



DATE	August 28, 2016
SPEAKER	David Smith
TITLE	Power Back On
SERIES	The book of Judges contains some of the strangest stories you'll ever hear. These unusual stories are entertaining, confusing, dramatic and even a bit crazy. But they also contain deep spiritual insights and truths. You can't make this stuff up!

Samson is a fascinating character in scripture. Through his story, we can glean some truths, as we have seen over the past few weeks. God's power that delivered His people from the Philistines even in Samson's absolute humanity is something we could not have made up! In this week's message, we focused on the POWER of God.

GET TO KNOW ME

- 1) When you're not concentrating on daily tasks or activities, where does your mind wander off to the most? What types of thoughts consume your mind when you have a free moment? Work, relationships, hobbies, stressors, or seeking to enjoy God's presence and carrying out His divine plan and purpose for your life?
- 2) What past events or present circumstances cause you to feel distant from God?
- 3) Read Judges 16:20. Under what circumstances might we not know that the power is ON or OFF?

Judges 16:20b was illustrated in detail regarding the phrase, "...But he did not know that the Lord had left him."

David Smith showed scriptures proving that God will never leave us nor forsake us. Read Deuteronomy 31:6 together. Discuss the value of memorizing this promise as a personal or group affirmation.

INTO THE BIBLE

Scriptures from Deuteronomy, Joshua, Chronicles, Psalms, Isaiah, and others show that many things can cause us to feel the loss of God's power: consuming fear, discouragement, giving up, unfaithfulness, accusing Him of not providing, hard circumstances, the love of money, discontent, and disobedience.

- 4) Read and discuss the following as they may pertain to your understanding of Samson's story.

- * Psalm 14:1 --- The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."
- * Proverbs 3:11 --- My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline, and do not resent his rebuke...
- * Hebrews 12:6 --- For the LORD disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child.
- * John 15:5 --- I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.
- * John 15:7 --- If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

* 2 Corinthians 9:6 --- Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

APPLICATION

(Read over the following questions and feel free to focus on those concepts that may be most applicable for your individual group.)

5) We can easily wander away from God (God is not the one doing the "leaving"), and thus lose the sense of His power when we lose our posture of worship and commitment to discipleship. What types of idols or worldly distractions can take God's place within our hearts to lead us to wander? The fool in Psalm 14:1 has made a choice to forget about God in order to pursue his/her own self-interests. What is the predominant posture of our hearts?

6) From time to time, we all go through times when we may be feeling the loss of God's power. Perhaps some in the group may be willing to share as to what it feels like to lose His power. How have you walked through such times? What lessons did you learn? How can you share those with others?

7) In what areas am I living in my own strength and understanding? How can I recognize these pitfalls? What level of effort am I placing into a deep study of the Bible that will allow God's word to dwell within me richly and thus cultivate the mind of Christ in my life?

8) Have I allowed God to search my entire heart in order to expose my sin or am I blaming God for the unfavorable circumstances in my life? What constitutes the bulk of my prayers? Do I focus on items that bring me comfort and personal satisfaction, or do I pray for the glory of God to become manifest in the lives of others for the sake of His holy name?

9) How can I develop godly relationships with men and/or women who can provide Biblical counsel and are willing to share hard truths that I may need to hear about myself? What are the benefits of this process?

10) What is my motivation for prayer? Has my repentance begun with the recognition that I am spiritually bankrupt and am "poor in spirit"? At times, we may give God the leftover scraps of our time and priorities and thus only "reaping sparingly"? What personal changes would it take to bring God into every moment of my life?

11) Consider the cost of discipleship and what truly means to remain in Christ. Explain why we need discipleship to have divine power.

12) When is it too late to cry out to God? Never? Explain your understanding and/or experience of this.

13) A definite pitfall in our broken world is that we can often allow our past to define our future. How do we keep this from happening? What does it take to experience God's power?