

# Sin Is Crouching At The Door

Series: If It Feels Good, Do It!(?)

by Ron R. Ritchie

---

In the story of Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve (Gen. 4), we read that Abel was a shepherd and Cain was a farmer, and that there came a day when they made an offering to the Lord. For reasons we do not know, Abel's offering was accepted and Cain's was rejected. As Cain sat there, angry and depressed, God appeared to him and said, "Why are you angry and depressed? For if you do well you will not be so." He then gave Cain a warning, saying, "If you do not do well, sin is crouching at your door; and its desire is to master you, but you must master it." Cain didn't listen to the Lord. The sin of anger mastered him, and he killed his brother.

The same theme is picked up by Paul in Romans 6, where he says:

**Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law [for the law has no power] but under grace.**

And grace provides the Holy Spirit, who gives us the power to master sin. When we sin now it is because we want to, not because we have to. We discover that power is available to close the door to sin in our physical life, in our emotional life, in our intellectual life and in our spiritual life. There is enough power through the indwelling Jesus Christ to hold the door shut against sin, so that sin will not pounce upon us, it will not consume us, it will not master us it will not reign supreme.

In our studies on the life of Samson, a judge of Israel, we can see that he needed to hear these words and heed them. Certainly he knew them, for he had the law, he had the first five books of Moses, yet he allowed the sins of disobedience and deceit towards his parents, dissension at his wedding feast, and fits of rage and person&l revenge against the Philistines to control him. He allowed all of those sins to spring on him and to bring him to a place where he was held captive by his own people, and it was only the grace of God that bailed him out. By that grace he walked with the Lord for 20 years as a judge of Israel, and the Israelites experienced peace, prosperity and power.

This sets the scene for us now in Judges, chapter 16. Samson has been walking with the Lord for 20 years (he must be 39 or 40 years old now), he has been choosing the right way to live, he has been depending on the Spirit of God to give him wisdom and judgment. But we discover once again that sin is crouching at his door; its desire is to master him, but he must master it or it will consume him. So here he is, 40 years old, unmarried, a judge of Israel, a man who has helped bring peace and prosperity through the power of the Lord d to Israel, and where does he go? To Gaza, one of the five major cities of the Philistines, about 35 miles from his home town. As he is going down south to the Mediterranean coast, he has all that time to make a choice. You can hear the Lord saying, "Where are you going, Samson?" "I'm just going down the road, Lord." "I know, but what are you thinking of doing down the road? That's not part of our territory." "I'm just gonna check in on the enemy, Lord." "What kind of enemy?" "Anything I see; anybody I see. I'll just check the fortresses. I'll check to see if they're still afraid of me. I'll just walk around the city. I don't mean any harm, Lord." But we see that a harlot is crouching at the door. Chapter 16:1-3:

## 1. A Harlot Crouches At His Door, 16 1-3

**Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her. When it was told to the Gazites, saying, "Samson has come here," they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. And they kept silent all night, saying,**

**"Let us wait until the morning light, then we will kill him." Now Samson lay until midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the city gate and the two posts and pulled them up along with the bars; then he put them on his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the mountain which is opposite Hebron.**

This is fascinating. In the freedom of his spirit, Samson is allowed to go to Gaza, but he has the Holy Spirit within him so no matter where he goes he doesn't have to have sin crash in on him. He has power available. He can be in the world but not of the world because of the indwelling Holy Spirit. He doesn't have to worry, because, "Greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world." (I John 4:4) But he forgets that. He sees a harlot. (You know what that is. That word is for you folks who are a little older than us. For those of us who are a little younger, she's a prostitute. For those of us who are even younger, she's a hooker.) And Samson goes in to her.

On reading this particular episode which took place 20 years later in Samson's life, I am discovering that my old nature, that sinful nature that is supposed to be dead because of Jesus Christ, never grows up, never matures, never gets better. It is the same old, stinking nature I do things at times that are exactly the same as what I did when I was 14 years old. And I say, "Oh my goodness! When I was 14 I did that." The same old movie; nothing changes. When I was 17, the same old problems arose because I allowed them to crash through my door. Samson probably thought, because he was walking with the Lord, "Lord, why don't you stay up with the tribe of Benjamin. I'll take care of this one." As for me, I thought, "Boy, one of these days I'm going to handle some of these sins in my life." I met a 90 year old man recently and I asked him, "Friend, how does it feel to be 90 and not lust any more?" He said, "What?" I said, "You know, 90, no more lust. I'll bet you're walking with the Lord. I'll bet life must be rich and full." He said, "No more lust? Why, I've got it so sophisticated now you don't know what's going on. I'm as tempted to lust now as I was when I was 20." How are we going to stop that from crashing in? How are we going to stop sin from destroying us and mastering us? We can't. It has to be by the power of the Holy Spirit who holds that door shut, because sin is always crouching there.

That lion, so to speak, had been crouching at Samson's door for 20 years now, waiting, waiting, waiting. All of a sudden, after all those years, that "lion" heard the door opening . . . and got him with the harlot! And the Philistines (they never forget anything), where were they? Why, they're right there. Only these probably are the sons of the daddies Samson killed. They had heard the story of how 20 years ago he had burned their fields and killed their fathers with the jawbone of an ass and now they're going to get him for that. So you had better believe they were waiting in the city. Anybody coming out of a telephone booth with a red and blue uniform on with a big "S" on his chest is not hard to spot! So you'd better believe they knew he was in town! And he thought he was just sneaking in, nobody saw him. But God says, "Little does he know." The Philistines surround him and say, "We're going to stay up all night and then we're going to get him in the morning," because the normal process was, go in to a hooker and then stay all night, have breakfast and go home.

But Samson woke up at midnight. (That's not part of the rules.) He went whistling out to the gates of the city and looked around. All the Philistines are sound asleep and he says, "Aha, they never give up," so he just picks up the city gates, made of iron, and the post to hold these two-story high iron gates (we know this from some archaeological ruins near Tel Aviv), puts them on his back and walks 37 miles up to Mt. Hebron, up the mountain. I don't know why he did that. I once did that walk, and I just about got a heart attack doing it, but Samson walked it with a gate on his back! I think he did it for one of three reasons. One, he wanted to see if he still had his strength; two, he wanted to show the Philistines he still had his strength; or three, he felt so guilty he thought he would do something good to make up for his sin. We do that, don't we? I'm always interested at how good I am for about three days after a sin. On Wednesday I ask God, "How am I doing?" God says, "What are you doing all that for? I forgave you when you asked me three days ago. What do you think this is, salvation by works? Cool it." I think this was salvation by works. Samson was trying to help God forgive him. ("See God, I'm good. I carried the gates all the way up the hill." God says, "What am I gonna do now with a set of gates?")

## **2. Delilah Crouches At His Door 16:4-22**

Now you would think Samson would be thankful that God bailed him out once again, but no. Let's look at the next section:

**After this it came about that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. And the lords of the Philistines [here they are again] came up to her, and said to her, "Entice him, and see where his great strength lies and how we may overpower him that we may bind him to afflict him. Then we will each give you eleven hundred pieces of silver. So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me where your great strength is and how you may be bound to afflict you.**

He opens the door of his life and sin springs in again, this time with Delilah. It is not the power of sin that overwhelms us, but our own unwillingness to depend on the strength of the Lord to close the door of sin for us.

Now we enter a series of events where Delilah is able to open Samson's physical door with a sexual relationship, but the enemy wants her to open his spiritual door in order to discover the secrets of his strength, and then kill him. Instead of force they use deceit and a beautiful woman. There is a series of four knocks on his spiritual door. Delilah got him physically (she got through the first door, she's in the living room right now), and now she's going to get into the inner secrets of his life. Look what happens, in four events. The first knock is in verse 6:

**"Please tell me where your great strength is and how you may be bound to afflict you."**

She gives it away. "Hi, I'd like to bind you and then beat you to a pulp, so would you tell me what will make you weak so I can do that?"

**And Samson said to her, ' If they bind me with seven fresh cords that have not been dried, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.' Then the lords of the Philistines [they're standing right outside the window] brought up to her seven fresh cords that had not been dried, and she bound him with them. Now she had men lying in wait in an inner room. And she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he snapped the cords as a string of tow snaps when it touches fire. So his strength was not discovered.**

Samson was playing with Delilah like a cat plays with a mouse. Now the second knock at his door:

**Then Delilah said to Samson, "Behold, you have deceived me and told me tees; now please tell me, how you may be bound." And he said to her, "If they bind me tightly with new ropes the's done that one before, remember?] which have not been used, then I shall become weak and be like any other man." So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson! " For the men were lying in wait in the inner room. But he snapped the ropes from his arms like a thread**

Again, Samson leads Delilah on a wild--goose chase. Now comes the third knock, with a little more pressure:

**The Delilah said to Samson, "Up to now you have deceived me and told me lies; tell me how you may be bound." And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my hair [look how close we're getting now] with the web (and fasten it with a pin, then I shall become weak and be like any other man." So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his hair and wove them into the web.) And she fastened it with the pin, and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he awoke from his sleep and pulled out the pin of the loom and the web.**

Now he's walking the razor's edge. Isn't it interesting how we love to see how close to sin we can get? We think we're in charge, and we just kept getting closer and closer: "After all, God didn't send any thunder and lightning when I was in Gaza. I got out of that one." Now the fourth knock, verse 15:

**Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me?"**

**You have deceived me these three times and have not told me where your great strength is." And it came about when she pressed him daily with her words and urged him, that his soul was annoyed to death. [That's the way his wife was, remember? She did the same thing. These Philistine women had a way of getting to you. Finally she broke through.] So he told her all that was in his heart and said to her, "A razor has never come on my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaved, then my strength will leave me and I shall become weak and be like any other man."**

She was right. How could he share his life with her? He was seeking to walk in fellowship with the Lord. What did he have in common with a prostitute?

A girl called me from Lake Tahoe last year and said, "Ron, I'm depressed. I remember you told me not to go with this guy who wasn't a Christian, but we went up to Tahoe together. He just kept pressing me and pressing me, so finally I agreed to sleep with him, but I rationalized it by saying, 'I'll sleep with him and then when his passion is spent I'll tell him about Jesus'." She said, "I couldn't wait. The next morning I woke him up and I reached to the night stand for my Bible. I started reading to him but all he did was laugh. He rolled over and went back to sleep. "

That's what Samson did. How could he tell Delilah who he was? She would have laughed. It's very embarrassing to be in sin and to be talking about Jesus Christ at the same time. Have you noticed that? They don't compute. Samson was a Nazirite. He knew that he was called from the day of his birth to begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines; he knew that his strength came from God, that his whole life was to be a walking demonstration of truth; he knew that his hair was a sign of weakness but that out of weakness would come strength; he knew that not to drink wine was to show that he could derive joy from the Spirit instead of wine; he knew that not to go near a dead body was to show that he would never have to depend upon dead flesh for life. Well, there is a fascinating passage, Proverbs 6:23-26, that describes where Samson really ends up:

**For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life, to keep you from the evil woman, From the smooth tongue of the adulteress. Do not desire her beauty in your heart, Nor let her catch you with her eyelids. For on account of a harlot one is reduced to a loaf of bread,**

There he was, the judge of Israel, as a loaf of bread, hopelessly weak.

### **3. Sin Is Crouching At The Door And Its Desire Is For You, 16:18-20**

**When Delilah saw that he had told her all that was in his heart, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up once more, for he has told me all that is in his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and brought the money in their hands. And she made him sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his hair. Then she began to afflict him, and his strength left him. And she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he awoke from his sleep and said, "I will go out as at other times and shake myself free." But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him.**

Delilah was delighted! She, the weak one, had mastered the strong one. She had his hair shaved off, but his strength was not in his hair. His hair was a symbol of his dependence on the strength of God, so when his hair was shaved off his Nazirite vow and covenant were cut. Samson said, "I will go out as in other times and shake myself free," but he didn't know that the Lord had departed from him. When the Spirit of God moved him, there was no task, no matter how hard, he could not accomplish. But by his own resources he was as strong and as fearful as a loaf of bread.

His parents had warned him about the Philistine women, and God bailed him out. He set out on a road of personal vengeance and his own people captured him, but God bailed him out. He went into a harlot and almost was captured again, but God bailed him out. He went to Delilah and he had three chances to get out, but God did not bail him out because he said to Samson, "Excuse me, is that what you really want? Then you can have

it." That's the wrath of God. Sometimes we get involved in sin and because there is no thunder and lightning, we think we have gotten away with something. God is just seeing what we really want. He bails us out for a period and then he doesn't bail us out any more. He lets us have it.

Last week I talked to a Christian who was involved in sexual immorality, and another who was tempted to commit adultery for the first time. One confessed the sin and asked Christ to master this sin that was crouching at the door. He was tempted and needed the strength of the Lord to keep the door shut. One sinned; he didn't feel so bad about it, and wanted to keep the door open. God is a loving God and he will warn us through his Word, he will warn us through his Spirit, and he will warn us through friends. But if sin is what you want, you can have it. He is a loving God. He doesn't produce puppets.

#### 4. Sin Is Crouching At The Door, 16: 21-27

**Then the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes** [those eyes that saw all those women. The first thing they go for is his eyes]; **and they brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze chains** [right back to square one] **and he was a grinder in the prison. However the hair of his head began to grow again after it was shaved off. Now the lords of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice, for they said,** [read this carefully] **"Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hands."** **When the people saw him, they praised their god, for they said, "Our god has given our enemy into our hands, Even the destroyer of our country, Who has slain many of us. " It so happened when they were in high spirits** [drunk as a hoot owl], **that they said, "Call for Samson, that he may amuse us."** **So they called for Samson from the prison, and he entertained them. And they made him stand between the pillars. Then Samson said to the boy who was holding his hand, "Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them."** **Now the house was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there.** [on the ground floor] **And about 3,000 men and women were on the roof looking on while Samson was amusing them.**

The sin which was crouching at the door mastered Samson. The Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes; they bound him; they imprisoned him. All these are pictures of what happens when sin masters us. It blinds us, it binds us, it holds us captive and we can't get free. Life is dead and boring. So the Philistines had a feast and they mocked our God, while they praised theirs. Many times in my counseling I hear the words, "Listen, what's the matter with sexual--immorality if it's between two consenting adults and it doesn't harm anyone?" "Well," I say, "I'll tell you who it harms. In this family it harms the very name of God. It gives our enemies a chance to mock our God; it takes our young people and breaks down their spiritual and moral fiber, and it gives you, personally, the wages of sin. That's all it does."

Is there any hope? Samson cries out to the Lord. Verses 28-31:

#### 5.The Sinner Calls Out To The Lord, 16:28-31

**Then Samson called to the Lord and said, "O Lord Cod, please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O Cod, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes."** **And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and braced himself against them, the one with his right hand and the other with his left. And Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he bent with all his might so that the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he killed in his life. Then his brothers and all his father's household came down, took him, brought him up [to the tribe of Daniel], and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. Thus he had judged Israel twenty years.**

Samson cried out to God and said, "God, remember me." And God remembered him. Do you know why? Because God didn't go away. He was right there, and that was all he wanted to hear from Samson. That is all he wants to hear from you and me. I don't care how bad the situation is, all he wants to hear from you and me

is, "Please, remember me." God says, "Got it! Your name is Samson." "Yes, Lord." Then Samson said, "Lord, please strengthen me," because he knows where strength comes from. God honors that in spite of the fact that his motives are mixed, because God is still going to be praised in the midst of our sin. Samson wants to be strengthened so he can avenge himself on the Philistines who gouged out his eyes, but God says, "No. I'll strengthen you so that I can fulfill what I began in your life--to begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines--and in spite of your sin I'm still going to keep my plan right on schedule." Then Samson says, "Let me die with the Philistines," and God says, "Yes, I'm going to do that. I'm not going to bail you out anymore."

That's the way we are in our flesh. Our flesh has to die before there can be life. We read that Samson died, but he did more in his death than he did in his life. That is what happens in our spiritual life. When we die to our sinful nature more is accomplished through our new nature than could ever be accomplished through our old nature. Samson died physically that day, but he didn't die spiritually. According to Hebrews 11:32, God sees him as a man of faith. You say, "Hold it! A what?" It says a man of faith. And you read this over and over, and you say, "Man of faith, man of faith. Boy, if that's a man of faith I don't know what a man of faith is." But what we know here is that God judges a man based on his heart, not his activities. God took Samson, and because he is in the presence of God, all his sins are forgiven in the same way that all your sins are forgiven and all my sins are forgiven. The only thing God is going to see in me in eternity is my life perfect, your life perfect in Christ, and not one cotton--pickin', crummy, cruddy sin is ever going to be reviewed again. We're going to burn the movies, the slides, the record books, the log books, anything that reminds God of sin that has been dealt with in Jesus Christ. We are made perfect in Christ. "Yes, but what about sin?" you say. Well, God is saying, "If you want to suffer the wages of sin, fine." That's not the way to live. It won't glorify God, but in the end God, through his mercy and grace, will still salvage your ruined life.

The warning, one more time: "If you do well, surely you will be accepted, but if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door and its desire is to master you, to consume you, to rule you. You must master it by depending on the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to keep you free from its power."

---

Catalog No. 3704  
Judges 16  
May 4, 1980  
Ron R. Ritchie

[Back to Index Page](#)

Copyright© 1996 [Discovery Publishing](#), a ministry of [Peninsula Bible Church](#). This data file is the sole property of Discovery Publishing, a ministry of Peninsula Bible Church. It may be copied only in its entirety for circulation freely without charge. All copies of this data file must contain the above copyright notice. This data file may not be copied in part, edited, revised, copied for resale or incorporated in any commercial publications, recordings, broadcasts, performances, displays or other products offered for sale, without the written permission of Discovery Publishing. Requests for permission should be made in writing and addressed to Discovery Publishing, 3505 Middlefield Rd. Palo Alto, CA. 94306-3695.