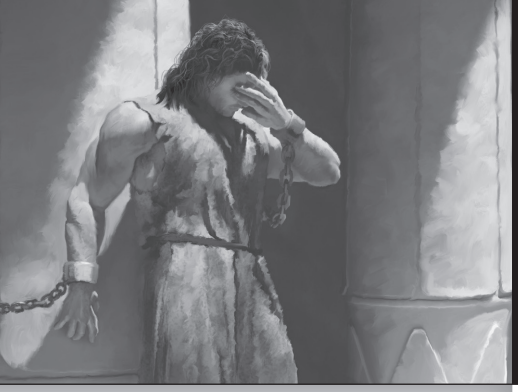


YEAR C | QUARTER 3

12

Victory in Defeat

Grace
God offers Himself to us.

POWER TEXT

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

KEY REFERENCES

- Judges 16:23-31
- *Patriarchs and Prophets,* chap. 54, pp. 560-568
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 3, pp. 130-136
- student story on page 132 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 22, Christian Behavior
- No. 3, The Father
- No. 10, The Experience of Salvation

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that victory comes from God, not from our own strength.
- **Feel** grateful that victory is God's job.
- **Respond** by asking God for a victory over a personal struggle.

POWERPOINT

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

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Samson is growing old and is now having to live with the consequences of his mistakes and bad choices. He is a blind captive mocked by the Philistines. While he is "on exhibit" in the temple, he asks God for one last victory against his enemies. In the last act of his life, depending completely on God, he defeats more Philistines than he has in his entire lifetime.

This is a lesson about grace.

God is always with us and ready to give us victories in His strength. Depending totally on God for the victory, Samson accomplished more in his weakness than he ever did in his own strength.

Teacher Enrichment

"There was no virtue in his [Samson's] long hair merely, but it was a token of his loyalty to God; and when the symbol was sacrificed in the indulgence of passion, the blessings of which it was a token were also forfeited. . . .

"Physically, Samson was the strongest man upon the earth; but in self-control, integrity, and firmness, he was one of the weakest of men" (*Patriarchs and Prophets,* pp. 566, 567).

"Gaza was one of the five capital cities of the Philistines. Known for its many wells, Gaza was a vital stop along a great caravan route that connected Egypt to the south with Aram to the north. . . .

"Dagon was the chief god of the Philistines, the god of grain and harvest. Many temples were built to Dagon, and the worship there included human sacrifice. The temples were also the local entertainment centers. Just as people today crowd into theaters, Philistine townspeople crowded into the local temple. They sat on the flat temple roof and looked into the courtyard below. What they often saw was the torture and humiliation of prisoners" (*Life Application Bible, Notes and Bible Helps* [Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1991], p. 412).

From where do I draw strength? God gives us victory. How will I seek the victory today?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the readiness activity of your choice. 

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. Blinded* *B. A Test of Strength*	blindfolds pencils or thin sticks or toothpicks
* Prayer and Praise	15-20	See page 127. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, offering plate/basket, world map, pushpins
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	four copies of poem on page 149 Bibles, blindfolds (strips of cloth for everyone), adult readers Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*A Matter of Time*	paper, pencils
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Victory Gift*	box with prewritten slips of paper
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments B. Reminder to Parents C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ blindfolds

Blinded

Bring a student to the middle of the room, blindfold him/her, and then turn the student around a few times. Signal for the other students to rearrange their chairs. Ask the blindfolded student to find his or her original seat. Allow the blindfolded student a few seconds to stumble around. Then ask students who can see to lead the blindfolded student to their seat. If time permits, let several students have a turn at being "blind." Use a new blindfold for each student who participates.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did it feel to be blind and on your own? How was it different with someone guiding you? How much do you think you would accomplish alone if you were blind? How much would you be able to accomplish by trusting someone else to guide you? Let's say our power text together:**

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

Say: **We can accomplish things when we trust God's wisdom and strength, instead of our own.**

Our power point reminds us that:

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

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ bundles of pencils, sticks, or toothpicks

A Test of Strength

Give each student five or six pencils, thin sticks, or toothpicks. Have them hold these together in a bundle. (Tip: Try this in advance so you know how many to bundle together so the students can't break them.) Now ask them to break the pencils/sticks using only their two hands, nothing else. Give them some time to test their strength. They may be certain that they can do it. When all have tried (and most likely failed), bring them back together to discuss their experience.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did you feel when you couldn't break the sticks? Helpless? Powerless? Why?** Have two students each look up and read one of the following verses: Romans 8:3 and Romans 5:6 (preferably in the New International Version).

Ask: **What does it mean to be powerless? How was your experience with the sticks like the powerlessness in these verses? If we are powerless, how can we ever win? What one thing can we do even in our powerlessness?** (Take the problem to God and do what He asks of us. Leave the results to Him.)

Let's say our power text together:

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

Remember:

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

Prayer and Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows that they shared with you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"It's About Grace" (see p. 148)
"I Cast All My Cares Upon You" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 141)
"He's Able" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 100)
"Oh, Magnify the Lord" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 12)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Say: **There are people in every country who are blinded by evil habits or ignorance of God. They are powerless to break through this blindness without the good news of God's grace.** Use Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults or another mission report available to you. You may use a map of the world where the students can identify and mark with pushpins the location of the mission story.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ offering plate/basket

Say: **God's unfailing love for us compels us to show love to others. Share God's love by giving to help the message of God's grace and victory reach everyone.**

Prayer

Lead students in a chain of sentence prayers thanking God for loving us even when we have made bad choices that have dishonored Him and can't seem to do anything right.

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

Notes

2

BIBLE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- four copies of the poem "Samson's Song" (p. 149)

Introducing the Bible Story

Assign parts of the poem "Samson's Song" (found on page 149) to student readers: Samson's "parents," "Samson," a narrator, "God." Have these students read their verses silently to practice their lines. Then ask the cast of readers to stand up in front, and present the poem as creatively as possible (with expression, possibly actions).

YOU NEED:
- Bibles
- blindfold for each student
- several adults to read

Experiencing the Story

Have students turn to Judges 16:23-31. Ask: **What do you remember of the story of Samson up to this point?** (His mighty feats and his humiliating defeat.) Then give each student a strip of cloth to blindfold themselves. Ask them to sit quietly while you read the Scripture passage. Without telling the students, have an adult male read the part of Samson (parts of verses 26, 28, 30) and several other adults read the part of the Philistines (parts of verses 23, 24, 25) and you read the narration. Have the adult readers stand at a distance from you but close to the students. They can move around.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did it feel to be blind?** (powerless, strange) **How did it feel to have unexpected voices around you?** (confusing, surprising, didn't know where they were) **How do you think Samson felt after his years of being in control?**

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

Exploring the Bible

YOU NEED:
- □ Bibles

Have students remove their blindfolds and find Judges 16:25. Ask a student to read it aloud.

Ask: **What did the Philistines require Samson to do during their day of sacrifice? In which text do we find some indication of Samson's willingness to call on the Lord in this hour of distress?** (verse 28) Have students read verses 28-30. **What did Samson admit in his last prayer?** (that he was weak, that he needed strength)

Ask: **What is God's response when He sees our helplessness?** (He has compassion, love, and sympathy for us.) Have a student read Matthew 9:36. **So, what does He do about it?** Have a student read Ephesians 2:4, 5. (He shows mercy and saves us.)

Say: **Samson had made many bad choices that had ruined his life, and now he was helpless. But the marvelous grace of God was still offered to him. God always loves us and is waiting for us to turn to Him for victory. Let's repeat our power text together:**

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

A Matter of Time

YOU NEED:
- □ paper
- □ pencils

Have students write the days of the week down the left side of a piece of paper, then divide the rest of the paper into five columns. Ask them to name the columns: "School," "Recreation/TV," "Eating," "Sleeping," "Connecting with God." Then ask them to write beside each day the amount of time they think they spend on those different activities during a week. Discuss with them that "connecting with God" can be Bible and devotional reading, family worship, quiet thinking and praying time, or quick prayers during their busy day. Also, suggest that they write an amount of time they feel would be appropriate for "connecting with God" rather than the amount of time they think they presently spend.

When they have made their chart, read John 15:4, 5 to them. Say: **Jesus is the source of life and victory. What do you think might happen if we began spending as much time connecting with God as we do with all these other things?** Encourage them to refer to their chart throughout the week.

Let's remember that:

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

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ box with prewritten slips of paper

Victory Gift

Divide students into groups of five or six. Have groups take 8-10 minutes to put together a short skit to illustrate the power text:

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

Suggest that they may draw inspiration from their everyday life and the problems they face. Allow them to look around your Sabbath School room for items they can use for props. Give each group a chance to present their skit.

Alternatively: Provide a box with slips of paper having written on them various situations. Students could draw from the box a piece of paper containing a situation they could enact.

Debriefing

Ask: **How true to life were these skits for you? Has God ever given you the victory? Tell us about it.**

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

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Pray specifically for each student to realize they can always admit their helplessness. God is always ready to give His victory to people who understand their own need.

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **Ruth chooses God and He blesses her. God offers His grace to all.**

Notes

Student lesson

Victory in Defeat

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 the 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 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 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.

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.

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.

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.