

BIBLE WOMEN – Lesson 9
Delilah / Naomi – Ruth – Orpah
By Beverly McKey

I. DELILAH

- A. In our lesson last week we covered Samson's mother and his Philistine wife, but it was Delilah who was responsible for Samson's destruction.
1. We learned when Samson chose his wife from among the Philistines that he was drawn to her simply by her looks. Apparently he gave no consideration to her character or her relationship to God.
 2. Samson's father was very unhappy with Samson's choice of a Philistine woman and asked Samson if there were no women in Israel he could find for a wife. But Samson ignored his father's advice.
 3. Samson's bad temper, his poor judgment and his pride caused great destruction and the death of his wife and her father
 4. A wise man would have learned valuable lessons from the terrible experience Samson had with his Philistine wife, but he did not.
- B. Samson was a rebellious, selfish man who seemed to value worldly pleasures and his physical strength more than spiritual strength.
1. Samson met another Philistine woman named Delilah and he loved her.
 2. The Philistines went to Delilah and said: **Judges 16:5** – *"Entice him, and find out where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver."*
 - a. These "pieces of silver" were most likely known as a "shekel", which was a measurement of weight, not value.
 - b. The talent was the largest weight measurement of gold or silver which equaled 75 pounds. A talent was equal to 3,000 shekels.
 - 1) **Judges 3:3** says that the Philistines had five lords.
 - 2) **Judges 16:5** says that the "lords of the Philistines" went to Delilah to get her to "entice Samson to find out where his great strength lies".
 - 3) The lords said they would each give Delilah "eleven hundred pieces of silver" (or shekels), totaling 5,500 shekels. This would be equal to 1 ³/₄ talents, (125 pounds of silver). This was an enormous amount of silver which would have made Delilah very, very wealthy.
 - c. Delilah was well aware that the Philistines meant to do harm to Samson, since they said they wanted to *"overpower him, that they may bind him to afflict him."* **Judges 16:5**

3. Delilah made her choice between Samson and the wealth promised to her and she began immediately questioning Samson as to the source of his strength.
 - a. **Vs. 6** – Delilah said, *"Please tell me where your great strength lies, and with what you may be bound to afflict you."* Oddly, Delilah was not even subtle with her questions.
 - b. Samson's response was to play games with her, so he said, *"if they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man."* **Vs. 7**
 - 1) The Lords of the Philistines brought her seven bow strings, not yet dried, and she tied Samson with the strings.
 - 2) The Philistine lords were lying in wait in Delilah's room so when she tied Samson she said, *"The Philistines are upon you, Samson!"*
 - 3) Samson easily broke the bowstrings so Delilah knew that was not really the secret to his strength. **Vs 8-9** These verses do not indicate that the Philistines ever came out of hiding or that Samson fought them. Apparently they were just watching to see the results of the experiment. Otherwise, surely Samson would not have continued to play the games with Delilah about his strength.
 - c. Delilah was angry with Samson and said, *"You have mocked me and told me lies. Now please tell me what you may be bound with."*
 - 1) Again Samson played games with her saying, *"if they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man."*
 - 2) Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them and again she said, *"The Philistines are upon you, Samson!"* **Vs. 12**
 - 3) Again, the Philistines were hiding in Delilah's room, but Samson broke the ropes on his arms as if they were threads.
 - d. Delilah was angry again accusing Samson of lying to her and mocking her. She insisted that he tell her how he could be bound.
 - 1) Samson tricked her for the third time saying, *"If you weave the seven locks of my head into the web of the loom..."* **Vs. 13**
 - 2) So Delilah wove Samson's hair into the loom while he slept then she shouted, *"The Philistines are upon you, Samson!"*
 - 3) Samson awoke when she shouted and pulled his hair from the loom.
 - e. Then Delilah played the victim saying, *"How can you say, 'I love you' when your heart is not with me. You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where your great strength lies."* **Judges 17:15**
 - 1) Delilah continued to press him until his *"soul was vexed to death."*

- 2) Not being a man of great patience or good judgment, Samson told Delilah the truth
 - 3) **Judges 16:17** – *"No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."*
- f. When Delilah saw that he had told her the truth at last, she sent word to the Lords of the Philistines saying, *"Come once more, for he has told me all his heart."*
- 1) The Philistines came and brought the money to Delilah. **Vs. 18**
 - 2) Delilah lulled Samson to sleep on her knees and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. (Apparently Samson's hair was either tied or braided into seven strands of hair.)
 - 3) **Vs. 19** said that Delilah *"began to torment him, and his strength left him."*
 - 4) Finally Delilah shouted, *"The Philistines are upon you, Samson!"*, and Samson awoke from his sleep and said, *"I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free."*, but he did not know that the Lord had departed from him.
- g. The Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza.. There they bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison.
- 1) While Samson was a prisoner, his hair began to grow again.
 - 2) The Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to their false god, Dagon. They rejoiced and said, *"Our god has delivered into our hands Samson, our enemy!"*
 - 3) During their celebration, the Philistines called for Samson to be brought to them so they could mock him.
 - 4) Samson was led in by the hand and placed between the pillars that supported the temple where they celebrated.
 - 5) The temple was full of men and women, including all of the Lords of the Philistines. About 3,000 were on the roof watching Samson while they made him perform for them.
- h. Samson was no longer full of pride. He had been humbled before his enemy and he called upon the Lord saying, *"O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!"* **Judges 16:28**
- 1) Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them.
 - 2) Samson said, *"Let me die with the Philistines.!"* And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it.

- 3) The number that Samson killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life. Samson had judged Israel for twenty years.
- C. Samson was a Nazirite. One whose life was to be devoted to the service of God from his birth.
1. Samson's parents were godly people who prayed to be given the wisdom to raise their son in the way God wanted them to.
 2. Unfortunately, Samson did not follow the teaching of his parents. Instead he chose that which brought immediate gratification to his lust and pride.
 3. Samson never developed the self-control he needed to be a leader in Israel who could inspire an army to defeat the enemies of God as a warrior.
 4. Samson trusted in his own strength and he used it to satisfy his own anger against those who offended him personally.
- D. Samson satisfied his own passions with idolatrous women from the Philistines rather than choosing a godly woman from among the people of God.
1. Delilah was an idolater, which on its own made her an unfit companion for Samson.
 2. It was obvious to the Philistines that Delilah did not love Samson since they were not afraid to approach her with their plan to capture Samson.
 3. Perhaps they also knew that greed was her weakness.
 4. Money was very important to Delilah and she was willing to betray Samson for a large sum. She was a perfect example of the teaching in **I Timothy 6:10** -- "*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*
 5. Delilah was a master manipulator. Her charms were not wasted on Samson, whose weakness was a pretty woman.
 6. Manipulators cannot respect God's authority because they are too busy working out their own plans to submit to God's will.
 7. I am amazed that Samson never seem suspicious as to why she wanted to know his secret. Apparently, he didn't take her questions seriously, since he played games with her making up a different story each time.
 8. Delilah was not only devious and greedy, she was cruel as well. **Judges 16:19** says that after she had Samson's hair shaved off, "she began to torment him". She was not in the least sympathetic to Samson, knowing what evil plan the Philistines had in store for Samson.
 9. Apparently Samson did not value the special gift God had given him, since he eventually told her the truth.

- E. The most essential lesson to be learned from Samson's life is found in **I Corinthians 15:33** – *"Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."*
1. Samson never learned to choose good companions.
 2. This is a lesson that we simply must teach our children today.
 3. Why would a Christian choose his closest companions from among people who do not share his love for God and the church?
 4. How can we have much in common with those who do not share the one thing that guides our lives.
 5. Of course God knew from the beginning that His people were in danger of being corrupted by the world, which is why He commanded the Israelites NOT to make treaties with the heathen nations NOR should they marry anyone outside the nation of Israel.
 6. In fact we are specifically taught this lesson in the New Testament as well:
 - a. **2 Corinthians 6:14** – *"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?"*
 - While this verse is commonly applied to the marriage bond, it also applies to any relationship in which we are greatly influenced, such as business partners, best friends, etc.
 - b. **Galatians 6:10** – *"^{v0} Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."*
 - c. **Romans 12:10** – *"^{v0} Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another:"*
 7. These verses are not just suggestions for a happy life, they are commandments – yet it should be the easiest of commandments to obey. Our love for one another proves also our love for God.
 - **I John 4:20** – *"If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?"*
 8. How very different Samson's life might have been if he had "preferred" the people of God over the sinful pleasures the Philistines women had to offer.

II. NAOMI AND RUTH – The book of Ruth

- A. The book of Ruth tells the story of two women who were connected, not by blood, but by their hearts. The importance of their relationship is attested to by the fact that God inspired the author (most likely Samuel) to record this account for the benefit of future generations.
1. The time period of this book is given in the first verse. *"The days when the judges ruled..."* Some scholars say it fits between chapters 12 & 13 of Judges.
 2. A famine plagued the land in Israel, so Elimelech took his family from Bethlehem to Moab. He took his wife Naomi, and their two sons Chilion and Mahlon.

3. Moab was approximately 60 miles southeast of Bethlehem. The Moabites were descendants of Lot and his daughter. They worshipped the pagan god called "Chemosh" and they were perpetual enemies of Israel.
4. Sometime after moving to Moab, Elimelech died and left Naomi and her two sons. The sons later married Moabite women and they lived in Moab about ten years. **Ruth 1:1-5**
5. Naomi's sons also died in Moab.
6. When Naomi learned that the famine had ended in Bethlehem, she determined to return to her homeland and her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, went with her for a while.
 - a. Naomi encouraged her daughters-in-law to go back to their families where they could find husbands and have a full life. Naomi asked God to bless them because they had been good wives to her sons.
 - b. Both Orpah and Ruth refused to go back, but Naomi discouraged them again from going with her.
7. Naomi felt despair and bitterness because she believed that the Lord had turned against her, since both her husband and her sons been taken from her.
 - a. She may have believed that this was her punishment for leaving Bethlehem and going to a pagan land.
 - b. Even so, Naomi loved her daughters-in-law and did not want them to suffer because of her, so she encouraged them to go back to their families.
8. Naomi reminded the women that she was old and would not bare any more sons, and even if she could, it was illogical to expect these women to wait until they were grown, so they could marry her sons widows (according to the Levirate law – where brothers were obligated to marry the widows of any brother who died without having any children.) This law is given in **Deuteronomy 25:5-10**.
 - a. After this Orpah kissed Naomi and went back to her family; but Ruth refused to leave Naomi saying: **Ruth 1:16-17**
*"Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.
¹⁷ Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me."*
 - b. This statement is one of the most beautiful professions of love ever written. It is often used in wedding ceremonies today.
9. Naomi and Ruth continued the journey until they arrived in Bethlehem. All the people of the city were excited to see Naomi again. **Ruth 1:19**
 - a. Naomi explained that her life had been bitter since her husband and both of her sons had died in Moab.

- b. Naomi said, *"I went away (from Bethlehem) full, and the Lord has brought me back empty. The Lord has brought calamity upon me*
 - c. Naomi could not know that God was using these events as part of the process of establishing the family among the children of Israel who would eventually bring about the birth of the Messiah.
 - d. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.
- B. Also living in Bethlehem was a man of great wealth who was a relative of Naomi's husband. His name was Boaz. **Ruth 2:1**
1. Ruth asked Naomi to let her go to the field and glean heads of grain in the fields that belonged to Boaz, in hope that she might find favor of him.
 2. Naomi gave her permission so Ruth went to the field after the reapers.
 - a. The Law of Moses contained commandments regarding the harvesting of crops in **Leviticus 19:9** – *"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰ And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God.*
 - b. **Deuteronomy 24:19** -- *"When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner and the fatherless and the widow."*
 - c. Since she was the stronger of the two women, Ruth took advantage of this law during this harvest season in order to provide food for her and her mother-in-law.
 3. Ruth went to the young man in charge of the reapers in the field belonging to Boaz and asked permission to glean in his fields.
 - a. Later Boaz came to the field and noticed her. He asked the young man, *"Whose young woman is this?"*
 - b. The young man told Boaz that she was the young Moabite woman who came back from Moab with Naomi.
 - c. The young man also reported that Ruth had continued from early morning with only a short rest.
 4. Boaz was very impressed with the young woman so he went to her and told her not to leave his fields, but to glean there only. **Ruth 2:8**
 - a. Boaz did this in order to protect Ruth from abuse by the men who were also gleaning.
 - b. Boaz assured her that he had instructed the young men to "leave her alone".
 - c. Boaz also gave her permission to drink from the water the young men drew, when she was thirsty.
 5. Ruth was overwhelmed with gratitude and she bowed to the ground and said to him, *"Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"* **Ruth 2:10**

- a. Boas answered her saying, *"It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."* **Ruth 2:11-12**
 - b. Ruth was very grateful to Boaz for the protection he offered her.
 - c. Boaz offered her bread to eat at mealtime, so she sat with the reapers and she ate her fill and saved some to take back to Naomi.
 - d. When Ruth went back to the field, Boaz instructed his reapers to purposely leave some sheaves in the field for her to glean.
 - e. Ruth worked until the end of the day and took the grain she had gathered back to Naomi. She had gathered enough grain in one day to provide food for her and Naomi for about five days.
 - f. Ruth told Naomi about the kindness of Boaz, then Naomi knew that he was their near relative and she was happy that Ruth would be able to gather food for them in a field where she would be safe. She also realized that Boaz might serve as a "redeemer".
 - g. **Leviticus 25:25** – *"The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me. ²⁴ And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land. ²⁵ If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold."*
 - 1) This is the law Naomi hoped that Boaz would take advantage of, since he had been so good to Ruth.
 - 2) Naomi attempted to be a "match-maker" between Ruth and Boaz because she wanted Ruth to be married and well taken care of.
6. Naomi told Ruth what she should do to in order to get his attention:
- a. At the end of the harvest Boaz was winnowing the barley at the threshing floor. This was when they took rakes and tossed the grain in the air so that the chaff would blow away in the wind leaving only the grain on the threshing floor.
 - b. Naomi told Ruth to wash herself, put on her best garment and her fragrant oil and go down to the threshing floor.
 - c. Ruth was not to make herself known to Boaz until he had finished eating and drinking. The end of harvest was a celebration with food and drink at the threshing floor.
 - d. Naomi told Ruth to wait until Boaz went to die down, then she should go to him, uncover his feet and lie down at his feet. Then Boaz would tell her what to do. **Ruth 3:1-4**
 - e. Apparently this action would be a sign to Boaz that she was petitioning him as a humble servant to act as her "redeemer" (according to the Levirate law).

- f. At midnight Boaz was startled when he saw a woman lying at his feet and he said, *"Who are you?"*
 - g. Ruth said to Boaz: **Ruth 3:9** – *"I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative."*
 - h. Boaz responded, *"Blessed are you of the Lord, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman. Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you – good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the Lord lives! Lie down until morning."* **Ruth 3:10-13**
 - i. So Ruth lay at his feet until morning and she arose before one could recognize another. Then Boaz gave her grain to take home to Naomi.
 - j. Ruth told Naomi all that Boaz said and Naomi told Ruth to wait to see how it would turn out, for Naomi knew that Boaz would not rest until he had concluded the matter with Ruth's nearest relative.
7. We learned in previous weeks that the "Levirate" law governed the marriage of a widow who had no children.
- a. If a man died, leaving his wife with no children, the brother of her husband was to marry her and the first child they had would be counted as the heir of her dead husband. This was how the dead man's inheritance could be passed down in his name.
 - b. But if the brother refused, or if there was no brother, then the nearest kinsman would have this responsibility. However, if he refused, then the next relative in line would get the opportunity to marry the widow and continue her dead husband's lineage as well as protecting the inheritance of the land.
8. Boaz went to the gate of the city and waited for Naomi's near relative to come by. Then he invited him to sit down with ten elders of the city.
- a. Boaz explained that Naomi's husband had sold his land when they left to go to Moab.
 - b. Now Naomi was back, Boaz was informing the nearest relative that he had the option of buying the land back for Naomi to "redeem" it.
 - c. Boaz said, *"If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you."* **Ruth 4:4**
 - d. The near relative was very happy to have this option to add to his own land, so he said he would redeem the land for Naomi.

- e. Then Boaz pointed out that in order to buy the field from Naomi, he must also buy it from Ruth, the widow of Mahlon in order to perpetuate the name of her dead husband through his inheritance.
 - f. The nearest relative then said, *"I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it."* **Ruth 4:6**
 - g. Remember, we learned that when a man refused his right to redeem the land of his brother, he had to remove his shoe and give it to the next person in line, confirming the fact that he refused his right as "redeemer".
 - h. The near relative took off his shoe and gave it to Boaz and Boaz said, *"You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chillon's and Mahlon's from the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day."*
9. So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife and they had a son.
 - a. Naomi blessed them and said, *"Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel!"*
 - b. Naomi took the child in her arms and the neighborhood women gave him a name, saying, *"There is a son born to Naomi."* And they named him Obed, who was the father of Jesse, who was the father of David who became the second king of Israel.
 10. Boaz's parents were Salmon and RAHAB (**Matthew 1:5**). And seven generations before his forefather was Perez, who was the son of Judah and TAMAR, also a gentile woman.
 11. Tamar, Rahab and Ruth are all Gentile women who were chosen by God to give birth to sons who were in the direct lineage of Jesus Christ.
 12. These Gentile women foreshadow the fact that God always, from the foundations of the earth, planned that all nations would be given the opportunity to become "children of God", His own "chosen people" through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- C. What a great example of love we see in Ruth. She gave herself fully to her beloved mother-in-law, Naomi.
1. This tells us a great deal about Naomi also.
 - a. Even though she described herself as "bitter" because of the tragedies of her life, she was not bitter toward Ruth.
 - b. She was not even bitter toward God, though she deeply mourned the loss of her husband and her sons.
 2. Naomi must have been very loving toward her daughters-in-law in order to inspire such devotion from them.

3. They both loved Naomi so much that they were willing to leave their own parents and all they knew to follow Naomi back to Bethlehem.
4. Ruth's dedication to Naomi was amazing. She took on the responsibility of the hard work required to supply food for them both.
5. She was such a woman of integrity that Boaz noticed her immediately.
6. Ruth and Naomi were both richly blessed for their godly life choices and their faithfulness.
7. Naomi's bitterness was changed to great joy with the birth of her grandson, Obed.

D. **Romans 12:10-18** – gives us wise counsel in how we can follow Ruth's example and to give ourselves to others:

¹⁰ *Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;*

¹¹ *not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;* ¹² *rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;*

¹³ *distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.*

¹⁴ *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.*

¹⁵ *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*

¹⁶ *Be of the same mind toward one another.*

Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble.

Do not be wise in your own opinion.

¹⁷ *Repay no one evil for evil.*

Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

¹⁸ *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."*

1. Who would not want to be a part of a church family where these characteristics abound
2. This congregation is often described as loving, generous, encouraging and welcoming.

THE JOURNEY

BY Melissa Lester

Many roads – winding, twisting, wandering – converging here.

For one brief moment in a lifetime of moments, we will journey together.

Arm in arm we will laugh and sing, growing as we bask in warmth and security of friendship.

Cherished memories, like flowers, will bloom in the meadows of our innocence.

Under the eye of the moon we will share secrets and silent tears.

If there be rocks in your path and you should stumble, I will catch you.

If your path grows dark and you tremble with fear, I will hold your hand in mine and my light will be also yours.

And if you should stray from the path and lose your way, I will call your name and you will be found.

In these days we will gather roses and I will call you friend.

And when these days are over and the sun has set on youth, I know not where our paths will lead us.

But in times of trouble, sorrow and remembrance, I have only to look into my heart and I will find you.

My heart will take me back to the path we walked together.

The air will smell as sweet, and the wind will echo the joy and laughter of more carefree days.

The flowers I carry from my youth will remind me of our times together, their fragrance of the love we shared.

You in your corner of the world and I in mine have only to remember our days together.

And our hearts will bridge the distance to bring us back to this place of peace, love and unending friendship.

And when I survey my life's journey, I will think of you and my heart will smile.

I will know that my path has been easier, my load lighter, and that I am better for having traveled with you.