

Russell Kelfer

A Lion, A Riddle and 300 Foxes

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Series: God's Living Legends (Part 1)

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Once again, we walk in the rather large footsteps of Samson, our man of the hour. Samson was a man of great strength. He was a man of great power. He was also a man with one major weakness, a weakness that ultimately cost him his great strength. But Samson was a man whose physical strength and his conflict with physical enemies demonstrates for us in the spiritual realm the kind of man and the kind of woman we are supposed to be in the midst of spiritual conflict. Our title for this lesson is: “A Lion, A Riddle and 300 Foxes”.

Our last lesson was foundational for this one; for in order to understand what God is saying through Samson’s life, we must understand some basic definitions and some basic principles about spiritual warfare and spiritual strength. For that reason, we are going to very quickly review a few things that we talked about in that last study.

THE EXPLANATION

First, let’s remind ourselves, “What is strength?” Strength is “endurance under attack”. Strength is a defensive position. Paul illustrated it for us in Ephesians 6:10-17, where he urged us to “be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might”, that we might be able to stand and to have a position that is steadfast and secure against the attack of the enemy. If your body is strong, if you are physically well, you can better resist the enemy of disease when it attacks the body. When an army is strong, it can remain in place without retreating when the enemy attacks. A football team with a strong defense can resist continual attacks on its line of scrimmage and remain in place. *Strength is the ability to stand against an enemy.*

In the spiritual realm, the transition is obvious. Spiritual strength, then, is our ability to withstand the assaults of Satan without giving ground or surrendering to his attacks. As we mentioned in the last lesson, he attacks us basically in at least

five ways. We will review them briefly.

First, He uses the circumstances of life to draw our thinking into the physical realm, and by taking our eyes off of the eternal, he leaves us with a gaping hole in our armor just above the heart. It may be a financial setback in your life. You need to understand that “godliness with contentment is great gain. You brought nothing into this world and you certainly can take nothing out. Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content.” You understand that, but suddenly Satan whispers in your ear, “You are God’s child. Look at you now. How embarrassing. How humiliating. Look at all of those unbelievers,” Satan whines, “They are mine and some of them are better off than you are. Hath God said? Why can’t He turn some rocks into loaves, *if He is God.*” Though you know the truth and the truth CAN set you free, you choose to believe a lie. That lie binds you up while Satan prepares for his next onslaught. But if you are strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, you will immediately draw nigh unto God and He will draw nigh unto you; you will resist the devil, and he will flee from you. That is why spiritual strength is not an option in the Christian life. It is an essential. You and I, if we are not careful, can spend the rest of our lives with the enemy camping on our front porch, crawling in our window with easy access to unlocked doors God never intended him to have. The circumstances of life are just one of Satan’s tools of the trade. It is the first one he used in his attack on Job. Often it is the one most visible in his attack on us.

The second offensive is temptation; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life. He knows where our weaknesses are and he knows when we lay aside our armor; and usually when we are weakest, he attacks. That is what he did with Eve. “Wow!” he said, “Eve, look at that tree.” That is the lust of the eye. “Wow!” he said, “Eve, imagine how good it would taste.” That is the lust of the flesh. “Wow!” he said, “Eve, it could make you wise.” The pride of life. In your case and in mine, as in Eve’s, it may seem like a meaningless conversation with the voice of a stranger or a meaningless glance at someone or something that God has placed off limits to you. It may be a seemingly meaningless decision to do something you know violates the will of God. Yet it injects into the bloodstream the disease of disobedience and then, because we have no strength, it spreads into the recesses of our spiritual bodies. We have no antibodies,

then, to fight the infection. Temptation will ruin you if you are not strong in the Lord.

We won't spend time in this lesson on the other three, but here is a brief summary.

The third involves the inner strongholds of Satan such as insecurity, bitterness and discontentment. They lie dormant until Satan knows we are gaining in strength and he reaches down and resurfaces those old inner conflicts that defy the mind of Christ.

The fourth is apathy, the gradual eroding of spiritual power through subtle disobedience and unconfessed sin. The fifth is the boomerang of reaping. This is the necessary fruit of previous decisions or choices that surface to haunt us, but not accidentally. They are Satan's time bombs and he drops them on us just when we are weakest to finish us off. It is a real war out there or I should say in here in our hearts. The war is one we are to win because Christ in us has already proclaimed us victors. But how well we fare and how well we endure Satan's hand-to-hand offenses will be determined by how strong we are in the Spirit.

So that is a capsule review of what strength is. The choice is ours. God commanded us to be strong in the Lord. We are to behave like men and women who stand firm when the enemy's onslaught floods our lives with the fury of a storm. We *can* be strong and we *must* be strong. If we maintain our strength, and here is the key, *eventually we become powerful*. But you see strength is defensive and power is offensive. Everybody wants to have power. But few of us are willing to pay the price to become strong. Our power is nothing more than a positive expression of how strong we are. It is just like building a strong body requires untiring exercise and abstaining from that which destroys. It requires a diet of that which only develops strength. Building that kind of body takes years of doing those things. So it is in the spirit realm. You don't read a book on body building, then enter the Olympics. The book only tells you the price you have to pay. You must consciously decide how badly you want to be strong and then bring your body under subjection and give yourself to becoming strong. Then after years of growing in strength you begin to exercise power.

Spiritual strength is no different. It takes years. It costs something. If you want to be strong badly enough to deny yourself and take up your cross daily, one day you will be a man or a woman of great power. *Power is the authority to control.* Jesus spoke with authority. He spoke with great power. When he spoke, lives came under the control of the Holy Spirit. That kind of power is yours. That kind of power is mine. This power is ours if we set our minds through the years on becoming strong. So much for the explanation.

THE ILLUSTRATION

Now for the illustration and a look at one of God's Living Legends, Samson, a portrait of strength. Our story opened in the last lesson as we looked over the shoulders of his parents, Manoah and his wife, as they entertained an angel unawares. The angel was THE angel of the Lord. He came to inform them that a miracle child with a miraculous calling was coming into their lives as a gift from God. We read in Judges 13:24 that Mrs. Manoah had the child and she called him Samson. His name means "miniature sun or picture of energy". The child grew and the Lord blessed him and the Spirit of God began to move in Samson's life. Now, as with Jesus' life, that transitional phrase spans a gulf of years that include both his boyhood and his youth. Like Jesus, just beyond that phrase we read of his first response to the enemy's attack. Jesus used his Father's word and went from strength to strength. But in Samson's life, we will read first of his weaknesses or the seed of his weaknesses and then of the expressions of his strength. Let's read now from Judges 14:

And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines.

And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife.

Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well.

But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

(Judges 14:1-4)

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So Samson's story opens with a brief, but important, account of how he chose his first wife. But tucked within its context are several revealing things.

1- We see what he was looking for in a woman.

2- We see that he was willing to violate the word of God to get what he wanted.

3- We see the beginning of a pattern that led eventually to his downfall. There were to be three women in Samson's life and all of them were losers. His choice in women was his downfall. He was not looking for a wife from God's perspective, but from man's.

4- We see a very weak effort on the part of his parents to change Samson's mind. Samson was the apple of their eye and their only argument was, "Gee, Sammy, can't you find one of our girls who is just as cute?" You see, they didn't quote Exodus 34:16. They didn't quote Joshua 23:12. They didn't even quote from Deuteronomy 7 which was directed at them and says:

Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.
(Deuteronomy 7:3)

They didn't quote that. Their argument was feeble at best. Now as we mentioned last week, it is no doubt that Sammy was an All-Conference linebacker for the Zorah Zebras. They had traveled three miles southward for a battle with the Timnath Tigers. But all Sammy saw was the homecoming queen. She was no doubt impressed with his muscles, and he was no doubt impressed with her beauty. It was hardly a basis for a marriage. But Momma and Daddy Manoah wanted their little Sammy to be happy even if it meant violating the will of God. Lastly, marvel with me at the grace of God. Here is Romans 8:28 in living color. Here is Genesis 50:20 revisited in Judges 14,

But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that He sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.
(Judges 14:4)

Now don't misread that verse. It does not mean that God changed His word and Manoah was a hero. God never changes His word. His children were not to intermarry with unbelievers, including the uncircumcised Philistines, period. The word of

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God *was* being broken, and the inevitable consequences are seen through the remainder of this story and leave deep scars in Samson's life. What verse 4 means is that God was looking for an occasion to bring the Philistines down to size, so He decided to use even Samson's mistake for His glory. There is a lot of difference. It says that his parents didn't know that, so their decision to cooperate was simply and plainly one of disobedience.

Anyhow, Sammy saw stars every time he thought of his precious Philistine. So Momma and Daddy said, "Whatever you want, Son." Sam headed south to Timnath to propose. Mom and Dad followed a little later to set up the wedding plans, but we know that our lethal linebacker went trooping to Timnath alone.

Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him.

And the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.

And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion.

And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion. (Judges 14:5-9)

So Samson's first encounter with the enemy was one of temptation, as we see in verses 1-4. He saw something he was not supposed to have, but what he saw appealed to the flesh. So he thought about it. He invited the thought to sit down and make itself at home in his mind. In order to do this, he had to reject the word of God. What he was entertaining was a no-no. But he ignored God's word and made a choice. It did not result in an immediate loss of power, but it did result in *eventual* loss of power. Remember that. It brought with it a whole barrage of unnecessary warfare which could have been avoided, but which God decided to use to magnify His name.

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Sam's second battle with the enemy came in the form of circumstances. Again, the circumstances would not have existed if he had been headed in the right direction. But God allowed Samson a direct confrontation with a roaring lion, to teach Samson that he could, with God's strength, resist the enemy. Now the lion is used 17 times in Scripture figuratively. Often it is used as a direct reference to Satan or Satanic powers. In Psalm 91:13, we read that God's strong man will one day destroy the lion who is the evil one. This is a beautiful passage. Let's read it from the beginning of Psalm 91:

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;

There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

(Psalm 91:1-13)

In II Timothy Paul wrote this:

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At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (II Timothy 4:16-18)

Then in I Peter 5:8 we read,

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

The lion, then, is a symbol of the enemy. So Samson meets up head to head with his enemy and he rips him to shreds. He probably should have stopped and praised God and built an altar. He should have realized, as David did, that he belonged to a God of immeasurable strength. He probably should have told his parents what had happened, so that they could have praised God with him, but he didn't. Samson overlooked the spiritual impact of this entire encounter with the lion because his mind was on his girlfriend.

And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. (Judges 14:7)

Now I remember when I was dating my wife, (back in the Dark Ages, just before the Civil War). I had a 1947 Plymouth 2-door. Now some of you are going to look stunned and not know what a 1947 Plymouth 2-door looked like, but some of you older ones here can remember. This one had a sun-visor in the front, but that doesn't mean anything to a lot of you either. It had big white wall tires and a fender skirt and little chrome eyelids over the front headlights. But anyhow, that car had radar. Now as often as I could, I would drive to Martha Lee's house. She lived across town. It got to where that little Plymouth was just like the Volkswagen that Walt Disney created. I could pat it on the hood and say, "Home, James," and off it would go. I was in another world. I was in a fog, even then. I didn't know what was going on, but that little black car just zoomed down the same path and it actually seemed to go by itself. All I thought of on the way was just getting there because I just wanted to be with her. All I

thought about on the way home was how I could hurry home so that I could get in and call her up and tell her that I loved her. That was 43 years ago, and I still do that.

At any rate, I can grasp Samson's mentality. Can you? So he killed a killer lion with his bare hands. Big deal, he was on his way to see the one he loved. He didn't focus on the conflict; he focused on reaching his destination. The lion was incidental; his objective was to be with the one he loved. Now there is a mountain of spiritual truth here. When the circumstances of life stare you in the face, and you realize that you are eyeball to eyeball with that roaring lion and he thinks you are a double-burger with fries, you mustn't major on the event. You crawl up into God and watch Him tear that lion apart. Then you run straight to the one you love, Jesus, and spend time with Him. Don't let the spiritual struggles become ends within themselves. That is a danger of this kind of study. All a spiritual struggle ought to do is to drive us into the arms of Jesus.

At any rate, on Samson's next trip, he came upon the dead body of the same lion and found it was filled with honey. Samson grabs a handful and has a honey-burger and heads for his honey in Timnath. It is a beautiful picture of how the very thing that Satan means to destroy us, God uses to bless us. He feeds us and He nourishes us with sweetness, even from the experiences in life that Satan intends for our harm. What a great God we have.

Samson's next test was one of sowing and reaping. It is the story of how he got trapped in the middle of a riddle. We begin in verse 10,

So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do.

And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments:

But if ye cannot declare it me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it.

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And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle.

And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye called us to take that we have? is it not so?

And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee?

And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her people.

And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down, What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.

And the spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house.

But Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend. (Judges 14:10-20)

Now it was a common practice of Hebrews and all Orientals of Samson's day to amuse themselves, particularly at dinner time, by propounding puzzling questions or riddles. So Samson decides that he will be one of the gang and try to amuse some of his prospective in-laws by creating a riddle out of his encounter with this honey of a lion. But Samson was about to get caught in his own trap. What he was trying to do was entertain the enemy. The problem is that he had forgotten who the enemy was because he had agreed to become unequally yoked to one of them. So he was reaping what he had sown. When the chips were down, his bride gave in and became a traitor, choosing to favor her own people at her husband's expense. They had no

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basis for a common commitment, and with the first real test of that commitment, the new Mrs. Samson used the secret weapon of the female race, her tear ducts. After she went boo-hoo for seven days, Sam gave in. She sold his secrets to the KGB and Samson blew his top. He killed 30 men from Ashkelon and gave their clothes to the 30 winners of "Let's Make a Deal".

Then in a teenage rage, he went home to Mommy and Daddy in Zorah. So that left the Timnath Tigers all dressed up with no place to go. So Sammy's new father-in-law gives the new bride to his best man and assumes they will all live happily ever after. You sort of expect a soap commercial to come on any minute, or J.R. to come in and make the plot a little stickier. At any rate, God was giving Samson strength.

The spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men. (Judges 14:19)

So you see Samson was winning the battles because God was defeating his enemies. Mr. Samson happened to be God's chosen vessel in which to store His strength. It wasn't because Samson was such an obedient lad; most of the encounters with the enemy never really had to be if Samson had simply obeyed in the first place. But ours is a God of grace, and we are not the enemy; Satan is. So God will use even our wrong choices, even our deliberate wrong choices as excuses to encounter the enemy and then defeat him. We get in on the action because God chooses to use us to bless us. You really can't lose as a Christian.

We have seen Samson through a lion and a riddle. Let's now follow him back to Timnath and see what new and exciting, fun-filled afternoon awaits our Hebrew Evil Knievel. Remember that dear Dad-in-law has given Mrs. Samson to a buddy. The big fellow as yet does not know it. General Hospital has nothing on us. Judges 15:1 begins,

But it came to pass within a while after, in the time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her father would not suffer him to go in.

And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: is not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her.

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And Samson said concerning them, Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure.

And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails.

And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives.

Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son in law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire.

And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease.

And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.

(Judges 15:1-8)

Well, the music swells, the commercials fade, and it is time for today's episode in the life of our bionic judge. When we left Wonder Boy in our last episode he was home in Zorah pouting up a storm while his new wife went on her honeymoon with Honey Second-best, her husband's best man. The scene fades in and Samson, with a present under his arm, is skipping through the forest like Little Red Riding Hood headed for what he thinks is a royal reunion with his pagan princess. What have we in the basket, Sammy? A bouquet of roses? A box of Russell Stover? A diamond necklace from Zorah Zales? A kid? You have got to be kidding. He leaves his wife on their honeymoon in a rage and then rushes to a reunion with a goat under his arm. This guy deserves to be replaced. Anyway, Daddy Pagan meets him at the door and asks, "Where are you headed Sammy?" Samson replies, "To my wife's room." "Sorry, big boy, we have a problem. I thought you had abandoned Teresa Teardrops, so I gave her to your buddy. After all, isn't that what friends are for?" he replies. He then uses his used car salesman voice and says, "Tell you what I'm gonna do. I've Tessies' younger sister, Bonnie Babyface. She is really a better looker anyhow. You can have her." This guy was up for the salesman of the year award, but Samson wasn't buying.

Just for an afternoon's entertainment, our fun-loving Wonder Boy goes out to get 300 foxes. He ties their tails together two at a time and sticks a torch between each of them. The foxes go bananas, run over the countryside and set fire to all of the corn and all the vineyards, leaving the Timnath stock market to plummet to zero as their only source of income goes up in smoke.

Now the world is not really faithful to its own. When they found that this heated fox-trot was a result of Samson's jealous rage, they took his wife and her husband and burned them and her wheeler dealer Poppa to a crisp. Samson answered their murder with more of his own. Verse 8 tells us that he slaughtered bunches of them in order to seek revenge for their revenge on his revenge. Isn't sin productive? As the camera fades and the credits come on screen, Samson is hiding in a cave in Etam and half of a country has gone up in smoke or down in defeat. But tune in next week as our Hebrew Superman will rise again. Indeed he will because God isn't finished with Samson yet.

THE APPLICATION

So much for the explanation and the illustration. What about the application? The application has really surfaced throughout the lesson, but let's try to nail it down to four basic points.

1- The enemy really doesn't have a chance when God empowers a Christian to fight the battle. Samson was called out by God to be a man of valor. God strengthened him, and at every turn, the enemy fell by his side. Now you and I have the same kind of power available to us that Samson had. A thousand may fall at our side, ten-thousand at our right hand, Scripture says, but it need not come nigh unto us. We so often cringe in the corner as though Satan had us on the ropes and we were waiting for the count. It is the other way around. You and I are about to break into a victory march. We have been declared the winners. No wonder the world isn't impressed with our claims of triumph, because we are cowering in the corner waiting for the referee to return and stop the fight. It is time we came to understand how strong we are in Jesus Christ.

2- No matter how much of a mess you think you have made of your life, no matter how many seemingly irreversible wrong choices you have made, God wants to remind you today that you are not the enemy; Satan is. God plans to pick up the pieces of

your life even if they are scattered all over the world. He wants to put it all together again in such a way that, even as you live out the fruit of your “mistakes”, God is going to use the very process to lure the enemy to the battlefield and take him to the cleaners.

3- This is a simple reminder that there is a real war going on out there. More is at stake in the spiritual struggles in our lives than meets the eye. Satan wants control of our lives and whatever it costs him to do it, he will try. God wants control of our lives and it has already cost Him His Son to do it. There really isn't any more time, either for maneuvers or AWOL Christians. This isn't a glorified rerun of MASH. This is a battle to the finish between the God of eternity and the prince of darkness. Some of us need to take the battle a little more seriously. The stakes are too high to use cap pistols or blanks because the enemy is shooting with the real thing.

4- We need to understand that we cannot have spiritual power by throwing on a cape in a spiritual phone booth. Power is the expression of strength. Strength comes from a commitment to build up the spirit day after day, line upon line, precept upon precept. Do you know how you get strength? You get in the Word of God. You stay in the Word of God, day after day after day, line after line after line, precept upon precept upon precept until you are saturated with the Word of God and God builds up the strength in your life. Then you need to confront those blind spots through counsel and spiritual surgery if need be. You need to lay aside those besetting sins as excess baggage if you are to become a man or woman of spiritual strength. It is worth it. There is a war going on. Paul said,

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. (I Corinthians 9:26,27)

Paul is saying, “I am not playing games, I am building strength. I do everything I have to do to keep my spirit under the Spirit's control for I want to stay on the front lines and not be shipped back to the barracks, declared unfit to do battle with the enemy.” Amen, Paul, amen.

The question really is,

HOW REAL IS THE BATTLE?

How real do *you* think the battle is?
(The one between Satan and God.)
Just why do you think this armor is here?
Why are our feet so shod?

Why does that reminder of God's own blood
Beckon to sober us still?
Why are we never e'er to forget
That Cross upon Calvary's hill?

I'll tell you why, blessed Christian,
It's a battle of life or death.
Every blow of the enemy's hand
Seeks to snuff out our spiritual breath.

These are not peace-time maneuvers,
This is war, my friend,
And you and I, as the Captain's hosts,
Are called His name to defend.

He is looking for men of valor,
He is looking for those who are strong,
For the battle's heat, intense will be
And the battle may be long.

So God is calling us to be
The Samsons of our day.
He expects the lion destroyed
And scattered by the way.

For His is the royal army
And victory is His to sing
For the King has declared that the battle is His
And we belong to the King.

The King's host is being ambushed
By Satan's evil band
And now God's trumpet blast resounds
And calls throughout the land,

"Take up your armor Christian,
And stand 'till the battle's o'er,
'Till the serpent under the Master's feet
Remains forevermore."

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Until then, the King is calling us
From strength to strength each hour,
Until His strength becomes in us
His awesome, mighty power.

So keep your eyes on the Captain,
One day soon the battle will cease,
And rushing into his waiting arms
Forever, we'll live in peace.

For Focus and Application

1- Review the five ways that Satan attacks us. Which of those five seems most likely to catch you off guard? Why? How would you gauge your “strength” in each case? How quickly do you cave in? What can you do about it? Are you trying to fight the enemy in your own strength? Why won’t that work?

2- What was wrong with Samson’s concept of women? How did it ultimately affect his strength? What could his parents have done differently? Why do we hesitate to interfere when our children make these kinds of wrong choices? Is there a balance? What is it? Can you list Scriptures to support your answer?

3- How did God plan to use Samson’s bad choice of a marriage partner? Does that mean He approved? Did that mean his parents were not responsible to speak up? What did it mean?

4- What made Samson’s battle with that lion so significant? How do you think he viewed it? What could he have done differently?

5- Why do Christians seem so afraid of Satan? What is the balance between having a healthy view of Satan’s power, while being aware of the greater power that is in us? How can we teach this balanced approach to our children? Where does the Word of God come into the picture?

6- How does the enemy convince us that *we are the enemy*? What does this do to our concept of God? What verses can you memorize to help you overcome this lie?

7- What is the relationship between strength and power? Why does strength take so long to develop? How can you illustrate this in the physical realm and make the “spiritual switch”?

8- Ask God this week to help you see how “strong” you are in the Lord by revealing your responses to situations where it is tested. Ask Him to infuse you with new strength and be careful to praise Him as He does.

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10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230
210-226-0000 or 1-800-375-7778
www.dtm.org • dtm@dtm.org • © Russell Kelfer

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