



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

# “The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 39”

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Pastor Darryl R. Curtis

Family Life Baptist Church

909 West Saginaw Street

Lansing, Michigan 48915

Phone: (517) 393-9399

Email: [info@familylifebc.com](mailto:info@familylifebc.com)

Website: <http://www.familylifebc.com>

***Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.***



### The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 39

#### Judges 14:4

**4 But [Samson's] father and mother did not know that it was of the LORD—that [God] was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.**

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

Our takeaway point in this series on the Biblical Design of Gender is that God has designed man as the cooperative coalition of husband and wife so that can successfully achieve the objective that God has given us to exercise dominion over the earth, developing wisdom and knowledge in preparation for further responsibility in our eternal life.

The book of Judges is the account of a sequence of wars between Israel and the indigenous people of the Promised Land. Once the Lord allowed Israel to begin conquering the indigenous people of the Land, the people of the Land struck back by seducing Israelites to worship the idol gods of the land, using the sexual rituals connected with their gods. God warned Israel, in **Deuteronomy 7:2-5**:

**2 and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.**

**3 Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.**

**4 For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.**

**5 But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.**

But, as we have reviewed for the last few weeks, Israel failed to do so. It requires a great deal of personal discipline and a close relationship with God to overcome the temptation of the free love generation. And Israel proved not to have the discipline. Israel failed to recognize that of which God warned them; that their lack of personal discipline in the area of idolatry would cause them to reject the source of their national power. And as Israel went through phases of worshipping idols, losing their sovereignty and then returning to God, God sent



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various individuals, whom He called judges, to both spearhead the defeat of the idolaters militarily and admonish the people to return to God.

Samson was born specifically to judge Israel. He was consecrated to God as a Nazarite by his parents before his birth. The word “Nazarite” means one consecrated or separated, and the Nazarite vow, as described in Numbers 6, consecrates a person to God. **Numbers 6:1-8** describes:

**1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,**

**2 “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When either a man or woman consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, (emphasis mine)**

**3 he shall separate himself from wine and similar drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from similar drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins.**

**4 All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin.**

**5 ‘All the days of the vow of his separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. Then he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.**

**6 All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body.**

**7 He shall not make himself unclean even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is on his head.**

**8 All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the LORD.**

**Numbers 6:8** records that one that has taken the Nazarite vow is holy. Interestingly, holy does not mean perfect or sinless. Holy designates that something or someone is separated from normal usage for God’s own use. The Nazarite vow requires a man or woman to look and act differently than other people, as the Nazarite is renouncing their own interests specifically to care for the business of God.

God called Samson to do a very interesting piece of business. **Judges 13:1-5** tells us:

**1 Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.**

**2 Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children.**

**3 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, “Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.**

**4 Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean.**

**5 For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come**



**upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.”**

As I mentioned earlier, God’s Old Testament solution for the problem of idolatry in the Promised Land was to eradicate the pagans that seduced the Israelites into idolatry. The Israelites consistently proved themselves unable to resist sexual temptation, and so God first punished the Israelites by putting them under the hand of the people that were tempting them, and, once Israel suffered enough, then God chose to remove the temptation by annihilating the those that were doing the tempting. So, to accomplish His purpose, God not only set Samson apart, but his parents as well. God chose to keep a woman barren after her marriage so that Sampson would be born into a family that would only have one child and could maintain the state of trepidant vigilance needed to facilitate that child maintaining the Nazarite vow that was normally taken by an adult.

Children are impulsive conformers to the norms of their environment. Clothing establishments in our country are most successful when they stock garments that allow children, and especially adolescents, to conform to the current trends.

So when the other young people in Samson’s milieu started drinking wine, Samson needed parents to supervise him to make sure that he did not conform, but remained in his set apart state. When the other young people in Samson’s milieu started grooming their hair to care for their personal appearance, Samson’s parents had to supervise him to make sure that no one cut any hair from his head.

To raise a child in the discipline of a Nazarite took a great deal of supervision and individual attention, and God made sure that Samson’s parents were not otherwise occupied with children so that they could do the job to which He appointed them. And that is a lesson to us today. Raising a child takes a great deal of supervision. Children are designed to bond with their parents, and when their parents are not available, children have to bond with someone. If a parent chooses to allow their child to bond with someone other than themselves, the parents may have to endure an outcome from their child that they do not want. Delegating parenting to institutionalize care may not be the best alternative.

But when Samson reached the age of chronological maturity, he began to stray from the accepted Biblical path in one particular venue. **Judges 14:1-3** records:

**1 Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines.**

**2 So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, “I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife.”**

**3 Then his father and mother said to him, “Is there no woman among the**



daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?” And Samson said to his father, “Get her for me, for she pleases me well.”

We have previously read **Deuteronomy 7:2-3**:

**2** and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.

**3** Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.

And, we all know that which **2 Corinthians 6:14-18** says:

**14** Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

**15** And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

**16** And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.”

**17** Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.”

**18** “I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.”

So the admonition for the people of God to not participate in marriage with pagans is well documented, both in the Old and New Testaments. Samson, being a man set apart for God’s holy use, should have been aware of that which Moses said on the issue, although he would have been unfamiliar with Paul. So then, why would one set apart for God want a wife from people that did not believe in God? Our text, **Judges 14:4** tells us:

**4** But [Samson’s] father and mother did not know that it was of the LORD—that [God] was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

So God was looking to pick a fight with the Philistines in order to free Israel from them, and Samson was the fist that God was choosing to use against them.

God, having set Samson apart to use as a tool to defeat the Philistines, gave Samson great strength and agility, because God did not call Samson to lead the army of Israel to act against Philistia, but to act by himself.

As Samson was on the way to marry his Philistine bride, Samson was attacked by a lion. Unfortunately, the lion didn’t know with whom he was messing, for if he had, he would have stayed home in the bed that morning. Samson, with his great strength and speed, split the lion open, tore the lion limb from limb, and left the lion by the side of the road.



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Samson and his parents went to Philistia to make the marriage arrangements, and then, on their way back home, Samson saw that a swarm of bees nested in the dead lions' carcass and made a honeycomb. Samson, being as impervious to bee stings as he was strong, took some of the honey from the lion's carcass.

When Samson went back to Philistia to consummate his marriage, he gave a feast for the family and friends of the bride. As they were celebrating, Samson proposed a wager. **Judges 14:12-14** says:

**12 Then Samson said to [the Philistines], "Let me pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing.**

**13 But if you cannot explain it to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing." And they said to him, "Pose your riddle, that we may hear it."**

**14 So he said to them: "Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet."**

Hmmm, said the Philistines. What could this possibly be? Ordinarily, they could just say, "Okay. I don't get it. What is it?" But thirty linen outfits were on the line. The Philistines either had to figure it out or pay up.

As the week went on, the Philistines had no more clue of the answer than they had on the first day, but they weren't about to lose thirty linen outfits to Samson. They got together and said to each other, "Nobody knows the answer, but somebody had better tell us something, or this wedding feast is going to get seriously out of hand." So they went to see the bride and her family. **Judges**

**14:15** records:

**15 But it came to pass on the [fourth] day that they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us, or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us in order to take what is ours? Is that not so?"**

So, now the ball is in Samson's wife's court. She can cleave to her husband and watch her parents get burned up, or betray her husband and watch him lose the bet. What's a woman to do? **Matthew 19:4-6** tells us:

**4 And [Jesus] answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'**

**5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh' ?**

**6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."**

Some parents and friends trying to separate their child or friend from their fiancé or spouse endeavor to dodge this passage of Scripture by postulating the possibility that God did not put the couple together. But in **Genesis 1:28**, God



gives us dominion over every living thing that moves on the earth, including ourselves. So God gives us the dominion over the decision that we make as to whom to marry. And, when we agree to be joined, God joins the two of us together. **Malachi 2:16** says:

**16 “For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one’s garment with violence,” Says the LORD of hosts. Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.”**

It does not matter how mismatched the union of man and wife may be, spiritually or otherwise. If the man and his wife can decide to come together, ignore friends and relatives, and become one flesh, according to God, that is the responsibility of any two people that decide to get married.

The suggestions for selecting spouses that God gives us in the Bible are there to make our married life more agreeable and to make the blending of our families more harmonious. God tells us the easier way to do marriage, but He also allows us to do it the harder way, should we choose to do so. Marriage the hard way can be successful, although it is harder and the percentages of success are less. But when God gave us dominion, He gave us the choice to do marriage either way that we want.

In the case of Samson’s wife, the Philistines were attempting to destroy her marriage by holding her parents hostage. So, she had no choice but to convince Samson to reveal the answer to the riddle to her and then tell it to the Philistines.

Wait a minute. That’s not true. She could have just explained the situation to Samson and convinced him to forgo the bet. After all, why should the hostility of the Philistines over a bet mar an otherwise joyous marriage? The whole betting thing is kind of stupid and adolescent, anyway. She could have said, “Dear, let it go, and I’ll make it worth your while. I don’t have thirty changes of clothing, but I do have something else with which to bargain.”

**Proverbs 15:1-2** tell us:

**1 A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.**

**2 The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.**

Unfortunately, Samson’s intended did not have the tongue of the wise, but rather, the mouth of a fool. A wise man once said that you can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar. I’m not sure why you want to catch flies, but the point is the same as **Proverbs 15:1**. However, rather than appealing to her husband, she chose to berate her husband. **Judges 14:16-17** records:

**16 Then Samson’s wife wept on him, and said, “You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained it to me.” And he said to her, “Look, I have not explained it to my father or my mother; so should I explain it to you?”**

**17 Now she had wept on him the seven days while their feast lasted. And it**



happened on the seventh day that he told her, because she pressed him so much. Then she explained the riddle to the sons of her people.

Samson's wife betrayed him and Samson lost the bet. And Samson's Philistine wife lost Samson. **Judges 14:19** records:

**19 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon [Samson] mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty [Philistine] men, took their apparel, and gave the changes of clothing to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house.**

God decreed the death of the Philistine idolaters, and Samson was God's good right arm to facilitate their deaths. Samson was not going to lead Israel into fighting a war with the Philistines, but rather he became a part of the Philistine family to destroy them from within.

Samson eventually got over being angry with his wife and went back to take her. But, **Judges 15:2** tells us:

**2 Her father said, "I really thought that you thoroughly hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead."**

So, Samson lost his wife, and he didn't particularly like the trade that her father tried to make. Samson showed his displeasure, as **Judges 15:4-6** tells us:

**4 Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes; and he took torches, turned the foxes tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails.**

**5 When he had set the torches on fire, he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards and olive groves.**

**6 Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?" And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire.**

Now, Samson couldn't have his wife or her sister. **Judges 15:7-8** records:

**7 Samson said to them, "Since you would do a thing like this, I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease."**

**8 So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.**

God called Samson to attack the Philistines, and Samson, imbued with the Spirit of God, was doing so, but for personal reasons. There were no hostilities declared between Israel and Philistia and there were no Israelite armies amassed for battle. There were just dead Philistines all over the place.

But the Philistines were a military people. The Philistines were warriors. They found themselves in an undeclared war with Samson, but that was not their style, so they decided to declare a normal war against Judah. **Judges 15:9-10** records:

**9 Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed**





themselves against Lehi.

**10 And the men of Judah said, “Why have you come up against us?” So they answered, “We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us.”**

But the nation of Judah did not want to fight a war over a personal matter, so they agreed to arrange a meeting between Samson and the Philistines in which they could work out their differences. They convinced Samson to attend the meeting bound with ropes. **Judges 15:14-16** says:

**14 When [Samson] came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him; and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands.**

**15 He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it.**

**16 Then Samson said: “With the jawbone of a donkey, Heaps upon heaps, With the jawbone of a donkey I have slain a thousand men!”**

There were no hostilities declared between Israel and Philistia and there were no Israelite armies amassed for battle. There were just dead Philistines all over the place. And when Samson returned from the battle, Samson was the hero. **Judges 15:20** tells us:

**20 And [Samson] judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.**

The power of God flowing through Samson persuaded the Philistines to leave Israel alone for twenty years. And, after twenty years, God continued to use Samson’s weakness for foreign women to plague the Philistines without starting a war. Samson went to Gaza to satiate his desire for foreign women, and ended up destroying the defenses of Gaza, as **Judges 16:1-3** tells us:

**1 Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her.**

**2 When the Gazites were told, “Samson has come here!” they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They were quiet all night, saying, “In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him.”**

**3 And Samson lay low till midnight; then he arose at midnight, took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two gateposts, pulled them up, bar and all, put them on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.**

Needless to say, Samson was not captured or killed at Gaza; rather, Samson tore out the defenses of Gaza singlehandedly. Still no war; still no army, just dead or confounded Philistines. The Philistines said to one another, what can we do with this guy?

Military force failed to defeat Samson, and strategy seemed to be doing no good. As a matter of fact, Samson had only been thwarted from doing that which he wanted to do one time, and that had to do with his wife. So the Philistines determined that if Samson was to be defeated, it had to be through the deception



of a woman, since neither numbers nor power nor might had any effect on Samson. And since Samson loved to be seduced by foreign women, the Philistine opportunity was only a matter of time. **Judges 16:4-5** says:

**4** Afterward it happened that [Samson] loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.

**5** And the lords of the Philistines came up to [Delilah] and said to her, “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.”

Interestingly, the Bible says that Samson loved Delilah. It does not say that Delilah loved Samson in return. She probably gave herself to him physically to gain his favor, but her interest in Samson was more monetary than emotional. But, in order to get the money, she had to duplicate the behavior of Samson’s first wife and betray Samson.

Now, this is where Sampson naïveté shows up. **Judges 16:6** tells us:  
**6** So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me where your great strength lies, and with what you may be bound to afflict you.”

Sampson, my friend, why oh why does she need to know that? As far as your enemies are concerned, the source of your strength should be on a need to know basis, and your wife has no need to know. And Sampson had more sense than to tell Delilah. To satisfy her, he told her some lies, that if he was bound with undried bow strings or new ropes that had never been used or if his hair was tied into a loom, that he would lose his strength. So, she tried each of his suggestions and found them to be untrue.

Now, this should have been the great wake-up call for Samson, but, for some strange reason, it was not. Sampson was still asleep, as far as using good sense was concerned. **Judges 16:15-17** tells us:

**15** Then [Delilah] said to [Samson], “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.”

**16** And it came to pass, when [Delilah] pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, so that [Samson’s] soul was vexed to death,

**17** that [Samson] told [Delilah] all his heart, and said to her, “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.”

So Delilah had Samson’s head shaved while he was asleep, Samson lost his strength, and the Philistines were able to capture Samson, put out his eyes, and take him back to Gaza to put him in prison. But, even in this catastrophic situation, God was still in control. **Judges 16:25-30** records:

**25** So it happened, when [the Philistines] hearts were merry, that they said, “Call for Samson, that he may perform for us.” So they called for Samson



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from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars.

**26 Then Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, “Let me feel the pillars which support the temple, so that I can lean on them.”**

**27 Now the temple was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there—about three thousand men and women on the roof watching while Samson performed.**

**28 Then Samson called to 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!”**

**29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left.**

**30 Then 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. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.**

And the sacrifice of Samson for the liberation of Israel was a sign and a symbol of the greater sacrifice that was to come. **John 3:16-17** tells us:

**16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

**17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**

Jesus Christ took hold of the pillars of hell, and then pushed them apart. He gave his life on Calvary’s Cross, just as Samson gave his life in the Philistine temple, so that not just the Israelites but all of us that believe in Him could have our sins forgiven and our enemy, the devil, eradicated, just as Samson eradicated the Philistines in their temple. And, so Jesus tells us, in **Luke 10:18-20**:

**18 And [Jesus] said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.**

**19 Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.**

**20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”**

The power that God gave Samson is dwarfed by the power to do good in His kingdom that Jesus Christ gives those of us that believe in Him. So let us use that power to spread the kingdom. Let us not be foolish and allow the enemy to cut off our power as did Samson, but let us emulate Samson’s sacrifice and decide to make whatever sacrifice is necessary that the kingdom might be enhanced.



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Pastor Darryl R. Curtis  
Family Life Baptist Church