Remind them that God wants to get them away from bad decisions, and he will be faithful to help them if they seek divine wisdom.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Judges 16:4-31. The story of Samson and Delilah is tragic because Samson rejected the wonderful plans that God had for his life. His foolish decisions distracted him, and he ended up blind and a slave to the Philistines. His story shows how quickly we can destroy a good relationship with God.

Samson should have left Delilah. The Bible does not say that she was a Philistine, but she had strong ties to them, and the leaders paid her to discover the secret of Samson's strength. After several false answers, he finally gave in to her persistence and revealed his secret.

As a result of such a decision, Samson lost his hair, his strength, his sight and his freedom. But the story does not end there. The Philistines did not count on the faithfulness of God. While Samson was grinding grain in the prison, his hair grew back.

In the celebration to honor the idol Dagon, the Philistines took Samson to mock him. But when he prayed for strength, God answered him. Then he knocked down the two pillars of the temple and the whole structure fell, killing him and thousands of Philistines.

Samson's story shows that making decisions without wisdom leads to destruction, but it also shows that God remains faithful, in spite of human errors.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Facing peer pressure

Ask the class: Have you ever felt pressured to do something that is not right? Mention some example, and allow one or two of the students to tell about a particular situation they have experienced.

Tell them that peer pressure is very strong at this stage of life. In today's lesson, they will learn about a man who gave in to the pressures and suffered terrible consequences.

If possible, show figures of artists or athletes that students know. Ask: "How different would our heroes look without hair?" (allow responses) Then ask: "Would it affect their voice or ability to play sports?" Listen to their comments, and then introduce them to this lesson's character, who lost his hair by being pressured by a bad person.

TEACH THE LESSON

Depending on the number of students in your class, organize them to do the following skit. Another option is to choose someone to read the passage from Judges 16:4-31 and assign each person a character. Both methods require rehearsals in order to be good and capture the students' attention.

Narrator: Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah. The Philistine rulers visited her to propose a deal.

Philistines: Try to deceive him to find out the secret of his strength. That way we can defeat him. If you do, each one of us will give you one thousand one hundred silver shekels.

Narrator: Delilah wanted the money, so she tried to get Samson to tell her his secret.

Delilah: Tell me the secret of your strength and how you can be tied up and subdued.

Samson: If anyone ties me with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, I'll become as weak as any other man.

Narrator: The Philistine rulers brought her seven fresh bowstrings that had not been dried, and Delilah tied up Samson while some Philistines waited in hiding.

Delilah: Samson, the Philistines are here to attack you!

Narrator: Samson got up, breaking the bowstrings easily. Delilah was disappointed to see that Samson had not told her the truth. So, she asked again what his secret was.

Delilah: You have made a fool of me; you lied to me. Come now, tell me how you can be tied.

Samson: If you tie me tightly with new ropes that no one has used, then I will become as weak as any other man.

Narrator: Delilah tied Samson with new ropes and, like the first time, the Philistines were hiding in the next room.

Delilah: Samson, the Philistines are here to attack you!

Narrator: Samson broke the ropes as if they had been threads.

Delilah: You made a fool of me again! You have to tell me how to tie you up.

Samson: If you weave the seven braids of my hair into the fabric on the loom and tighten it with the pin, I'll become as weak as any other man.

Narrator: While Samson was sleeping, Delilah did everything he had said.

Delilah: Samson, the Philistines are here to attack you!

Narrator: Samson instantly got up and pulled up the pin and the loom with the fabric.

Delilah: Liar! How can you say you love me? You have made of fool of me three times, and you still won't tell me the secret of your strength.

Narrator: Delilah kept insisting, asking the same question over and over. Finally, Samson got tired of her nagging and told her his secret.

Samson: No one has ever cut my hair, because before I was born I was consecrated to God as a Nazirite. If you cut my hair, I will lose my strength and be as weak as any man.

Narrator: Delilah realized that this time he had told her the truth. Then she sent word to the Philistine rulers: "Come back once more; he has told me everything!" They arrived with the money in their hands. After Delilah put Samson to sleep on her lap, she called a man to come and cut off the seven braids of his head.

Delilah: Samson, the Philistines are here to attack you!

Samson: (Waking up) I'll escape just like I did before.

Narrator: This time the strength had abandoned Samson. The Philistines captured him, took his eyes out and took him to Gaza. There, binding him with bronze shackles, they put him to work in the prison mill. However, his hair began to grow again.

Narrator 2: The rulers of the Philistines decided to celebrate their victory and offer sacrifices to Dagon, because they thought that their god had delivered them from their enemy, Samson.

In the middle of the celebration, they asked for Samson to be brought out to entertain them. Then they stood him among the pillars. Samson said to the young man who was guiding him:

Samson: Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so I may lean against them.

Narrator 2: The temple was full of men and women, and all the rulers of the Philistines were there. On the roof there were about three thousand people watching Samson perform.

Samson: Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.

Narrator 2: Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood, and braced himself against them.

Samson: Let me die with the Philistines!

Narrator 2: Then he pushed with all his strength, and the temple collapsed on the Philistines and all who were there. More were killed when Samson died than he had killed in all his life. (Judges 16)

CONNECT THE LESSON

Decisions

Divide into small groups such as pairs, or if you have only a few students assign a question to each person, and ask them to work on the activity suggested in Student Activity Sheet #335-A. Allow a certain time for the questions to be answered.

When time is up, allow them to present their answers.

When did Samson's fall begin?

When he trusted Delilah.

What could Samson have done to avoid his fall?

Get away from Delilah. Ask for help, wisdom and strength from God.

What was the result of Samson revealing his secret of Delilah?

He broke his vows to God, he lost his strength and the Philistines captured him.

What should have been some hints to Samson that he could not trust Delilah?

She insisted on asking the same questions and informed the Philistines about the source of his strength.

What do you think God wanted for Samson's life?

To be obedient to his laws and use the strength he had given him.

In your opinion, why did Samson's life end the way it did?

Bad decisions = bad consequences

Write the following sentences on small cards, and give one to each of your students. They will have to take turns reading their cards. Some will read the decisions and others the respective consequences. After reading each "consequence", take time to discuss the topic. This is a good opportunity to emphasize Christian values in the lives of your students.

Decisions

Consequences

Choosing bad company.

I will get in trouble.

Cheating on a test.

I will not learn.

Keeping something that is not yours.

People will not trust me.

Having sex before marriage.

Unplanned pregnancy.

Insulting people.

Provokes fights.

You can add more cards, depending on the number of students.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Write the memory verse on the board. Teach the children the passage, word by word, and have them repeat it several times until they learn it. Then, start deleting a word and have them repeat the whole verse. Then erase another and so on until they say it by memory. Every time you delete a word, encourage them by making comments like: I'm not sure you can say it, it is very difficult, etc. (to challenge them). Celebrate when they say it well. In the end, when there is not anything written on the board, have them repeat it one more time with all their strength.

It is likely that many of your students have memorized the verse. We suggest that you reward them with a treat or other symbolic gift as an incentive. In this way, the effort of each student is recognized. Student Activity Sheet #335-B can be used as a certificate of memory for the recent three units of lessons.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Gather your students in a circle. Pray for God to give them strength to face negative pressures from their friends, so that they always make the right decisions.

Encourage

Review what the group learned during these four lessons, and encourage them to practice what they have learned.

Invite

Invite the group to attend the next session to begin to study the new unit. Remind them that this is a good time to welcome new members to the group.