

Judges, Part 4 – Ignoring The Boundaries

Judges 13:1-5 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years. [2] And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not. [3] And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. [4] Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: [5] For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

Judges 13:24-25 And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. [25] And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

BOUNDARIES – from day one we have to contend with them! Moments after your birth you were wrapped in a blanket and put into a bed that looked something like a fish tank on wheels. Then when you got home, your parents put you in a bed that had bars like a jail cell. And when it was time to play, they dropped you into something called a “playpen.” At first these enclosures were of no concern. But as your motor skills developed and your mobility increased, you began to feel quite restricted. And then one day it hit you – you were being tricked!

They called it a playpen to make it sound enticing. They filled it with your favorite toys and they always talked mushy baby talk when they stuck you in it. But suddenly you knew. You saw the truth as clearly as if it were written on the wall in crayon – you were being held prisoner! They could call the devilish contraption anything they wanted, but a cage by any other name is still a cage. And that’s when you rebelled. Big time. At the top of your lungs. With some kicking and tears thrown in for good measure. And you didn’t stop until somebody came and liberated you. But your victory was short-lived, for there were more boundaries in your future ... Go to your room ... Sit in that chair ... It’s your bedtime ... Be home by eleven ... (FATHER’S DAY – “DAD SAYINGS”) ...

If you were like most kids, you couldn’t wait to turn eighteen. You dreamed of a life without authority, restrictions and boundaries. Finally, after years of oppression, you would be free! But it was a pipe dream – no matter how old you are, there are still many boundaries that hem you in ... speed limits ... doctor’s orders ... job descriptions ...
BOUNDARIES ARE A WAY OF LIFE.

Boundaries are designed to keep us on track and out of trouble. That’s why God laid out some specific boundaries for Samson at the very beginning of his life – he was to be a NAZARITE, a lifelong Nazarite.

The Nazarite vow, which was usually temporary, is spelled out in Number 6 ... Nazarites were to stay away from strong drink and dead bodies, and they were not to cut their hair. It was a vow that required great devotion and attention to detail, and God was insisting that Samson live under it, not temporarily, but for his entire life!

Unfortunately, Samson only respected God’s boundaries when it suited him; the rest of the time he did whatever he wanted. And he wasn’t afraid of getting into trouble because he believed his strength would bail him out. “I’m strong enough to deal with it; I can handle it.” Sound familiar?

Samson didn’t wake up one day and suddenly decide to trash his Nazarite vow. Instead, he slipped gradually into a life of disobedience by making a series of small compromises. He ignored God’s boundaries.

In Judges 14, Samson decides he is going to marry a Philistine girl (!), and on his way to Timnath he takes a detour through the vineyards (!) and a lion attacks him. He kills the lion, but on the return journey stops to check on the carcass. He’s not supposed to touch dead things, but the bees have made honey inside and he eats it. Another “small step” over the boundary line! Samson’s pagan wedding feast (the word in Hebrew means “drinking”) was another willful step of disobedience.

We often preach about Samson and Delilah – how his hair was the secret of his strength, and he lost out with God when she cut it off. Samson’s hair was not the secret of his strength – his SEPARATION was the secret of his strength. And he had destroyed two-thirds of his Nazarite vow before he ever met Delilah!

Samson was a Judge in Israel, but he spent most of his life fooling around with the very enemy he was supposed to be fighting! The Bible says that he judged Israel “in the days of the Philistines” (Judges 15:20) – the Philistines were in control the whole time, despite Samson’s occasional victories. The saddest Scripture in the whole story is this ...

Judges 16:20 And [Delilah] said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, **I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him.**

Samson didn’t realize how dangerous it was to continually ignore God’s boundaries until it was far too late!

Delilah's name means "to bring low, dry up, be emptied, fail, be impoverished, be made thin." That's what disobedience will do!

- Delayed obedience is still disobedience!
- Surface obedience is still disobedience!
- Partial obedience is still disobedience!

There is still strength in SEPARATION and power in BOUNDARIES. Paul revisits this theme over and over in his writings ...

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? [17] If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? [20] For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. [2] And be not **conformed** to this world: but be ye **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD. The word "conformed" in this verse means "to mold one thing into the shape of another." It refers to things that are temporary and unstable.

BUT BE YE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND. The word "transformed" in this verse means "to undergo a complete change or metamorphosis." It refers to a process of the Spirit that results in permanent change to the character and conduct. (i.e. butterfly)

Psalms 40:8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

Psalms 37:4 Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

If you take "delight" in God's laws, He will give you His "desires."

ILLUSTRATION: Story of barbed wire (John Warner Gates, salesman) - the Smithsonian Institute calls it one of the ten most important inventions of all time (the West was settled because of it) - what a difference a line can make!