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Victory in Defeat

Key References: Judges 16:23-31; *Patriarchs and Prophets,* chap. 54, pp. 560-568; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 3, pp. 130-136; Our Beliefs, nos. 22, 3, 10



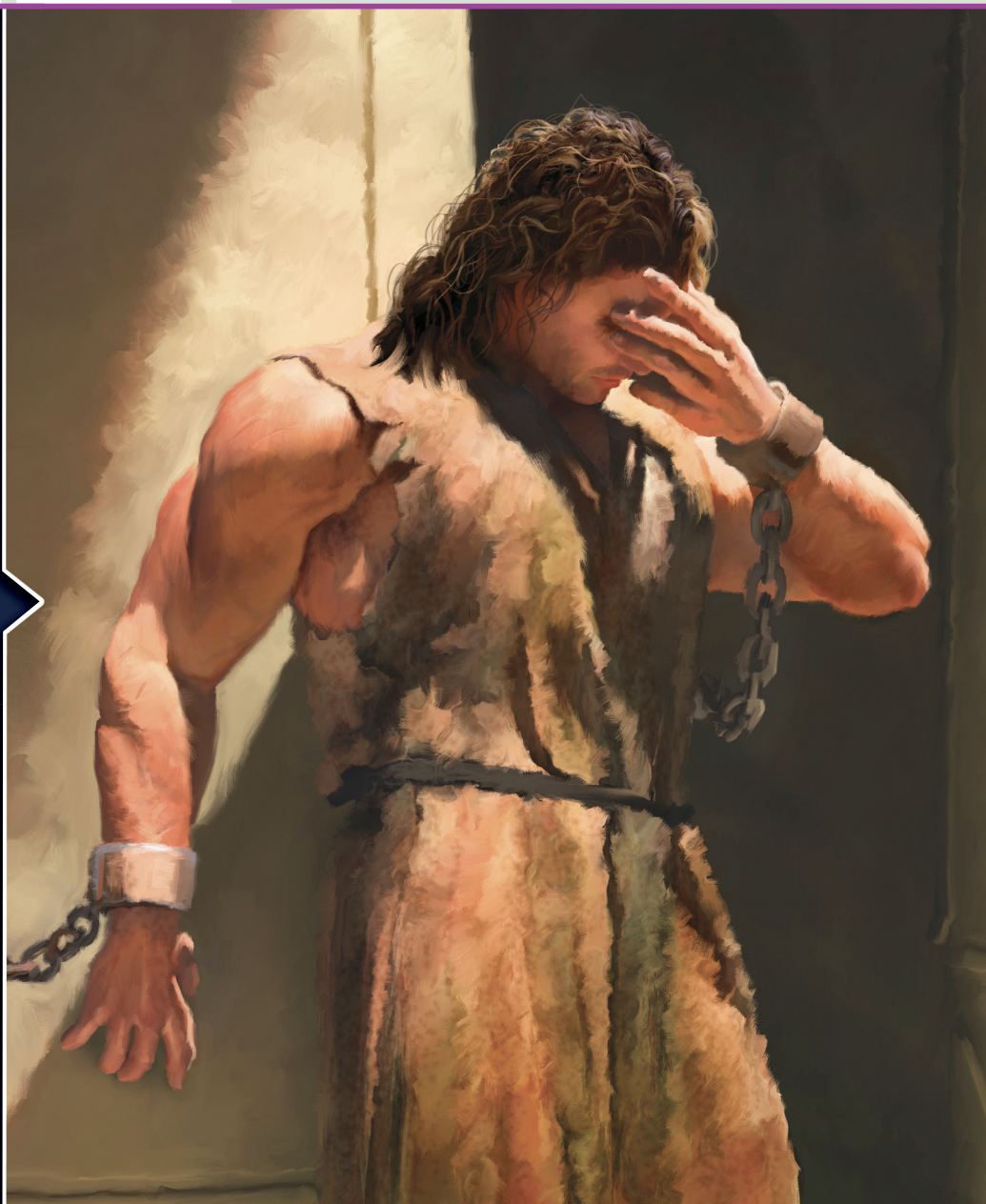












power**text**

"But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57).

power**point**



Victory is a gift from God, not a product of our strength.

Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 89.

Did you ever have a bad habit that you wished you could break? Did you notice that the more you thought about it, the more it seemed to control you? You may have already discovered that once you admitted to God that you couldn't handle it by yourself, He took over.

A well-built but sad-looking man slumped against one of the walls in the temple of Dagon. The temple was located in the city of Gaza. The occasion was one of the many festivals and celebrations that filled the life of the Philistines. The blind prisoner leaned back as if staring into space. His mind's eye saw other days in Gaza. Once in his youth he had lifted the massive city gates off their hinges and carried them to the top of a hill miles away. Back then he had been invincible. Back then the strength of God had been with him.

Now he was sitting here, getting a little rest. Ever since the Philistines had learned of his vow to God and had shaved his head, he had been blindly grinding grain in a prison in Gaza. His capture was a huge Philistine triumph. This celebration would honor the god Dagon. He could sense that people, as usual, were crowding into the temple for the festivities.

Samson remembered when God had blessed him with great physical strength. He recalled major victories—the times he had used his bare hands or the jawbone of a donkey. There had been no obstacle too big in those days.

Samson knew he had started making bad choices. In his choice of friends and entertainment he went against the wishes of his parents, who pleaded with him. Slowly these choices had become more important to him than the work God was doing through him. Before he knew it, he was here, blind and helpless, a slave to his enemies. And since they had been able to capture him, the Philistines were convinced that their god was more powerful than his.

Samson sighed and moved against the wall. Slowly he brought his mind back to the scene around him. The people were chanting and

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Sunday

READ Read 1 Corinthians 15:57 and this week's story, "Victory in Defeat."

MAKE Make a thank-You card for God's gift of victory and write this week's power text, 1 Corinthians 15:57, on it. Put it in a place where you can see it.

LEARN Begin to learn the power text.

PRAY Make the power text a part of your daily prayer.

Monday

READ Read Judges 15:9-15.

THINK Why did the Spirit of the Lord give Samson so much strength to fight against the Philistines?

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write about how you could resist and fight the negative influences that represent obstacles in your relationship with God.

PRAY Ask God to give you strength through His Spirit to fight any "enemy" that separates you from Him.

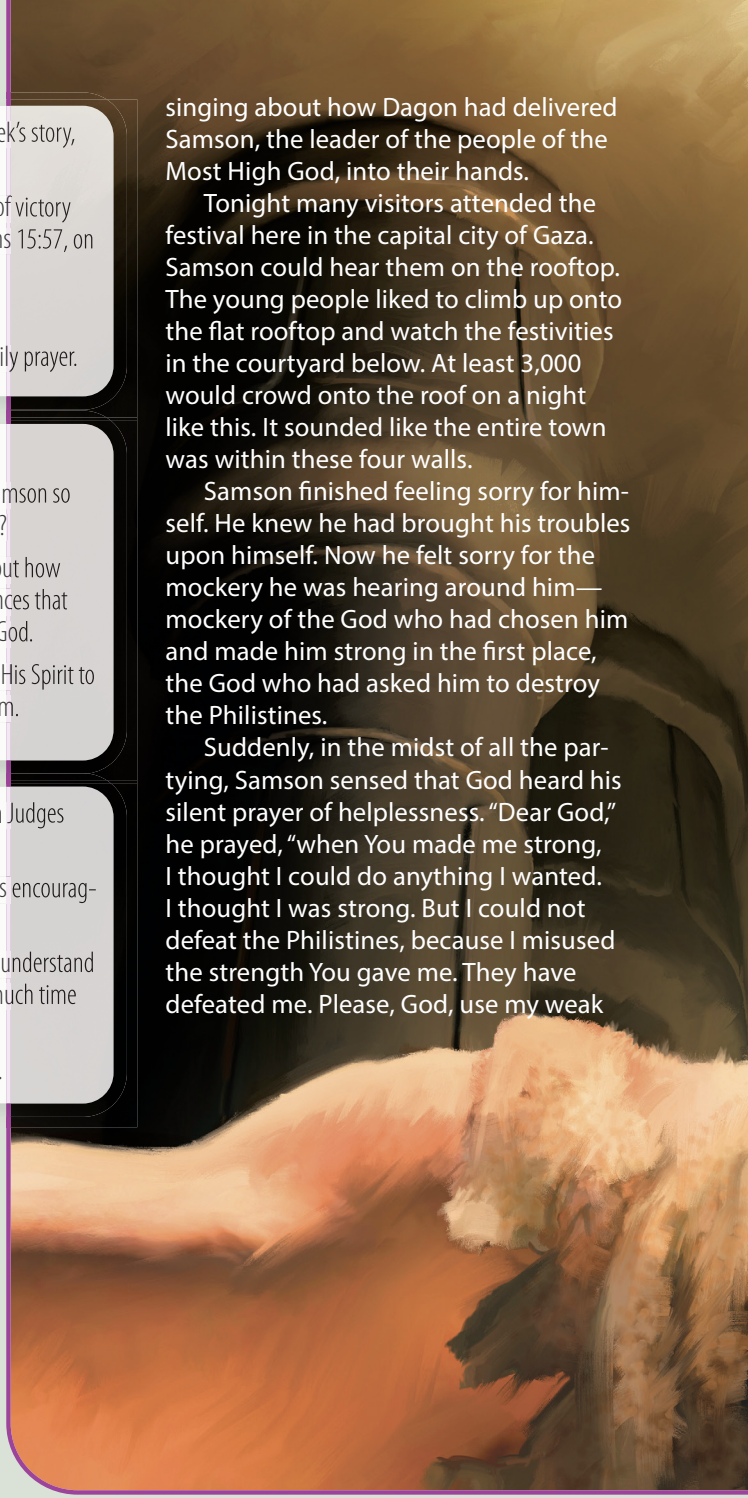
Tuesday

READ Read about Samson's water miracle in Judges 15:18-20.

THINK Focus on Samson's prayer life. What is encouraging about how God answers prayer?

ASK Think of adults you know who seem to understand God's grace. Ask at least three of them how much time they spend with God each week.

PRAY Choose to spend time with God today.



singing about how Dagon had delivered Samson, the leader of the people of the Most High God, into their hands.

Tonight many visitors attended the festival here in the capital city of Gaza. Samson could hear them on the rooftop. The young people liked to climb up onto the flat rooftop and watch the festivities in the courtyard below. At least 3,000 would crowd onto the roof on a night like this. It sounded like the entire town was within these four walls.

Samson finished feeling sorry for himself. He knew he had brought his troubles upon himself. Now he felt sorry for the mockery he was hearing around him—mockery of the God who had chosen him and made him strong in the first place, the God who had asked him to destroy the Philistines.

Suddenly, in the midst of all the partying, Samson sensed that God heard his silent prayer of helplessness. "Dear God," he prayed, "when You made me strong, I thought I could do anything I wanted. I thought I was strong. But I could not defeat the Philistines, because I misused the strength You gave me. They have defeated me. Please, God, use my weak



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Wednesday

READ Review Judges 16:23-31.

ASK Ask an elderly adult to share with you about a time God provided a victory for them.

THINK Over what do you want God to give you victory?

PRAY Ask Him to give you that victory.

Thursday

READ Read Zechariah 4:6.

WRITE Write a letter to God in your Bible study journal telling Him how you think this lesson applies to your life. Samson was kept prisoner by the Philistines for a while. What challenges do you experience? Close your letter with the power text.

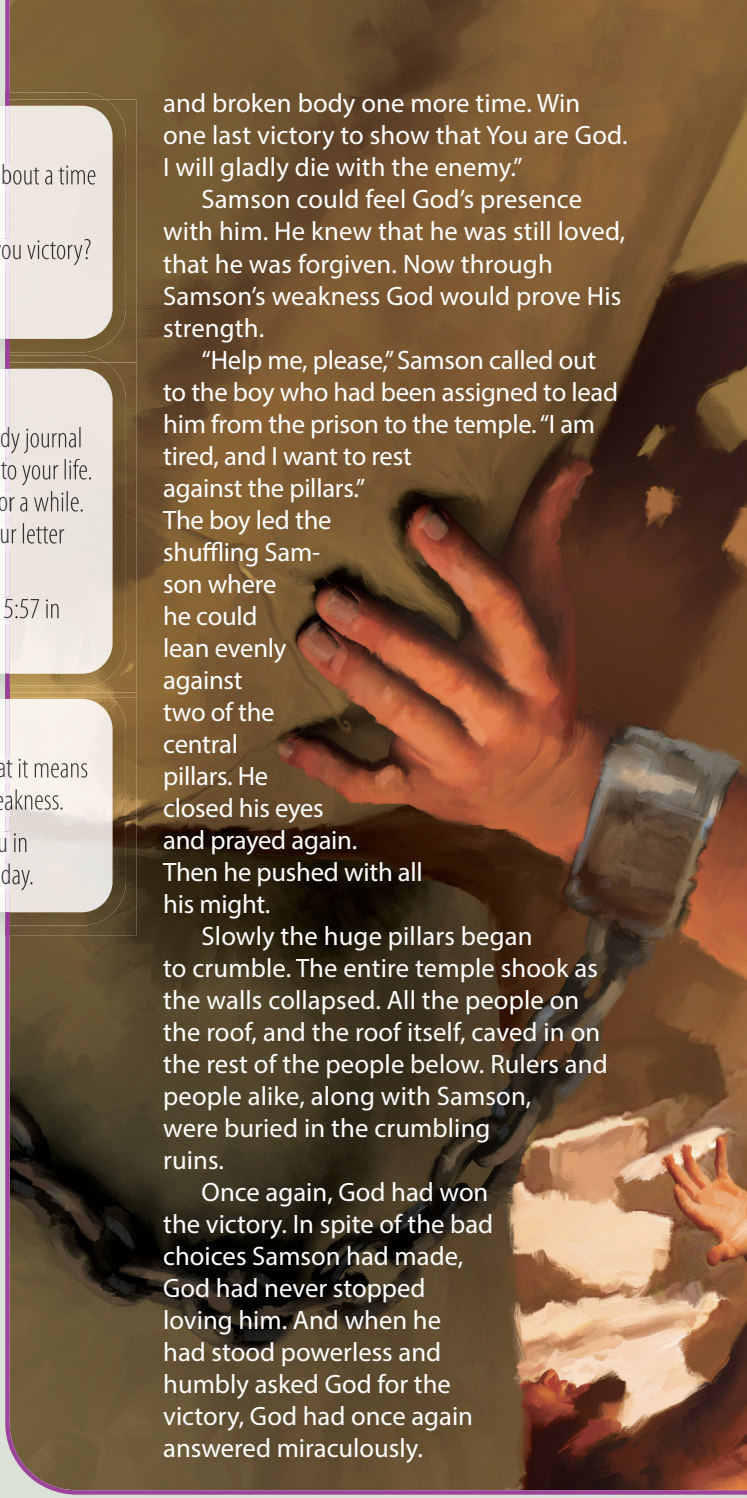
PRAY Claim God's promise in 1 Corinthians 15:57 in your daily prayers.

Friday

READ Read 2 Corinthians 12:9.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write what it means to you that God's power is made perfect in weakness.

PRAY Thank God for providing victory for you in response to the request you made on Wednesday.



and broken body one more time. Win one last victory to show that You are God. I will gladly die with the enemy."

Samson could feel God's presence with him. He knew that he was still loved, that he was forgiven. Now through Samson's weakness God would prove His strength.

"Help me, please," Samson called out to the boy who had been assigned to lead him from the prison to the temple. "I am tired, and I want to rest against the pillars." The boy led the shuffling Samson where he could lean evenly against two of the central pillars. He closed his eyes and prayed again. Then he pushed with all his might.

Slowly the huge pillars began to crumble. The entire temple shook as the walls collapsed. All the people on the roof, and the roof itself, caved in on the rest of the people below. Rulers and people alike, along with Samson, were buried in the crumbling ruins.

Once again, God had won the victory. In spite of the bad choices Samson had made, God had never stopped loving him. And when he had stood powerless and humbly asked God for the victory, God had once again answered miraculously.



IN HIS STRENGTH

Instructions: Cross out each "myownstrength" from the following, and the leftover letters will reveal what God says about our strengths and weaknesses.

God says:
"Fomyownstrengthr
mmyownstrengthypowmyownstrengther
imyownstrengthsmadmyownstrengthe
perfmyownstrengthectimyownstrengthn
wemyownstrengthaknemyownstrengthss."

