

# The Four D's: "Spiritual Disgrace"

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## FOR FURTHER STUDY

The word "disgrace" has become a very popular media word in recent years used to describe the fall of individuals in the corporate, sports, and even the religious arena. Disgrace is a word usually associated with people who have lost everything; their honor, integrity, reputation, dreams, and success because they made some wrong choices in their lives. Whether it's lying, stealing, cheating or committing some sexual sin, the results are always the same. To me, the saddest of all falls has to be in the religious realm. Falls that occur in the religious world carry a much greater stigma than other types of public falls because not only is the individual's testimony destroyed, but God and His name and fame suffer as well. From Presidents to Pastors and everything in between, sin, disgrace, and humiliation is no respecter of persons.

One of the first names that come to mind in the Bible relating to public disgrace is Samson. How could a man with so much God-given potential end up losing so much, including his life in disgrace? If Samson ever had the opportunity of graduating from high school, he would have probably been voted "most likely to succeed". Yet, his life became associated with the expression, the high cost of low living.

His life story is told to us in Judges Chapters 13-16. These chapters are well worth the reading.

Chapter 13 - His Miraculous Birth

Chapter 14 - His Untimely Wedding

Chapter 15 - His Battlefield Heroics

Chapter 16 - His Tragic Death

The one portion of Scripture that includes a summary of his life that should truly amaze us is Hebrews 11:32. Samson, in spite of every despicable thing recorded in Judges 13-16, is part of God's great hall of fame. This reminds all of us that grace truly is amazing.

## HIS UNUSUAL GOD-GIVEN POTENTIAL

The story of Samson's potential begins even before his birth. He is one of only two people in the Old Testament to have his birth announced by the angel of the Lord before he was born. Isaac was the other.

1. He was a Nazarite. That simply meant that he had been specially consecrated to God, and set apart for a sacred use of service. Numbers 6 records the requirements of a Nazarite:

He could not drink wine or any intoxicating drink.

He could not touch a dead body.

No razor could touch his head.

All of these outward things were intended to be a visible testimony of a special inner dedication that he had to God. Unfortunately, his life came to symbolize a life dedicated to self, rather than to God.

2. He also enjoyed the special blessing upon his life as a child and teenager (see 13:24,25).
3. His calling and mission in life had been chosen by God Himself. He didn't have to think about it or pray about what his vocation in life should be. He knew he was to be a deliverer of Israel.
4. He was specially empowered by the Spirit of God.
5. He was raised by godly parents who were sensitive to God's will.

In short, Samson had it all! You will never fully understand his life until that point sinks in your mind.

### HIS LIFE WAS A LIFE OF CONTRADICTIONS

1. He was a man of faith who had obvious weaknesses for women.
2. He was a man who lacked common sense.
3. He was a leader of Israel who desired Philistine women.
4. He was a man of prayer who had fits of anger and rage.
5. He was driven by a desire to always get even with anyone who had ever done him wrong.

### IMPORTANT VERSES OF SCRIPTURE TO THINK ABOUT

Judges 14:1 - He went to the wrong place. He went to down to "Timnath". "Timnath" of course was a Philistine city located only four miles from his birthplace, Zorah. This was his first big step towards disgrace. He left family and friends to be with the Philistines.

Judges 14:2 - He was looking for the wrong thing. This verse indicates that this was not just a casual visit. He was going to look for a wife among the Philistines.

Judges 14:3, 7 - After finding a woman that he found to be very attractive, he tries to convince his family that she would make the perfect wife. Interestingly, he probably had not even talked to her. He had only seen her from a distance. He didn't know her name, her family, or anything about her.

Judges 15 - In this chapter, he conquers everything but himself. He loses complete control of his life.

Judges 16:1 - He now goes to "Gaza". Gaza is not just any Philistine city. It is the capitol city. It was approximately 25 miles from his birthplace. Sin always is progressive in nature. It progresses from worse to worse. In addition, this city was the place where a temple had been built and dedicated to "Dagon", the god of the Philistines. Traveling to this city seems like a very strange thing for him to do in light of the fact that everyone knew who he was and what he looked like. He had to have known that he would be recognized immediately. Why did he desire to go to this place? To seek a prostitute!

Judges 16:2,3 - Rather than staying the entire night with the unnamed prostitute as the guards expected, he leaves the house about midnight to return home. Because the city gates are closed and locked, he pulls them out of the ground and carries them to a hillside and casts them away. This act was done to publicly humiliate the Philistines. City gates represented safety and security. He not only broke them down, but he carried them a great distance from the city. Since they weighed about 700 to 1000 lbs each, it would be difficult to get them back quickly.

Judges 16:4 - Samson was a "He" man with a "She" problem.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

Samson lost three very important things in his life according to Judges 16

1. He lost his "Vision". Notice the word "Blind". Both physical and spiritual (verse 21).
2. He lost his "Vitality". Notice the word "Bind". He lost his spiritual and physical strength (verse 20,21).
3. He lost his "Victory". Notice the word "Grind". Grinding corn was a woman's task in Bible times. This was intended to publicly humiliate and disgrace him.

How sad! God's man in Gaza, in prison, in chains, and blind. One of the saddest verses in all the Bible is found in Judges 16:20 where it says that Samson did not realize God had departed from him. According to Judges 16:29-31, Samson died with the Philistines. Afterwards, his brothers and relatives came to recover his body from the ruins of the temple.

May all of us prayerfully consider these passages as a warning of the danger of concluding our lives in disgrace. It's not how you start that matters. It's how you finish.