

The Book of Judges, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 11: Samson's Marriage and Riddle

Judges 14:1–15:20

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

What is doctrinally at stake in this lesson is the relationship between God's sovereign providence and human responsibility, a tension the world flattens but Scripture holds firmly in both hands. Judges 14:4 tells us the LORD was seeking an occasion against the Philistines through Samson's marriage, yet that same marriage springs from Samson's self-willed lust, 'she is right in my eyes.' We must teach students to affirm both: God can weave His good purpose through a man's sinful choices (Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28) without authoring, approving, or excusing the sin. To collapse this into determinism, as if God caused Samson to lust, slanders God's holiness and denies the plain teaching that the soul that sins is the one who bears its guilt (Ezekiel 18:20). To deny God's providence altogether leaves us with a God too small to redeem our messes. The narrative insists on both, and so must we.

Equally at stake is the doctrine of consecration and separation from the world. Samson's Nazirite calling pictures a life set apart, and his casual contact with the lion's carcass, his feast among the Philistines, and his marriage outside the covenant trace the slow unraveling of a holy life. The New Testament does not bind the Nazirite vow on us, but it does call every Christian to come out from among them and be separate, to not be unequally yoked with unbelievers, to cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit (2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1). The lesson must guard against legalism on one side and worldliness on the other, teaching that holiness is not a stricter rulebook but a heart wholly given to God.

This lesson aims at the student's spiritual formation because the deepest danger in the text is one every believer carries: being ruled by the eyes and the appetites rather than by the will of God. The refrain 'right in my own eyes' is not ancient history; it is the daily liturgy of the flesh. By walking students through Samson's slow compromise and God's surprising grace, we are inviting them to name their own wandering eyes, their own neglected consecration, and to cry out to the Lord as Samson finally did. The aim is not merely to understand Samson but to be reshaped, to let Jesus, the truly consecrated Deliverer who never did what was right in His own eyes but only the will of His Father, form in us a heart set apart for God.

Question 1

Student Question:

What does Samson's demand, 'Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes' (14:3), reveal about the spiritual condition both of Samson and of Israel in the days of the judges, and how does this phrase tie into the book's recurring refrain?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The opening scene moves with deliberate speed. Samson goes down to Timnah, sees a Philistine woman, comes back up, and immediately commands his parents, 'Get her for me as my wife' (14:2). The Hebrew narrative gives us no courtship, no conversation, no consideration of consequence. The verb that drives the whole episode is 'saw.' What Samson sees governs what Samson wants, and what Samson wants becomes, in his mind, what Samson must have. This is the anatomy of a life ruled by the eyes.

When his parents object, pointing out that this woman is among the uncircumcised Philistines, the covenant outsiders, the very oppressors God raised Samson to fight, he answers with the line that defines him: 'Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes' (14:3). The phrase is loaded. The Book of Judges repeatedly diagnoses Israel's sickness as everyone doing 'what was right in his own eyes' (compare Judges 17:6; 21:25). Samson, the deliverer, embodies the very disease he was sent to cure.

There is something deeply sobering here. Samson had every advantage: a miraculous birth, an angelic announcement, godly parents, the Spirit of the LORD, a lifelong calling. None of it inoculated him against the tyranny of appetite. Privilege and calling do not automatically produce holiness. A heart that will not submit its eyes to God will follow them anywhere, even a man set apart from the womb.

For the church of Christ student, this verse is a mirror. The phrase 'right in my own eyes' is the autonomy of the modern heart, the conviction that my desires are self-justifying, that wanting something strongly enough makes it permissible. The gospel calls us instead to crucify the flesh with its passions and desires (Galatians 5:24) and to walk by faith, not by sight.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- 'Right in his eyes' deliberately echoes the book's refrain, marking Samson as a microcosm of Israel's lawless self-will.
- The Philistine identity of the woman matters: she is a covenant outsider, and the objection of Samson's parents is rooted in faithfulness, not mere preference.
- Note that the text never presents Samson's demand as righteous; the narrator records his sin without softening it, even while God overrules it.
- Privilege and divine calling did not produce holiness in Samson, a warning against assuming spiritual heritage guarantees spiritual character.
- This is not a model for marriage but a cautionary tale; nothing here commends choosing a spouse by appetite or outside the faith.

Discussion Prompts

- Read 14:1–3 slowly and underline every verb tied to seeing and wanting. What pattern emerges?

- Where in Israel's history and in the Book of Judges does the phrase 'right in his own eyes' appear, and what does it consistently signal?
- What advantages did Samson have that should have shaped his choices, and why did they fail to?

Question 2

Student Question:

Think honestly about your own decisions this past month. Where have your eyes led your will, choosing what looked good or felt good over what you knew to be right? What did it cost you?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns the mirror toward us. Samson's tragedy is not that he had desires; God made us with desires. His tragedy is that his desires ran the household of his soul, dictating to his will, overruling his parents, ignoring his calling. The eyes proposed and the will simply obeyed. We are invited to ask whether the same arrangement quietly governs us.

Consider how many of our decisions begin with seeing. We see the advertisement and we want the thing. We see the lifestyle and we covet it. We see the opportunity for pleasure and we reach for it before conscience can speak. The path from eye to appetite to action can be so swift that we never notice a choice was even made. Samson's speed is our speed.

The honest believer will admit that following the eyes always carries a cost, even when the cost is delayed. Samson's marriage cost him peace, cost the lives of his bride and her father, cost thirty men of Ashkelon, and cost him years of escalating violence. Our smaller surrenders to appetite carry their own bills: damaged relationships, wasted hours, dulled consciences, a slow drift from God. The fruit ripens later, but it ripens.

The gracious news is that the eyes can be retrained. The psalmist prayed, 'Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways' (Psalm 119:37). Jesus spoke of the eye as the lamp of the body. Spiritual formation includes learning to look at the right things, to set our minds on things above (Colossians 3:1-2), so that what governs our wanting is increasingly the will of God rather than the lust of the eyes.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The question is diagnostic, not condemning; the aim is honest self-examination, not despair.
- Following the eyes always carries a cost, though the cost is often delayed and therefore easy to ignore.
- Desire itself is not sin; the issue is which faculty governs the soul, appetite or the renewed will.
- Scripture offers hope: the eyes and affections can be retrained through discipline and grace (Psalm 119:37; Colossians 3:1-2).

Discussion Prompts

- Trace one recent decision from the first 'seeing' to the final 'doing.' Where could you have paused?
- What is one worthless thing your eyes regularly return to, and what would it mean to turn them away?
- What hidden cost have you already paid for following your eyes that you would not pay again?

Question 3

Student Question:

Judges 14:4 says the LORD was 'seeking an occasion against the Philistines.' How can God be sovereignly working His purpose through Samson's sinful choice without God approving or causing that sin (compare Ezekiel 18:20; Genesis 50:20)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Verse 4 is one of the most theologically arresting sentences in Judges: 'His father and mother did not know that it was from the LORD, for he was seeking an occasion against the Philistines.' God was at work in and around Samson's sinful choice, steering history toward Israel's deliverance, and no one in the scene knew it. This is providence, the unseen hand of God governing events toward His purposes.

We must be careful and precise here. The text does not say God caused Samson to lust, or that God approved the marriage, or that Samson was merely a puppet. Samson's desire is his own, and Scripture elsewhere is emphatic that God tempts no one to evil (James 1:13). What the verse affirms is that God, without authoring the sin, overruled it, bending even Samson's self-will to serve a larger redemptive plan.

The clearest parallel is Joseph's word to his brothers: 'You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good' (Genesis 50:20). The same act carries two intentions, the evil intention of the human agent and the good intention of the sovereign God, and the two do not cancel. God does not need our goodness in order to accomplish His purpose; He is great enough to weave even our failures into His design without becoming the author of them.

This guards a vital doctrine for the church of Christ. We reject any notion (whether fatalism or a hard Calvinistic determinism) that makes God the cause of sin or erases human freedom and responsibility. Ezekiel 18:20 stands firm: 'The soul who sins shall die.' Providence and responsibility are not rivals. God rules over all, and every person answers for his own choices. Both are true, and the believer rests in the first while owning the second.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Providence means God governs events toward His purposes; it does not mean God authors the sin He overrules.
- James 1:13 guards the truth that God tempts no one; Samson's lust is his own, not God's doing.
- Genesis 50:20 is the model text: the same act bears the human's evil intent and God's good intent without contradiction.
- This refutes determinism and fatalism: God's sovereignty never cancels the human responsibility of Ezekiel 18:20.
- The parents' ignorance ('did not know') underscores that providence often works hidden, recognized only in hindsight.
- We must not use this verse to excuse sin by claiming 'God will use it anyway'; that abuses providence and ignores accountability.

Discussion Prompts

- How does Genesis 50:20 help you articulate the difference between God overruling sin and God causing it?
- Why is it important to insist that God tempts no one (James 1:13) even while affirming His providence?
- How would you answer someone who says, 'If God uses my sin for good, then my sin does not really matter'?

Question 4

Student Question:

Where in your life right now do you most need to trust that God is quietly at work for good even though circumstances, including your own failures, look like a tangle of bad decisions?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question invites us to live inside the doctrine of providence rather than merely affirm it. If God could be at work for good through the tangle of Samson's bad choices, then He can be at work in the tangle of ours. The believer is not promised an easy road or even a road of our own good decisions, but we are promised that God works all things together for good for those who love Him (Romans 8:28).

Notice how the comfort here is not that everything we do is fine, but that nothing we have done is beyond God's redemptive reach. Samson's mess was real; the consequences were real; people died. And still God advanced His purpose. For the believer carrying regret over past failures, this is gospel: your failures, repented of, do not place you outside the reach of God's good hand.

It is worth distinguishing two things our hearts often confuse. We are not told to trust that our sinful choices were secretly good, nor that the pain they caused was harmless. We are told to

trust that God is sovereign over even those choices and able to bring good out of them as we turn back to Him. That trust frees us from both despair and self-justification.

Practically, this means we can bring our tangled situations to God in honest prayer, confessing what was ours to confess and entrusting the outcome to a God who specializes in redemption. The same God who split a rock for a thirsty, self-willed Samson can bring water out of the dry places of our own making.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Providence is meant to be lived, not merely affirmed; it produces real comfort in real failure.
- The comfort is not that our sin was good but that God's redemptive reach extends even over our sin.
- Romans 8:28 grounds this confidence and is addressed to 'those who love God,' not a blanket promise apart from Him.
- This frees the believer from both despair (my failure is final) and self-justification (my failure did not matter).

Discussion Prompts

- What past failure most tempts you to believe it is beyond God's redemptive reach?
- How does Romans 8:28 differ from a vague optimism that 'everything happens for a reason'?
- What would honest prayer over your current tangle actually sound like this week?

Question 5

Student Question:

Samson tears a lion apart by the Spirit's power (14:6), then later scoops honey from its carcass and eats it (14:8-9). Given his Nazirite vow against touching the dead (Numbers 6:6), what does this incident teach about the slow erosion of consecration?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

On a later trip to Timnah, Samson turns aside to look at the lion's carcass he had earlier killed, and finds that a swarm of bees has made honey in it. He scrapes out the honey with his hands and eats it as he walks, even giving some to his parents without telling them where it came from (14:8-9). On the surface it is a small thing, a snack. Beneath the surface it is a quiet act of defilement.

Samson was a Nazirite, and the law of the Nazirite forbade contact with any dead body, even a parent's, for the whole duration of the vow (Numbers 6:6-7). Scooping honey from a carcass is precisely the kind of contact the vow prohibited. And note the concealment: he does not tell his

parents the source. The hiddenness signals a conscience that knows something is off but proceeds anyway.

This is how consecration erodes, not usually in one dramatic apostasy, but in a series of small, deniable compromises. First the marriage outside the covenant, now the carcass, later the drinking feast (the word in 14:10 for the feast suggests a drinking party, and a Nazirite was to touch no product of the vine), and finally, years on, the cut hair. Each step seemed minor. Each step loosened the cords of his consecration a little more.

The lesson for us is the danger of the small compromise. Holiness is rarely lost in a single leap; it leaks away through a thousand tiny concessions we tell ourselves do not matter. The Christian is called to faithfulness in little things, knowing that the one who is faithful in little is faithful also in much (Luke 16:10). Guard the small surrenders, for they train the soul.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The Nazirite vow forbade all contact with the dead (Numbers 6:6–7); eating honey from the carcass was a real violation.
- The concealment from his parents signals a conscience aware of wrongdoing yet choosing to proceed.
- Samson's compromises form a pattern: foreign marriage, the carcass, the drinking feast, and finally the cut hair.
- Consecration erodes by small, deniable steps rather than by a single dramatic fall.
- We must avoid both errors: making the carcass a trivial detail and binding the Nazirite vow on Christians today.
- Luke 16:10 carries the principle forward: faithfulness in little things guards faithfulness in great ones.

Discussion Prompts

- Trace the sequence of Samson's compromises across chapter 14. How does each one prepare the next?
- Why does the detail that he hid the source from his parents matter for understanding his conscience?
- What does the principle of Luke 16:10 say about how we should treat 'small' compromises?

Question 6

Student Question:

What small compromise have you allowed yourself recently, telling yourself it does not really matter, that is quietly eroding your own consecration to the Lord?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question presses the previous note into the reader's own life. We all have our equivalent of the honey from the carcass, the small permission we grant ourselves that we would rather not explain to anyone, the compromise we keep quietly tucked away. The very fact that we would prefer to conceal it is often the first sign that our consecration is leaking.

Think of the things we tell ourselves do not really matter: the show we keep watching that coarsens us, the conversation we keep having that we would not want overheard, the corner we keep cutting at work, the prayer life we keep neglecting. None of these feels like apostasy. Each one feels survivable. But like honey from a carcass, each one quietly defiles, and together they reshape the soul.

The remedy is not anxious scrupulosity, jumping at every shadow, but honest, regular self-examination before God. Paul urges us to examine ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5). The Spirit is gentle and faithful to show us where our consecration is leaking, if we will sit still and ask. What He reveals, we can confess and forsake before it grows.

There is hope in this. Samson never seems to reckon with his small compromises until they have cost him everything. We do not have to follow that path. We can attend to the carcass-honey now, while it is still small, and let the Lord re-consecrate the area we have quietly surrendered.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The instinct to conceal a compromise is itself a warning sign worth heeding.
- Small compromises feel survivable individually but reshape the soul cumulatively.
- The remedy is honest self-examination before God (2 Corinthians 13:5), not anxious scrupulosity.
- Unlike Samson, we can address our compromises while they are still small and reversible.

Discussion Prompts

- What is one 'honey from the carcass' you would rather not explain to anyone? Name it before God.
- What story do you tell yourself to make that compromise feel like it does not matter?
- What would it look like to confess and forsake it this week rather than years from now?

Question 7

Student Question:

Samson's bride pressures and betrays him, and the marriage that was 'right in his eyes' brings disaster (14:15–20). What does this account, read alongside the New Testament, teach about being unequally yoked and entangled with the world (2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The marriage that was 'right in Samson's eyes' becomes the source of his undoing. At the seven-day feast he poses a riddle to thirty Philistine companions, wagering thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes (14:12–14). Unable to solve it, the companions threaten his bride and her family with fire (14:15). She weeps on Samson the whole feast until he relents and tells her the answer, and she promptly betrays it to her countrymen (14:16–17). The marriage built on appetite collapses into manipulation, betrayal, and death.

The narrative is a vivid case study in the danger of being unequally yoked. Samson bound himself in the most intimate covenant to someone outside the faith, whose loyalties, when pressure came, lay with her people and not with him. The very closeness that should have been his strength became the channel of his betrayal. What we bind ourselves to, we are shaped and exposed by.

The New Testament draws the principle out for the church. Paul writes, 'Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers... what fellowship has light with darkness?... Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate' (2 Corinthians 6:14–17). This is not a license for unkindness or isolation from the lost, whom we are sent to love and reach, but a warning against binding partnerships, intimate covenants, and entangling alliances that compromise our loyalty to Christ.

For the church of Christ student, this bears directly on choices of marriage, business, and deep friendship. We do not despise outsiders; we evangelize them. But we are wise about what we are yoked to, because a yoke shares a direction. Bind yourself to one walking away from God, and you will feel the pull. Samson felt it, and it cost him his secret, his bride, and ultimately the peace of his life.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Samson's bride's loyalty lay with her people; intimate covenant with an outsider became the channel of betrayal.
- 2 Corinthians 6:14–17 draws the principle forward: do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.
- This is not a call to isolate from or despise the lost, whom we are sent to love and evangelize.
- A yoke shares a direction; binding ourselves to those walking from God exerts a constant pull.
- The passage warns against entangling covenants (marriage, business, deep partnership), not ordinary contact with unbelievers.
- The text also exposes the manipulation that grows in a relationship built on appetite rather than shared faith.

Discussion Prompts

- How did the closeness of Samson's marriage become the very means of his betrayal?
- How does 2 Corinthians 6:14–17 distinguish loving the lost from being yoked to them?

- What is the difference between evangelistic friendship and an entangling alliance?

Question 8

Student Question:

Where are you most tempted to be 'unequally yoked,' to bind yourself closely to people or pursuits that pull you away from God? What boundary do you need to draw?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question asks the reader to locate the unequal yoke in his own life. It may be a romantic relationship pulling toward compromise, a business partnership that keeps requiring ethical concessions, a friendship that consistently dulls the conscience, or a circle of influence that slowly pulls the heart from God. The yoke is anything we bind ourselves to that shares a direction contrary to Christ.

Honesty is required here, because the heart is skilled at rationalizing entanglements it does not want to give up. We tell ourselves we are the influence, that we will change them, that we can handle it, that it is not affecting us. Samson surely told himself the same. The proof, as always, is in the direction we are actually traveling, not the direction we intend.

Drawing a boundary does not mean cruelty or abandonment. We can love people deeply, pray for them, serve them, and still refuse to be yoked to their direction. Sometimes the boundary is ending a relationship; often it is changing its terms, its closeness, its place of authority in our lives. Wisdom discerns the difference.

The call is not to fear the world but to be clear-eyed about our loyalties. Friendship with the world is enmity with God (James 4:4), not because the world's people are to be hated, but because a heart bound to the world's direction cannot also be bound wholly to Christ. The boundary we draw is finally about protecting our first love.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The unequal yoke may be romantic, professional, or social; the test is shared direction, not mere proximity.
- The heart rationalizes entanglements it does not want to release ('I will be the influence').
- The real evidence is the direction we are traveling, not the direction we intend.
- Boundaries are about loyalty to Christ, not cruelty toward people (James 4:4); we can love without being yoked.

Discussion Prompts

- What relationship or pursuit most consistently pulls you in a direction away from God?
- What rationalization do you use to keep that entanglement in place?
- What specific boundary, ending or changing, would protect your loyalty to Christ?

Question 9

Student Question:

Hold two truths together from this passage: God genuinely uses Samson, a deeply flawed and self-willed man, to begin delivering Israel, and yet Samson remains fully accountable for following his appetites and neglecting his consecration. How does Scripture keep both God's overruling providence and human responsibility in view, and what does this say about how God can use you without excusing your sin?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the doctrinal heart of the lesson, where two truths must be held together without collapsing either. The first truth: God genuinely uses Samson. The Spirit rushes upon him (14:6, 14:19; 15:14), and through his flawed and violent career God begins to deliver Israel from the Philistines (compare 13:5). Judges 15:20 even records that 'he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.' God's purpose is real and it advances, and the human instrument is a deeply compromised man.

The second truth: Samson is fully accountable. The text never excuses his lust, his vengeance, his broken vows, his self-will. He is responsible for following his appetites and for neglecting the consecration God placed upon him. Ezekiel 18:20 stands: 'The soul who sins shall die... the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.' God's use of Samson does not transfer Samson's guilt to God or erase it from Samson.

Scripture keeps both in view by distinguishing what God ordains to accomplish from what God approves and what each agent intends. The classic statement is Genesis 50:20: 'You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.' Two intentions, two responsibilities, one event. Acts 2:23 says the same of the cross: Jesus was delivered up 'according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God,' and yet 'you crucified and killed' Him 'by the hands of lawless men.' God's sovereign plan and human guilt coexist without contradiction. The plan does not excuse the guilt; the guilt does not thwart the plan.

This protects us from two errors the church of Christ rightly rejects. On one side, a hard determinism that makes God the author of sin and reduces humans to puppets, denying real freedom and real responsibility. On the other, a deism that imagines God uninvolved, merely reacting to human choices. The biblical picture is richer: a sovereign God who governs all things, working His good purpose even through the worst of human acts, while every person remains genuinely free and genuinely answerable. We marvel at the first; we tremble at the second.

What does this say about how God can use you? It says your usefulness to God does not excuse your sin, and your sin does not necessarily disqualify you from being used. God can advance His kingdom through your gifts even where your character lags, which should make you neither

proud (it was His purpose, not your worthiness) nor presumptuous (you will answer for your choices). The only safe response is to pursue both: be available to God's purpose and be accountable for your obedience, refusing to hide behind providence or to despair under responsibility. Look to Christ, the one Servant who was both perfectly used by the Father and perfectly faithful, and let Him form that union of usefulness and holiness in you.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Both truths are biblical: God really uses Samson (Spirit rushing upon him; twenty years judging Israel) and Samson is really accountable.
- Ezekiel 18:20 guards individual responsibility; God's use of a man never transfers or erases that man's guilt.
- Genesis 50:20 and Acts 2:23 model the coexistence of God's sovereign plan and genuine human guilt in a single event.
- This refutes hard determinism (God as author of sin, humans as puppets) on one side and deism (God uninvolved) on the other.
- Usefulness to God does not excuse sin, and sin does not automatically disqualify; both pride and presumption are cut off.
- There is no inherited guilt or total depravity here; Samson answers for his own choices, not for an inherited corruption (Ezekiel 18:20).
- Christ is the resolution: the one Servant perfectly used and perfectly faithful, in whom usefulness and holiness are joined.

Discussion Prompts

- How do Genesis 50:20 and Acts 2:23 help you hold God's sovereignty and human guilt together without collapsing either?
- Why must we reject both hard determinism and deism, and how does Samson's story expose the weakness of each?
- How does this truth keep you from both pride and presumption about your own usefulness to God?

Question 10

Student Question:

Samson cries to the LORD in his thirst and God graciously provides (15:18–19). Name one specific appetite or one 'what is right in my own eyes' that Jesus is reshaping in you right now, and what would it look like to cry out to Him about it this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

After the slaughter at Lehi, where Samson kills a thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey by the Spirit's power, he is suddenly, desperately thirsty (15:18). And here, for almost the first time in the whole account, we hear Samson pray. 'You have granted this great salvation by the hand

of your servant, and shall I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?’ It is not a polished prayer, but it is real, and it is directed to the LORD.

God’s response is sheer grace. He splits open the hollow place at Lehi and water comes out; Samson drinks, his spirit returns, and he revives (15:19). The self-willed man who has spent two chapters chasing what was right in his own eyes cries out in his need, and God answers with cool water from a broken rock. This is the gospel pattern: God meets the cry of the needy, not the merit of the worthy.

The question turns this toward the reader’s own appetites. Samson’s thirst becomes a picture of every craving we cannot satisfy on our own and every ‘right in my own eyes’ that Jesus is patiently reshaping. The same Lord who answered Samson’s thirst invites us to cry out about ours, to bring Him the specific appetite, the specific self-will, the specific area where we have been our own authority, and to ask Him to be Lord there.

Notice the shape of formation here. It is not that we clean ourselves up and then come to God; it is that we cry out in our need and God provides the water. Jesus said, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink’ (John 7:37), and to the woman at the well He offered living water that would become a spring welling up to eternal life (John 4:14). The way forward for the self-willed heart is the cry of thirst, naming the craving, and the drinking deeply of Christ.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Samson’s prayer at Lehi is one of his few moments of genuine dependence on the LORD.
- God answers by grace, meeting need rather than merit; the self-willed man’s cry is heard.
- The reader is invited to name one specific appetite or ‘right in my own eyes’ Jesus is reshaping.
- Formation comes not by cleaning ourselves up first but by crying out in thirst (John 7:37; John 4:14).
- Jesus is the true and better Deliverer who offers living water to every thirsty, self-willed heart.

Discussion Prompts

- What specific appetite or self-will is Jesus currently reshaping in you, and how do you know?
- What would it look like to cry out to the Lord about that thirst this week, naming it plainly?
- How does it change you to know that God answers the cry of the needy, not the merit of the worthy?