**STRONG**

Elementary

Week 4

**PARENT BIBLE STUDY**

**Read: Judges 13, 16**

Samson is a great “me too” story. He screwed up his life and made bad decision after bad decision. But God chose to use Samson to carry out his plan anyway. It’s the same with us. Samson’s story is a story of grace, undeserved favor, and one-way love. With Samson’s track record of defiant and obnoxious behavior, it’s surprising that he is mentioned in Hebrews 11 as being a man of great faith. He did conquer the Philistines, but his faith seemed to falter more than it stood strong. Samson had moments of greatness, but overall his life was a string of selfish decisions.

Eventually he found himself in jail because he became so intoxicated with love and lust for a Philistine woman that he allowed her to manipulate him. This toxic relationship clouded Samson’s judgement. He foolishly spilled the secret of his strength. Samson played her game too long, and eventually couldn’t resist her anymore. The next thing he knew, he was trapped in jail, blind and weaker than ever. That’s the point of Samson’s story really. It’s far less about Samson and much more about God. God comes through on his promises and stands firm on his word, no matter how we respond. In his worst moment, Samson remembered God and cried out to him to restore his strength one last time. And you know what? God did. Samson died along with all the Philistines that day, and it was God’s strength that was made known. Because God is the source of Samson’s strength, not his hair or any quality of his Nazarite vow. The story of the strongest man in the world is, really, a story about how God is with us, or at least there waiting for us. All we have to do is ask him to strengthen us.

**Do you ever feel like your bad decisions disqualify you from God’s grace or cause him to change his mind about using you? How does the story of Samson remind you of what is true?**

**It’s true that Samson was used by God in great ways. It’s also true that his life was far from God’s best. Do you ever see this tension in your own life?**