



# TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

**One day Samson went to Gaza, where he saw a prostitute. He went in to spend the night with her. The people of Gaza were told, "Samson is here!" So they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the city gate. They made no move during the night, saying, "At dawn we'll kill him." But Samson lay there only until the middle of the night. Then he got up and took hold of the doors of the city gate, together with the two posts, and tore them loose, bar and all. He lifted them to his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron. Some time later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah. The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, "See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels of silver."**

*Judges 16:1-5*

## Controlling desires

Isn't it tragic when a person with a lot of talent and potential blows it all by doing something stupid? How sad when a famous athlete loses his career over a criminal charge of domestic violence! What a shame when a singer overdoses and loses her life long before her time! How heartbreaking when a Christian does something similar—getting entangled in sin and losing the opportunity to advance God's kingdom.

That's the situation we see as Samson's life draws toward the end. The great hero God raised up didn't stick with what he learned from early on or the holiness he was given by grace. He gave that all up for lust. He made arrangements to stay the night with a prostitute, and because he got away with it, he thought he could handle his problem and still be a hero for God. Little did he know, he couldn't handle it! Little did he know that the devil was orchestrating everything, utilizing his desires to do him in through a beautiful woman named Delilah.

Do you think you could be stronger? Do you believe those wayward desires in your heart will never lead you to the same place? Be careful, so you don't fall! You don't ever want to have to give up your career, your family, or your soul because you're holding on to sinful desires, whether it's lust online or anything else!

How tragic this chapter of Judges! Yet, as sad as a fallen hero is, as sad as it would be for any of us to fall, here's the beauty of God's grace: God didn't give up on Samson, and he's not about to give up on us. Though we might fail and though we do every time we sin, God gives us Christ in all our weakness. God gives us forgiveness every time we fall.

Rely on Jesus always. Don't rely on your own strength. You are no match for sinful desires on your own. Call out to the Lord for rescue, and don't be afraid to confide in fellow Christians. They're engaged in the same struggle against sin that you are! Stay disciplined in the faith and in the holiness God gave you. Keep coming to Jesus in the Word and Sacrament. There is your strength! Don't throw it away like Samson did. God have mercy. God will! Amen.

### PRAYER:

**Heavenly Father, I thank you for making me a hero for this world by applying Jesus' work to me through Holy Baptism. Help me to always take comfort in my baptism—that you saved me there. Keep me also from thinking that my baptism is the end of the story. Cause me to see that baptism means living a heroic life daily by drowning my old self and living new for you, forgiven and righteous. Amen.**