

OVERCOMING FEAR

Bible Text: Judges 14-16

Objectives of This Session

That we might:

- Look again at one of God's Old Testament heroes and understand his faith and courage;
- Think about some of the situations that cause us fear and look for the roots of that fear in our lack of faith;
- Celebrate the call we have to be witnesses by our courage and seek ways to put our trust in God.

One Who Overcame Fear

The nation of Israel had been chosen by God as an example to the world of what God was like. By what they said and by how they lived, the Israelites were to testify of God's love and faithfulness.

Because God knew that human beings are sinful and forgetful, God gave the people of Israel many reminders of their specialness. One of these reminders was a group of people called Nazirites. God used the Nazirites as walking, breathing reminders to the rest of the people of their job as God's "set apart ones."

- **Read about the special rules the Nazirites obeyed in Numbers 6:1-8. Then list at least two of the rules here.**
- **Discuss the function of these rules in the life of the people.**

After Joshua died, Israel broke God's covenant again and again. Each-time they did, God sent trouble to them. When they repented, God sent a deliverer or "judge" to save them.

At the time of Samson, God had allowed the heathen Philistines to oppress Israel for 40 years. Finally God sent Samson as a deliverer.

Even before he was born, Samson was chosen by God for this special work. God told Samson's mother that her son would be a Nazirite. When he grew up, Samson fought the Philistines single-handedly. Samson was filled with great strength and courage so that by himself he was able to do things it would have taken many ordinary people to do.

Courage to Spare

- **Read Judges 14:4-9. What act of courage did Samson perform?**
- **Read Judges 14:10-20. Pair up with another learner and discuss the event. What do you think this event accomplished?**
- **Read Judges 16: 1-3. What great feat of strength did Samson perform in these verses? Talk about why the action took courage.**
- **The rest of Judges 16 tells about Samson's last deeds of courage and strength. Read verses 4-31. Summarize the events in the space below.**

- Talk about what these event meant to the people of Samson's day. What do they mean to us?
- Many people think that Samson's strength came from his long hair. From what you have read, tell why this is not true. Discuss the source of Samson's strength.

Walking in Samson's Footsteps

- Think about times when you need courage to face problems or enemies in your own life. Get with one or two others and talk about some of these situations.
- As you share, write down some of the advice that Samson might give you if you could include him in your discussion.
- Read the following Bible passages. They talk about times Christians need courage. How would knowing about Samson help you do what God wants you do to in each case?

Matthew 5:16

Mark 16:15

Acts 1:8

Gaining Confidence

- Read Psalm 56:3. What suggestion that can help you in fearful situations do you find in the verse?
- Share other texts or insights that can be helpful to you.
- Write out a brief promise to God that sets out your intention to stand more bravely in the face of fearful situations.

- Share your promise with several others.