

Adventures in Bible Study

The Great Strength of Samson

Long before the Guinness Book of Records was written the Bible told us who the strongest man in history was. His name was Samson, and ever since his story was written his name has been synonymous with great strength and great failure.

Samson was born and raised in the area of Zorah, which was northeast of Jerusalem. His mother and father were given strict instruction by an angel of God to avoid intoxicating substances while she was carrying the child. In addition Samson was never to cut his hair, for this would be a sign to everyone that he was God's man ([Judges 13:1-5](#)).



When Samson reached adulthood the Spirit of the Lord began to move him to fulfill the plan of God for his life. Under the power of the Holy Spirit great strength was given to Samson. With this strength he defeated the Philistines (the enemies of Israel) time and time again. On one occasion Samson killed 1,000 soldiers with the jawbone of a donkey ([Judges 15:14-15](#)). These kind of demonstrations led the people of Israel to adore him, but the Philistines hated him.

It was obvious to the Philistines that Samson's strength was due to some supernatural power he possessed so they began to scheme to find out what Samson's secret was. In time it became clear to them that Samson's greatest weakness was his love of women. He had loved a Philistine woman in spite of the advice of his parents against that relationship ([Judges 14:1-3](#)). The Philistines knew Samson had been persuaded by this woman to tell her a secret he had resolved to keep hidden in order to win a bet. So when they found out that Samson was keeping company with a Philistine harlot named Delilah they hired her to coax Samson into telling her the secret of his strength ([Judges 16:5](#)).

On three separate occasions Delilah badgered Samson into telling her what the secret of his strength was. Each time Samson had made up a story, and each time when the Philistines came to capture him he defeated them. Finally Delilah pestered Samson so much that he finally

told her the truth—that if his hair were cut off he would no longer be strong ([Judges 16:17](#)).

After Delilah cut off Samson's hair while he slept, the Philistines once again came to capture him. This time Samson had no strength to resist them. They put out his eyes and made him tread grain in the prison like an animal ([Judges 16:21](#)). However, Samson's hair began to grow again.



During a great feast the lords of the Philistines ordered Samson to be brought before them into the hall to perform feats of strength for them. After performing he was allowed to rest between the two supporting pillars of the hall. Samson then prayed that God would grant him strength one last time and under the power of God Samson pulled down the entire hall killing at least 3,000 people ([Judges 16:25-30](#)).

As with Samson our strength to overcome sin comes from God. Jesus said, "Without Me you can do nothing." [John 15:5](#).

When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior the Holy Spirit comes into us ([John 7:38-39](#)). Just how this happens is a mystery yet it is true. "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you?" [1 Corinthians 6:19](#). The Spirit then

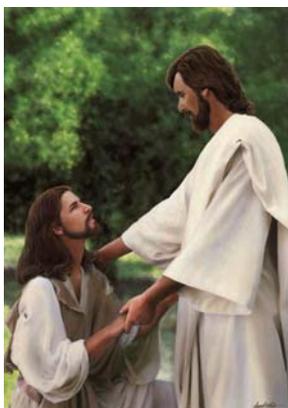


works in us by giving us both the desire to do what is right and the ability to obey. That doesn't mean obedience comes automatically, but it does mean we are trying to do what we really want to do, and as we put forth our human effort to obey the power of God gives us success. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." [Philippians 2:13-14](#).

It is God's will that sinful habits and practices be removed from our lives. "These things I write to you, that you may not sin." **1 John 2:1**. The Bible says Jesus is our example in all things, and His life was one of victory (**1 Peter 2:21-22**). In Christ we may become, "blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." **Philippians 2:15**.

Three Biblical Steps

Step #1: There are three biblical steps to overcome addictions, or any sinful behavior. The first step is found in **Matthew 11:28-29**, "Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." When we accept Jesus He has promised to set us free from the controlling power of sin (**John 8:36**). He accomplishes this by changing the way we think and feel. In **2 Peter 1:2-4** it says that we become "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." In **Ezekiel 36:25-27** it says God will give us a new heart (new desires) and a new spirit (or new mind).



When we receive these new desires and thoughts from God we begin to experience conflict because the old habits are strong and the devil tries to keep us from following Jesus. Paul spoke of this conflict in **Romans 7:14-25**. He said, "For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Fortunately if we maintain our commitment to Jesus the power of evil grows weaker and the power of good grows stronger. Then one day we find that we have completely overcome the bad habit that brought us so much trouble and embarrassment. We have become a new person (**2 Corinthians 5:17**).

Step 2: As we have seen, Jesus will give us new desires, and new thoughts. We are a new person in Jesus. The next step is found in **Matthew 5:29-30**, which teaches us to minimize as much as possible the negative forces in our lives that try to lead us into sin. Whatever is consistently dragging us down must be removed from our lives.

The Bible says, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he." **Proverbs 23:7**. If we focus on negative and unlovely things of the world we will tend to become negative in our thoughts and unlovely in our actions. "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and

peace." **Romans 8:6**. We think the way we do because of the things we focus on. The friends we have, the books we read, the programs we watch, the music we listen to and many other things all have an influence for good or evil.

The Bible teaches us not to touch unclean things (**2 Corinthians 6:16-18**); to set no evil before our eyes (**Psalms 101:3-4**); to keep our ears from hearing violence (**Isaiah 33:15**); and to avoid indulging appetite (**Daniel 1:8**). If we guard our five senses and limit the amount of evil that enters our minds we will find the grip of sin loosening in our lives.



Step 3: After we have accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior and removed sinful influences from our lives we then need to follow the third step, which is to surround ourselves with all the positive influences we can. **Romans 12:21** says, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." The Bible teaches us to make sure the influences in our lives are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, good, virtuous, and praiseworthy (**Philippians 4:8**). As you make it a habit to focus on the things that are positive influences in your life it will become easier to follow Jesus with each passing day.

Some of the positive influences the Bible encourages us to take advantage of are: **1)** Uplifting music and praise to God (**Ephesians 5:18-20**) cultivate the habit of thankfulness and gratitude. **2)** Memorize the promises of the Bible (**Psalms 119:11**); **3)** Spend time with godly friends who believe as you do (**Proverbs 13:20**); **4)** Simplify your life (**Isaiah 30:15**); **5)** Adopt good health habits (**1 Corinthians 6:19-20**); **6)** Attend church regularly (**Hebrews 10:25**).

If we persist in following these three biblical steps we will achieve higher and higher levels of mental, physical, and spiritual growth. The apostle Paul said, "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended, but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." **Philippians 3:12-14**. We are assured by Jesus that if we do not give up we will obtain the victory (**Galatians 6:9**).

