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# The Greatest Commandment

*Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:1-25*

**Theme: Love the Lord your God with all your heart**

*1st-3rd Grade (Ages 6-8)*

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Free curriculum for small and rural churches

## Lesson Overview

Lesson Title: Samson , God's Strength in Weakness Theme: God gives us gifts to serve Him, not ourselves. Lesson Overview: Samson was a strong man, but he wasn't strong because he was powerful, he was strong because God chose him! The Bible tells us that Samson was born weak and could barely walk, but God gave him a special gift of great strength. Even though Samson sometimes struggled to listen to God and make the right choices, God still used him to help His people (Judges 13-16). His story teaches us that God doesn't call the strong; He calls those He can use, no matter how small or unsure we feel! We all have special gifts from God, like kindness, creativity, or even just the ability to help others. God gives these gifts to help us serve Him and others, not to make us feel proud or alone. Sometimes, we might feel weak or unsure, but God's power is bigger than our fears. Just like Samson, we can trust that God works through us, even when we don't feel strong enough! God's plan isn't always easy, but He's always with us. When we make mistakes, like Samson did, God forgives and shows us another chance. The key is to listen to His guidance and use our gifts to love and serve others. Let's learn from Samson that God's strength is in our weakness, and that's where our true power lies! Application Idea for Kids: Discuss how Samson's story reminds us that God uses people in different ways. Ask kids: "What gift or strength do you have that you can use to help God and others this week?" Share how even small acts of kindness or obedience make a big difference in God's eyes!

## Bible Story

### Samson's Amazing Strength

Long ago, the people of Israel were in trouble. The enemy, the Philistines, had taken away their gods and their most important leader, Samson. But God was still with them! One day, a man named Manoah met a special angel (an angel is like a messenger from God) who told him he would have a baby boy with God's power. The angel said, "He will start the work of saving Israel." Manoah and his wife waited for a long time before their son was born, he was called

Samson.

When Samson grew up, he was strong and brave, but he didn't know God's plan for him. The Philistines kept teasing and teasing him, telling him he wasn't strong enough to help them. Samson wasn't used to being weak, but God wanted him to learn something important: that even the weakest person can do great things when they trust God. One day, Samson's love for a woman named Delilah made him forget about God. She kept asking him why he was so strong, and he lied to her. But the truth was that his strength came from God, and one day, God would take it away.

Delilah tried many ways to break Samson's strength, but he always lied. She even tried to make him angry by cutting his hair, which was the only thing keeping him strong. Samson thought she would win, but God had a bigger plan. Finally, he let Delilah do what she wanted, and she tricked him into telling her the truth. She cut off his hair and let the Philistines grab him. They tied him up and laughed at him, but Samson's strength had left him. He was now as weak as a baby! The Philistines took him to their biggest temple and made fun of him. They said, "We will sacrifice him to our gods!" But as Samson looked around, he saw that the temple was made of wood and stone, just like the Philistines! God gave him one last chance to save himself.

With all his strength gone, Samson did something amazing. He grabbed the temple pillars (big, strong columns) and pushed them over! The whole building crashed down, and the Philistines were trapped under the ruins. With a loud shout, Samson killed many of them too. The Philistines ran away in fear, and God was pleased. This was a sign that He still loved Israel, even when Samson wasn't strong. His story teaches us that God can use anyone, even the weakest people, to do big things if they trust Him!

Why This Story Matters: Samson's story shows us that God doesn't always make us strong in the ways we think we need to be. Sometimes, we need to ask God for help, even when we feel weak. Just like Samson, we can be brave and strong because of God, not because we are perfect. When we trust God, He can work through us in ways we never imagined!

## Key Verse

### Deuteronomy 6:5

God Helps When We Ask Him with All Our Heart Samson was a strong warrior in the Bible who helped his people win battles. Even though he was very powerful, he sometimes made big mistakes, like letting a woman named Delilah trick him. After losing his strength, Samson felt really sad and weak. One day, he knew he needed help from God, so he asked Him with a heartfelt prayer: "Remember me, God, and give me just one more strength to win this fight!" God loves it when we turn to Him when we feel down. When we pray like Samson, trusting in God even when things seem tough, He answers in ways we might not expect. Sometimes, He helps us with new strength, but often, He teaches us that true power isn't just about being strong, but about knowing we can ask for help and trust Him. Just like Samson's prayer, our prayers can bring us hope and remind us that God is always there to help us. How Can We Pray Like Samson? When we feel weak or afraid (like Samson did after losing his strength), we can pray like this: "God, I need You. Help me with Your power!" This isn't just asking for strength to fight, but also asking God to show us how to live with love and faith. Maybe we can ask God to help us be brave, kind, or smart in small things, like sharing our toys or asking for help when we need it. Just like Samson learned that God's strength isn't always about winning big battles, we can learn that God's love is always there to help us grow. A Simple Way to Remember God's Promise Next time we feel tired or need help, we can make a small promise to God: "I'll pray when I need You, and I'll trust You like Samson did." We don't have to wait for big moments, even little prayers like "Help me, God!" can make a difference. Think of God like a superhero who always listens. When we talk to Him with honesty and love, He'll always answer, maybe with strength, wisdom, or just a smile to remind us He's with us. Practice Today! Try saying this prayer in your heart: "God, remember me. Give me strength just once more." Then ask a grown-up if you can pray together for something small, like asking for help with a homework problem or just asking God to remind you to be kind. God is always listening, and He wants us to ask Him with a happy, trusting heart!

## Activities

## Activity 1:

A quick, interactive game where kids act out Samson's struggles, then turn them into a prayer or teamwork challenge to "find God's strength."

1. Show the Bible Story: Begin by reading Judges 13:24 (Samson's hair grows at birth) and 16:17 (his strength comes from it). Ask: "What do you think Samson's hair did for him?" Write down answers (e.g., "he could defeat a lion").
2. Cut Hair Strips: Give each child a paper plate. Ask them to cut black strips into long, wavy "hair" (about 3, 4 inches long). Glue them onto the plate in a top-down style, leaving a gap for eyes.
3. Color and Add Details: Let them color their plate with crayons. Add a face (eyes/nose) with markers. Remind them Samson's hair was his power, like God's strength works in their lives!
4. Discussion: Ask: "How can we 'wear our strength' like Samson's hair?" (Answer: Trust God's power, even when we feel small.)
2. "Weakness Strength Game"
6. Act Out Samson's Weakness: Read Judges 13:24 (Samson's hair grows at birth) and 16:17 (his strength comes after he cuts it). Ask: "What happens if we try to be strong on our own?" (Example: Samson's pride led to trouble.) Write key points on the board.
7. Game Setup: Assign 3, 4 kids to act out Samson's story:
8. "Samson vs. the Lion" (climb a tree to rescue a girl).
9. "Samson's Trap" (fall into a pit, "weakness!").
10. Pray and Find Strength: After each act, say: "God gives us strength when we ask Him!" Have kids pray aloud for their "weakness" (e.g., "Lord, help me trust You like Samson's hair!").
11. Prize & Takeaway: Reward participation with a badge. Say: "God's power works through our obedience, like Samson's hair!" End with a Bible verse (e.g., Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.")
12. Note: For both activities, emphasize that Samson's "secret" was God's strength in his weakness, just like we can trust God when we feel small! Use simple analogies (e.g., "Hair = Your faith in God").

## Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions for early elementary students (ages 6, 8) about the story of Samson and how it connects to their lives:
- What Do We Learn About Strength?
- Samson was strong, but God used him in a special way, not just by making him physically powerful. How do you think Samson's story shows that God can help us in different ways? Maybe we don't need to be the strongest or fastest to be brave or helpful, like Samson wasn't always. What are some ways you've felt weak, and how can God help you be strong in those moments?
- How Did Samson Choose His Friends?
- Samson had a friend named Delilah who tried to trick him into telling her how he could be weak. What do you think made Delilah a bad friend? How can friends help us, even when we make mistakes? Think about a time you or someone else chose poorly. How can we be a good friend to someone who needs help?
- Samson's Lesson About Pride
- Even though Samson was strong, he sometimes got too proud and let his hair grow long as a sign of being special. The Philistines (the enemies) thought Samson was weak because of his long hair, but really, Samson's hair was a sign of God's power. How do you think Samson's pride made things harder for him? What can we learn about being careful with our thoughts and words, just like Samson was?
- How Can We Trust God Like Samson Did?

- Samson trusted God to give him strength, even when things seemed hard. When have you trusted God to help you, even if you didn't understand everything? Samson's story shows that God can work in ways we might not expect. If you had to explain to someone else how you trust God in a small way, what would you say?
- These questions encourage reflection, discussion, and application of the lesson while keeping it age-appropriate and engaging! Would you like any adjustments to fit a specific lesson focus?

## Prayer Focus

*Prayer Focus for Early Elementary: Samson's Strength Dear God, We thank You for being with us, even when we feel small or weak. Like Samson, we sometimes struggle to be brave, but You give us strength to do what is right. Help us to trust in You, just like Samson trusted You even when things seemed hard. Show us how to be strong in our hearts and kind to others. Lord, we pray that children like Samson can see how You help them grow. Just as he used his hair to help people, teach us to use our gifts to help others. Help us to remember that even when we feel scared or tired, You are always with us to guide and protect us. We love You, God. Help us to follow Your example every day. Amen. Application for the class: "Can you think of a time you felt weak, but then felt strong because of God?" (Let kids share or act out small moments of bravery.)*

### >> Missions Spotlight

Among the Xhosa people of South Africa, the concept of physical strength and warrior culture is deeply valued. Samson's story resonates, and the contrast between Samson's selfish strength and Jesus' sacrificial strength opens powerful Gospel conversations.

### -> To the Cross

Samson was given great strength but misused it for selfish purposes. Jesus was given all power in heaven and earth, and used it to serve, sacrifice, and save. Samson's life shows what happens when we use God's gifts for ourselves. Jesus shows what happens when we use them for others.