

Life Group Guide Jud 15:1–20 “The Downward Spiral, Pt 1”
For the Sermon Preached on Sun Aug 27 and For Use in Life Groups through Sun Sep 3

Icebreaker Question

When you were younger, which kid did you want to get even with? How did that work out?
What would you tell your much younger self now about how you should have responded?

Pastor Richard’s Sermon Outline

- I. Revenge leads to the downward spiral (15:1-20).**
 - a. The Unintended Consequences of Revenge
 - b. How should a Christian handle conflict?
 - i. Understand the real source of conflict (Prov. 4:23).
 - ii. Find the right time and place (Prov. 15:23).
 - iii. Examine yourself first (Matt. 7:3-5).
 - iv. Consider the other person’s side of the conflict (Phil. 2:4).
 - v. Do not overreact to the issue or overload on emotion (Prov. 25:28).
 - vi. Do not allow the small disagreements to become big disagreements (Prov. 15:18).
 - vii. Work towards a solution (Prov. 21:3).
 - viii. Grant grace and forgiveness easily (Eph. 4:32).
 - c. Practice the Pause (Psalm 46:10)
 - i. When in doubt, pause (Prov. 3:5-6).
 - ii. When angry, pause (Jam. 1:20).
 - iii. When tired, pause (Matt. 11:28-30).
 - iv. When stressed, pause (1 Pet. 5:7).

Jud 15:1–8

Read Jud 15:1–8 Observation

1. Read 14:20. What happened to Samson’s wife after his conflict with the Philistines in Jud 14?
2. In 15:1, what did Samson decide to do at the time of the wheat harvest? As he arrived, what did his wife’s father do?
3. In 15:2, what was the father’s reasoning for giving her to Samson’s friend? What does he offer him instead of his older daughter? Which story from Genesis does this verse echo?
4. In 15:3, what did Samson claim about himself in his actions?
5. In 15:4–5, what did Samson do?
6. In 15:6, what did the Philistines ask? How did the Philistines respond to the answer?
7. In 15:7–8, what did Samson pledge? What did he do?

Interpretation

8. Samson claims, “*This time*, I will be blameless (15:3).” What does this suggest he thinks about his other actions to this date? If he did recognize his guilt with his other actions, did the author give any hints that Samson repented from his sin or restored what he had taken?
9. In what way is Samson “right” to be angry at what has been done to him regarding his wife? In what way is Samson wrong to be angry about his wife being handed over to his friend? How does Samson’s response to his father-in-law’s action (15:4–5) compare to the Philistine’s response to Samson’s action against them (15:6)? Are they the same or different?
10. What happens to a person when he is governed by seeking vengeance for past wrongs? What happens to people when past wrongs are ignored? How does the Bible call Christians to bring together justice, love, and mercy?

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Application

10. Are there parts of your life that you know are wrong and still seek to do wrong? How will you ask God to help you flee from those sins and replace them with the worship of God?
11. We each struggle with sin in our own ways, even with our own personalities. Is your heart more likely to demand immediate justice from others or to ignore injustice on others as you live your life? What is your tendency? How might the gospel challenge you to live differently? What habits might the gospel change?
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Jud 15:9–20

Read Jud 15:9–20: Observation

11. In Jud 15:9–10, what did the Philistines do to the people of Judah?
12. In Jud 15:11, what did the Judeans say to Samson? What was his reply and rationale?
13. Read Ex 14:10–12; Num 14:1–4. What is similar between God’s people under Moses’ leadership and God’s people under Samson’s leadership?
14. In Jud 15:12–13, what do they ask of Samson? What does he have them swear? What happened next?
15. In Jud 15:14–17, what happened when the Spirit of the LORD came upon Samson?
16. In Jud 15:18, what did Samson experience next? What question does he ask God?
17. In Jud 15:19, how did God respond? What did He provide for Samson?
18. Read Exo 15:22–25; 17:1–7; Num 20:2–12. How does Samson’s dilemma compare to Israel’s and Moses’ dilemmas?
19. In Jud 15:20, how long did Samson judge Israel in the days of the Philistines?

Interpretation

20. Samson’s flawed leadership magnified the conflict with the Philistines, but the same happened under both the “good” and “not-so-good” leadership of Moses. How should God’s people respond to good leaders and bad leaders? How should God’s people respond when their leaders stir-up conflict with others? How do we know what is good leadership? How do we know what is good conflict?
21. Why did God grant Samson water and revive him? Does God approve of Samson’s motives and techniques? How should Christians understand why God sustains us through difficult times? Are we the reason God sustains us?

Application

22. Will you ask God to help you submit to leaders God’s way this week? Will you seek God’s wisdom on how you may lead others in a more godly manner?
23. How might you use this passage to share the gospel and help someone to avoid seeking vengeance?
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