

Monday Morning Rewind - July 7 (Vacation edition)

Good morning! This Monday is especially good for me because I'm on vacation. Hooray! But even as I take some time to rest my body, replenish my spirit, and refresh my mind, I can never take time "off" from the battle we're all engaged in every day of our lives.

On Sabbath, I revisited a theme I had written about in the June 9 Rewind. The challenge was to *"Live your life in such a way, that when your feet hit the floor in the morning, Satan shudders and says, 'Oh no, ...she's/(He's) awake!'"* We sought to answer the question, What kind of life would give Satan a migraine? What would make us "armed and dangerous" Christians who are a threat to hell and a praise to heaven?

The tragic fall of Samson, the Old Testament strongman who could subdue lions but couldn't subdue his own lust, provided an example of how *not* to live-of how to be unarmed and harmless to the enemy. From his downfall with Delilah in Judges chapter 16, we learned these lessons:

1. When you are armed and dangerous, you are submitted to God.

James 4:7 says, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you." To "submit" to God means to "obey," "subordinate" and "subdue" oneself unto another. If Samson had subdued himself to the Lord, he would not have been subdued by the Philistines. You're either a fool for the Lord or made a fool of by the devil. The choice is ours. We must choose everyday to submit to God and relinquish control of our lives to Him. This surrendered position actually makes us dangerous to the enemy.

2. When you are armed and dangerous, your connection to Jesus shows.

Though Samson was dedicated to God at birth, he was dedicated more to satisfying his passions. The result was that no one knew the true source of his strength. (See Judges 16:9.) Samson's life obscured God's glory instead of revealing it, and whenever we are more dedicated to pleasing self than pleasing God, we do the same thing. We lose our testimony. We wake in the morning and Satan says, "oh good! He's *asleep!*" Rewind to Acts 4:8, 10, 12, and 13 to see the flip side of an undercover witness. Peter and John connection to Jesus was obvious and it showed. And if we're living a life that heaven applauds and hell despises, our connection to Jesus will be obvious.

3. When you are armed and dangerous, God's grace is your greatest strength.

Unless you renew your strength in God every day-subduing yourself before Him in obedience-self gets stronger making you morally and spiritually weaker. It is only when self is weak that you are truly strong. (See 2 Cor. 12:9-10.)

Samson's problem (among many) was that he was arrogant and confident in his own strength. He enjoyed playing the game with Delilah and outsmarting his opponents. Verse 20 of Judges 16 says, "He awoke from his sleep and thought, 'I'll go out as before and shake myself free.' But he did not know that the Lord had left him."

Samson didn't have a fresh experience with the Lord. He was relying on what had "worked" before. He thought if he went through the same motions, he'd have the same results. He forgot that his success was tied to his dependence upon God, and as a result, Samson was "weak as any other man." Are we coasting on the ever-sliding momentum of a past experience with Christ? Are we going through the motions of religious activity that we've always done before, not realizing that the power and presence of God is missing from our lives?

4. When you are armed and dangerous, you are clothed with Christ. You "wear" His character.

Rewind to Romans 13:11-14 to see the right way to live and make Satan tremble. Don't live the Samson way-the way of self-reliance, self-indulgence, and self-deception. Before your feet hit the floor in the morning, pray and go through your "pre-fight" check. Submit yourself to God. Ask Him to let your connection to Jesus show and be obvious to others. Claim God's grace as your greatest strength, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ. If you will do this, you will be victorious in the daily battle that awaits us every morning.-Pastor Randy

