

Bad Girls of the Bible
Delilah: Betraying Love for Money
(Part 2)

Intro: There are many tragic love stories in literature and history. Here's a few...(Romeo and Juliet / Cleopatra and Mark Antony / Lancelot and Guinevere/ Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler – Gone With the Wind - ..."Frankly Scarlett..."

Stories of betrayal seems to fascinate us. Just look at the tabloid headlines. (Have one) Shows like "Entertainment Tonight and Extra have high ratings and most of what they talk about is gossip about celebrities. (Who broke up with who / who betrayed who / Fascination!

In Judges 16, God saw fit to record another tragic love story...Samson and Delilah. Delilah's betrayal of Samson makes her go down in history as another bad girl of the bible. She will forever be remembered as the woman who betrayed the strongest man in history by revealing the secret of his great strength for money.

Summarize the story: This story takes place during the time of Israel's history known as "The Judges".

Principals from the life of Delilah

I. Chasing The Promise of Wealth Can Lure Us Down the Path of Betrayal

Judges 16:4-5 "Some time later Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah, who lived in the valley of Sorek. The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, "Entice Samson to tell you what makes him so strong and how he can be overpowered and tied up securely. Then each of us will give you 1,100 pieces of silver." (NLT)

- We need to understand the enormous amount of money she was offered. 1100 X 5 Philistine Rulers = 5500 pieces of silver or 140lbs! A literal fortune!
- Why did they offer a prostitute so much money? She was probably a Philistine. She knew Samson was killing her people. If she truly hated him, why not betray him for free? Maybe she had some genuine feelings for Samson. Maybe the Philistine rulers wanted to make an offer she couldn't refuse. Was the promise of wealth simply more powerful than the promise of love?
- Whether or not Delilah ever truly loved Samson, we do not know. The Bible tells us that Samson did love Delilah. Sometimes I think people have demonized Delilah over the years. Some scholars have called her the OT Judas.
- Here is a single woman...a prostitute, being offered a way out of her lifestyle...a way out of her low social class and the promise of prosperity for the rest of her life. She took it, and in taking it, started sown the path of betrayal.
- The desire for money is powerful in our day as well.

I Tim. 6:9-10 "Lust for money brings trouble and nothing but trouble. Going down that path, some lose their footing in the faith completely and live to regret it bitterly ever after."

(Message)

- It's not money in itself that causes us to walk down the path of betrayal. It is the lust for money. It is the desire for wealth. We don't have to be wealthy to be lured down its path. We simply must have the desire for wealth to cloud our judgment. How?

A. Wealth can cause us to betray our values

1. Whether or not Delilah betrayed her values because of the promises of wealth we do not know. We never hear of her again after the story. Did she have any remorse watching Samson's eyes being gouged out? Was she saddened by his death? Who knows?
2. But the desire for wealth and prosperity can certainly cause us to betray our values. When our desire for wealth becomes stronger than our desire for living our internal values, we are on the path to betrayal.
3. Our values operate like an internal GPS system that keeps us living life in a healthy / safe / God-honoring way. Ignore the values, we veer off course.
How?
 - The lure of money from your job / career can cause you to betray your value of family by working long hours for extended seasons ignoring the needs of your spouse and kids.
 - When you throw your money away on video poker hoping to make a fast buck, you are violating the value of financial responsibility.
 - You may make a business decision that saves you 1000s of dollars, yet it violated your value of personal integrity because it wasn't completely ethical...no one will know anyway.
 - You lie on your taxes so you get a larger return and violate the value of honesty.
 - You notice the grocery store cashier made a \$10 mistake in your favor after you leave the store. Hey, who couldn't use an extra \$10. You violate the values of your character by not returning it.
4. All of these violations of values come from the lure of wealth. It doesn't have to be the lure of getting rich. It can be as simple as \$10. It's amazing how quickly money can cause us to violate our internal values if we're not careful.
5. Unfortunately, when we violate our values, it creates other issues

B. Wealth can cause us to betray our relationships

1. Any time we betray an internal value, we end up negatively affecting the relationships around us. Certainly the case with Samson. As soon as Delilah agreed to the money, the relationship was over.
2. We certainly see this play out frequently today in professional sports. It is money that creates loyalties, not a commitment to relationships. Star athletes go to the teams who can pay them the most. Loyalty to the franchise??? Yeah right!
3. But is the average person that much different than the professional athlete? How many people make a job change simply because they were offered substantially more money at another company? Therefore, you pull up stakes and move to another state.

- What about your spouse? What about your kids? What does this do to them? Our values didn't make the decision...money did.
- 4. How many pastors left their churches because they were offered more money at another Church? Therefore, they move their families once again and the people in the church are left scattered and confused.
- What about the relationships that were developed in the church?
- Years ago when I was a youth pastor, I was recruited for another job (explain)
- 5. The promise of money should never be used as the best indicator to make major decisions. WHY? Because we will betray relationships if we do. Sometimes the right relational decision is not the best financial decision.
- 6. If love is the greatest value in scripture, shouldn't that be a consideration when making decisions?

II. Guilt Is A Destructive Tool For Manipulating Relationships

Judges 16:15-16 "Then Delilah pouted, "How can you tell me, 'I love you,' when you don't share your secrets with me? You've made fun of me three times now, and you still haven't told me what makes you so strong!" She tormented him with her nagging day after day until he was sick to death of it." (NLT) She laid a guilt trip on him that eventually wore him down!

A. Attempting to control a person with guilt will destroy the relationship

1. Laying guilt trips on people has to be one of the most common relational tools people use. Parents use it on their kids to control their behavior. Teachers use it on their students to motivate better performance. Spouses use it on each other to try to change one another's behavior. Some Pastors use it on their people to get them to do what they want.
 2. Laying a guilt trip on another person is a form of manipulation that will eventually destroy a relationship. (It certainly destroyed Samson and Delilah) It is not a tool you want in your relational tool kit. Unfortunately, it's the only one many people have been exposed to.
 3. Nobody wants to hang out with someone who is constantly trying to control / manipulate another person's behavior with guilt. I avoid people like this like the plague! You want to know why people are avoiding you? This may be it!
 4. I can't even begin to tell you how many times over the years people in church have tried to control my behavior by attempting to lay a guilt trip on me. (expectations.)
- Examples: "A really good pastor does this..." "How can you call yourself a pastor..."
 - 5. How often are you using guilt as a relational tool? Be honest? If you really want to know, muster up the courage and ask your spouse? If you have Middle school to High School age children, ask them. ("Do you feel that I use guilt to try to control / change your behavior?")
 - Guilt trips are a very destructive unloving response to our relational frustrations. Relational frustrations are part of life. God has a better answer.

B. Attempting to unconditionally love someone transforms the relationship

1. The greatest commands in the Bible are relational commands. We are to love God with our entire being and love each other. The greatest tool we have in our relational tool kit for life that transforms people is love...not guilt...not control...not manipulation...but love.

I Cor. 13:4-7 "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance." (NLT)

2. I have done this many times here at Foothills and I am going to do this again. As we read through these verses describing what real love looks like, substitute your name for the word love.
3. Love is what gives us tremendous influence in another person's life not guilt or manipulation. When I know someone genuinely loves me, it is just amazing how much I welcome their input into my life.
4. Here's a principal you all should write down. "The one who loves the most has the most influence." If you want to genuinely influence the behavior / attitudes / of the people around you, learn to love them unconditionally as the Bible describes it. Give up on the attempts at trying to control people. This is what's pushing them away! Instead...love them!

III. Our Lives Can Be Used To Bring the Downfall or Success of Others

Judges 16:18-19 "Delilah realized he had finally told her the truth, so she sent for the Philistine rulers. "Come back one more time," she said, "for he has finally told me his secret." So the Philistine rulers returned with the money in their hands. Delilah lulled Samson to sleep with his head in her lap, and then she called in a man to shave off the seven locks of his hair. In this way she began to bring him down, and his strength left him." (NLT)

- Here we see the ultimate end of her betrayal where she was used to literally destroy Samson's life. She could have chosen to be used to propel Samson towards even greater things, but instead she was used to bring his downfall.
- Our lives have a powerful influence on those around us for their success or downfall.

A. Our lives can hinder the success of others

1. Now I realize that most of the time this is unintentional. Even our guilt trips are usually motivated from a desire to see some good outcome in another person's life. We believe we know what's best for them so we employ guilt as our tool. But even our good intentions can hinder another person's life.
 2. Sometimes I think about the number of people who have tried to hinder me from becoming who I am over the years. Those who have intentionally or unintentionally tried to bring me down.
- Ex girlfriends mother who said I would amount to nothing.

- Former co-workers who mocked me as I walked out of a job to enter the ministry. “You’ll be back...”
- Former denominational leaders who said it is impossible for me to grow up in Molalla and stay here as a pastor.
- Those who said that Foothills will never make it and it will fail like all the others.
- Other believers in the community who say the only reason so many people go to Foothills is I preach easy and don’t require commitment. It’s a feel good message.
- People who have left Foothills over the years because I refuse to alter the vision and core values to fit their opinion of church. “How can you call yourself a pastor if you don’t do this...?”

3. I don’t ever want to be guilty of hindering the progress of another traveler in this life as they chase after God. I want to be known as the person who inspires people to become more not discourage them. The Bible warns us about this behavior.

Matt. 18:6 “But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to have a large millstone tied around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea.” (NLT) Don’t let your life hinder others!!!

4. We need to be very careful about the influence of our lives on others. Do our words inspire / encourage / build others up / are they affirming / do they motivate people to live by faith and trust God / are they loving?
5. If we’re not careful our lives can hinder our spouses / our children / our co-workers / even our church. If we’re not careful, we’re really no different than Delilah. God has a better idea.

B. Our lives can propel others towards success

Rom. 14:19 “So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.” (NLT)

Rom. 15:2 “We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord.” (NLT)

I Thess. 5:11 “So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.” (NLT)

1. We should all embrace the responsibility to help propel each other forward to become all that God desires us to be. Notice the phrase in each of these verses; “Build each other up”.
2. This is our job. I help build you up and you help build me up. We are literal builders of one another. HOW? What does this mean? Let’s use the word BUILD as an acronym to understand our responsibility to each other.

B: Believe – Believe in God’s work in each other. When I believe that God is working in you, I don’t want to hinder this process. It gives me more grace and patience towards you and you towards me. We are all a work of God in progress.

U: Unity – We are sold out to unity and we refuse anything divisive? It takes no skill or effort whatsoever to complain / grumble / gossip / and have a negative spirit. A commitment to unity is a commitment to be a peacemaker and unity builders. Unity builds up; dissension tears down

I: Inspire – Become each other's cheer leaders. Are we cheering each other along? Who are you encouraging to keep going? The journey can be discouraging and often we feel like quitting. We need to hear the voices of others cheering us along!

L: Love – Are we sold out to loving one another unconditionally in a manner like I Cor. 13? Do our relationships / our ministries / our church have the environment of love? Do we all take responsibility for fostering it?

D: Determined – This word means to be resolute, decided, settled or resolved. We cannot become builders of others without determination...without a constant resolve to live this way. It's not easy living this way...yet it is what God calls each of us to.

- Is your life being used by God to propel people forward, building them up?

Samson and Delilah may appear like only a tragic love story, yet after a closer look, there are principals for us all.

- **Chasing The Promise of Wealth Can Lure Us Down the Path of Betrayal**
- **Guilt Is A Destructive Tool For Manipulating Relationships**
- **Our Lives Can Be Used To Bring the Downfall or Success of Others**

Is there at least one principal from this story God is speaking to your heart about asking you to trust Him with? Is there one place He is asking you to make a commitment to change?