CHOSEN.

BETRAYED.

REDEEMED.

DEPLOYED.

PURE FLIX PRESENTS

# AMS ON

DISCUSSION PLANNER

## CHOSEN

## BETRAYED

## REDEEMED

DEPLOYED

THE FOLLOWING FOUR-SESSION DISCUSSION GUIDE IS

DESIGNED FOR SMALL GROUPS AND CLASSES THAT WANT TO

GO DEEPER IN LEARNING AND APPLYING THE RICH LESSONS

FOUND IN THE BIBLICAL STORY OF SAMSON, AS WELL AS IN

THE MOTION PICTURE ABOUT THIS AMAZING MAN: SAMSON.

WE WOULD URGE THE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP TO READ THE STORY OF SAMSON IN THE BIBLE FOR THEMSELVES—FOUND IN THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOK OF JUDGES, CHAPTERS 13–16.

# SANSON

ALSO, IT WOULD BE HIGHLY BENEFICIAL FOR YOUR ENTIRE GROUP TO SEE THE SAMSON MOVIE TOGETHER AT SOME POINT BEFORE, DURING, OR AFTER USING THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU AS YOU UNFOLD THE STORY AND LESSONS OF SAMSON.

—MARK MITTELBERG

AUTHOR OF CONFIDENT FAITH AND THE

BECOMING A CONTAGIOUS CHRISTIAN COURSE.



"YOU WILL HAVE A SON... HE [SAMSON] WILL TAKE THE LEAD IN DELIVERING ISRAEL FROM THE HANDS OF THE PHILISTINES."

JUDGES 13:5

"We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

## C.S. LEWIS, THE WEIGHT OF GLORY

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."

#### **JESUS, JOHN 10:27**

"The purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, your peace of mind, or even your happiness. It's far greater than your family, your career, or even your wildest dreams and ambitions. If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must begin with God. You were born by His purpose and for His purpose."

## RICK WARREN, THE PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

**JEREMIAH 1:5** 

## SESSION ONE: CHOSEN

#### YOUR LIFE HAS A HIGHER PURPOSE

As people who were created in the image of God, we weren't made to just work 9-to-5, eke out a living, and bide our time "until death do us part." There's nothing wrong, of course, with working and providing for our needs—but, as the hit song by Switchfoot says, "We were meant to live for so much more."

For any of us who follow Christ, God has a higher mission for our lives. We are "called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). He has chosen us to serve the people around us with the unique mix of spiritual gifts He has given each of us. As 1 Corinthians 12:11 explains, these gifts "are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He distributes them to each one, just as He determines."

Therefore, because we have such an important calling from God, we need to live "not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is" (Ephesians 5:15-17).

Samson grew up knowing God's will for his life. He had been chosen before he was born, and his marching orders were made clear by the angel of the LORD who had visited his parents. Their son would "take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines" (Judges 13:5).

Let's watch a scene from the SAMSON movie in which Samson and his brother Caleb talk with their parents, Manoah and Zealphonis, who remind Samson of his clear calling to liberate the Israelites.

#### **SHOW VIDEO CLIP 1**

Samson Reminded of His Calling.

"IN THEIR HEARTS HUMANS PLAN THEIR COURSE, BUT THE LORD ESTABLISHES THEIR STEPS."

PROVERBS 16:9

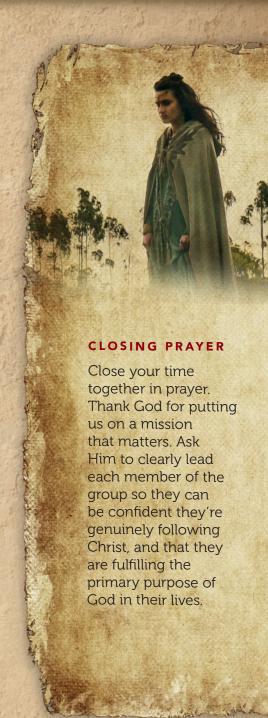
#### FOR DISCUSSION

While all true children of God have been chosen to follow and serve Him in their own unique way, very few of us have the clarity of a message from an angel telling us specifically what to do—though that would certainly be helpful!

- Have any of you had what seemed to be a clear and distinct calling from God—maybe when you were very young—and, if so, would you be willing to share what that calling was?
- Most of us have probably had to work harder to discern, as Ephesians 5:17 puts it, "what the Lord's will is" for us. What have some of you done to determine God's calling on your life, and what was that calling?
- It's interesting that Samson's calling was to liberate his people, which sounds more like the *military* than the *ministry*. Have you ever considered that God chooses His followers for what we often consider "secular" lines of work? Examples?
- If you know the story of Samson, you know that he resisted God's calling for much of his life. In fact, we just saw him doing that in the movie clip. Who can relate to that struggle? Can you tell us about it?
- There's an old saying: "What God expects, He enables." As a member of what was then a tribe of slaves, Samson was given a daunting task—to free his people from bondage. But he was also given supernatural strength to do what God asked him to do. How have you seen God provide you with the resources you needed to fulfill your calling?
- Something that stands out in the story of Samson is that he seemed to view God's calling as something he'd have to accomplish by himself. How could he have benefited by enlisting the help of others around him? How might you?

Some people feel a sense of trepidation when they hear about God "calling" individuals to certain tasks, because they've never sensed that kind of direction in their own lives.

- If that person is not sure where they stand in relationship to Christ, what's the first step you would urge them to take? [Hint: check out Romans 10:9-13.]
- For friends who are clearly followers of Christ but struggling with figuring out what God wants them to do, what practical advice could you offer?



CHOSEN



REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD YOU:
'A SERVANT IS NOT GREATER
THAN HIS MASTER.' IF THEY
PERSECUTED ME, THEY WILL
PERSECUTE YOU ALSO."

JESUS, JOHN 15:20

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."

#### 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

"For this reason [Jesus] had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted."

**HEBREWS 2:17-18** 

## SESSION TWO: BETRAYED

#### PEOPLE WILL TRY TO THWART YOUR PURPOSE

Adam and Eve disobeyed God so we now live in a fallen world. Things are not the way they're supposed to be. Work has gotten harder; resistance greater; inertia stronger. And just when you think you're gaining momentum toward fulfilling your purpose, somebody trips you up. They stab you in the back. They sell you out.

It happens to the best of us. In fact, it *did* happen to the best of us: Jesus was betrayed by Judas. So if it can happen to *Him*, we shouldn't be surprised when someone double-crosses us.

And what of Samson? Few have known more betrayals than he did. Let's watch a scene from the SAMSON movie in which he's betrayed by an enemy, Rallah, after making a foolish wager over whether he would be able to solve Samson's riddle.

#### **SHOW VIDEO CLIP 2:**

Samson's Riddle

#### FOR DISCUSSION

As that scene continues, we soon discover that Samson had been betrayed by his enemy, Rallah, who had forced his bride, Taren, to betray him as well. And that was only the beginning. He was also betrayed by his own countrymen, who bound Samson and handed him over to the Philistines (Judges 15:11-14). And finally he was tricked by his lover, Delilah—multiple times—which led him to his ultimate downfall (Judges 16).

- Being betrayed by an enemy, as Samson was by Rallah, hurts—but it's not completely unexpected. But being betrayed by friends and even family members will wound us deeply. Without violating confidences, would anyone like to share a situation in which you felt betrayed?
- How did you handle the situation? Do you wish you would have done anything differently?

"AFTER PUTTING HIM TO SLEEP ON HER LAP, [DELILAH] CALLED FOR SOMEONE TO SHAVE OFF THE SEVEN BRAIDS OF HIS HAIR, AND SO BEGAN TO SUBDUE HIM. AND HIS STRENGTH LEFT HIM. THEN SHE CALLED, 'SAMSON, THE PHILISTINES ARE UPON YOU!'"

JUDGES 16:19-20

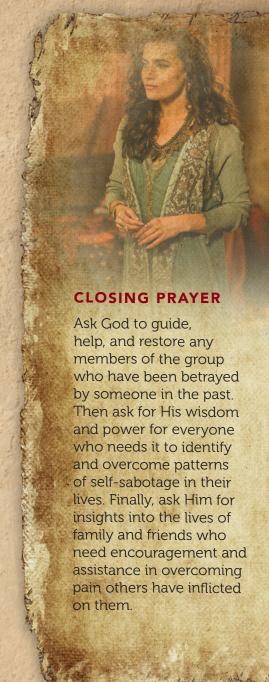
- Have any of you been able to go back and reconcile a relationship after you've been hurt by someone? What lessons did you learn along the way that might benefit others in the group?
- Can you think of any verses in the Bible that speak to these kinds of situations?
- Have you considered that you have a Savior who understands what you're going through, since He was betrayed by a trusted friend Himself?

Hebrews 4:15-16 says this: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

• How does that passage, and that truth, encourage you? Who could you share these verses with in order to encourage them to reach out to the Savior who has been there Himself, and thus can sympathize with them?

Before we end our discussion, there's one more betrayal in Samson's life that we've overlooked—one that was probably more painful than all of the others combined: Samson betrayed himself. Think about it: Judges 16 tells us that he repeatedly bluffed when Delilah asked him about the source of his amazing strength—and in every case she did what he said would make him weak, and the Philistine soldiers showed up immediately afterwards. So why—was it self-sabotage or reckless gamesmanship?—would he finally tell her the real source of his strength? It's hard to understand what motivated him, but it was a foolish choice he undoubtedly regretted for the rest of his life.

- Why do we sometimes sabotage ourselves? Can anyone relate to this—or
  maybe we should ask; can anyone not relate to this on some level? What did
  you do—or are you doing—to try to overcome this pattern?
- Which is harder: forgiving someone else or forgiving yourself? Why are both so important?
- What practical steps would you prescribe for a friend who needs to break out of a cycle of self-betrayal?



BETRAYED



"BUT WHILE HE WAS STILL A LONG WAY OFF, HIS FATHER SAW HIM AND WAS FILLED WITH COMPASSION FOR HIM; HE RAN TO HIS SON, THREW HIS ARMS AROUND HIM AND KISSED HIM."

LUKE 15:20

"When he came to his senses, [the Prodigal Son] said... 'I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' So he got up and went to his father."

#### **LUKE 15:17-20**

"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on [my son]. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

#### **LUKE 15:22-24**

"Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."

#### DAVID, PSALMS 51:7-12

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

#### **EPHESIANS 2:8-9**

### SESSION THREE: REDEEMED

#### GOD CAN GIVE YOU A SECOND CHANCE

Everybody loves a comeback. The washed up athlete who comes back to win again, the defeated soldier who finds the strength to overcome the enemy, or the ordinary person who is about to give up, but then comes back to succeed in the very area that was about to defeat him—these stories always inspire us.

Well, the Bible is full of comeback stories. Joseph was sold into slavery, yet somehow survived not just to be free again, but to become the number two leader over an entire kingdom. David blew it—big time—but then he turned away from his sins and again found God's grace and favor.

And Jesus, in the ultimate comeback of all history, was ruthlessly crucified, His dead body was placed in a cold stone tomb, and all hope was lost. Until it wasn't! Three days later Jesus triumphantly burst out of the tomb with resurrection life, and He wants to share that life with each of us!

Samson too, after brashly tempting fate and losing spectacularly, found himself blind, beaten, and all alone in prison. There in his pit of despair, he finally humbled himself enough to reach out to the God who had chosen him in the first place. In Judges chapter 16 Samson called him "Sovereign Lord," acknowledging that God was the one who is in control—a lesson that came to Samson slowly and through a lot of pain. But God heard him, and showed him grace and mercy once again.

Let's watch a scene from the SAMSON movie in which Samson reaches out to God for a second chance.

#### **SHOW VIDEO CLIP 3:**

Samson Seeks a Second Chance

#### FOR DISCUSSION:

So Samson, with God's help, starts staging a comeback. What comeback stories
inspire you the most? Let's share a few examples from the everyday realm (sports,
battle, business, school, ordinary achievements) as well as the spiritual realm
(examples where people seemed too far gone to ever come back to God—and
then did).

"BUT THE HAIR ON [SAMSON'S] HEAD BEGAN TO GROW AGAIN AFTER IT HAD BEEN SHAVED... SAMSON PRAYED TO THE LORD, 'SOVEREIGN LORD, REMEMBER ME. PLEASE, GOD, STRENGTHEN ME JUST ONCE MORE....'"

JUDGES 16:22, 28

- Unfortunately, we see in Samson—and too often in ourselves—that we can be slow to learn. Have any of you gone through a hard time, only to realize later that God allowed it to teach you or to bring you back to Him? Anyone willing to share one of those experiences?
- Did you ever feel like giving up spiritually? How did God bring you past that situation? Were you able to later thank Him for the difficulties He brought into your life for your own good?
- Romans 8:28 is an often overused verse, but let's read it together, and discuss ways it proved to be true for Samson. And, perhaps, for some of us?
- This verse (Romans 8:28) is clearly written to believers—those who "love Him" and are "called according to His purpose." That's a promise for we who have already followed Christ, but the Bible also has clear and hopeful promises for those who don't yet know Him. Let's read together Ephesians 2:8-9, and see what it says for anyone who wants to know God.
- Drawing from that passage, what could you say to your friend who has reached the point where he or she is ready to learn more about what it means to follow Christ? Anyone willing to role play and tell us what you might say?
- According to this passage, how many acts of service or spiritual activities do we need to do in order to receive God's grace and salvation?
- Is anyone willing to briefly tell the story of how/when you came to the realization that you needed God's grace, and put your trust in Christ? What happened? Specifically, what did you say, do, or pray to express your faith in Him?
- Have any of you had the opportunity to lead someone else in making that decision? Could you tell us about it?
- Who do you know in your life right now, whether family member, friend, co-worker, classmate, or neighbor, who you could share the message of God's grace with? What step will you commit to taking to help make that happen?

#### CLOSING PRAYER

Thank God together that He is the God of the second chance. Praise Him for His grace in all of your lives, and request His ongoing activity to help each of you to overcome barriers and challenges keeping you from fully following and serving Him. Also, ask Him to use the members of your group to courageously share the Good News of His grace with the people around them this week. [If you have time, you might also want to sit together in pairs to pray for the people you'd like to reach for Him.]

REDEEMED



"WHOEVER WANTS TO BECOME GREAT AMONG YOU MUST BE YOUR SERVANT ... FOR EVEN THE SON OF MAN DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE AS A RANSOM FOR MANY."

JESUS, MARK 10:43-45

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

#### **EPHESIANS 2:10**

"Create in me a pure heart, O God... Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you."

#### **PSALMS 51:10, 13**

"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good... All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He distributes them to each one, just as He determines."

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 12:7, 11

"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve."

**JESUS, MARK 10:45** 

### SESSION FOUR: DEPLOYED

#### GOD REDEEMS US TO FULFILL HIS MISSION

"For I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord to the Israelites in Jeremiah 29:11. Well, if you're a follower of Christ, then God has plans for you, too. You're a member of the group Jesus commanded: "Go into all the world and make disciples." We all have a vital part to play in that broader mission—and we also have other more specialized purposes for which God created us.

One thing's for sure. God didn't redeem you to let you be idle. As the old saying goes, "You were blessed to be a blessing." Jesus came to serve others—then He tells us to do the same.

Some people say "I don't need a church to worship God. I worship God best in the woods." Okay. You may feel closer to God in the woods, so get out in the sticks and give Him praise! But that doesn't mean that you don't need the church—or that the church doesn't need you.

In fact, when you neglect the command of Hebrews 10:25, and neglect meeting together with other believers, you're actually ripping *them* off! That's because they need you and your spiritual gifts and service.

"But I thought God's grace and salvation were supposed to be free" some will say. Well, that's true. We saw this in the last session from Ephesians 2:8-9: we are saved by grace through faith, and our good works have nothing to do with obtaining God's salvation. But let's not stop there—verse 10 adds something very important. It says we were "created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

We saw in Session 1 that we are chosen by God to serve Him, and to fulfill His purposes in our lives. Well, after facing resistance and sometimes betrayals (Session 2), God comes and rescues us (and if He hasn't already done so, He redeems us as His sons and daughters—Session 3), and then He recommissions us to fulfill the purposes He gave us in the first place (this session). Even if we've failed, God wants to restore us and to help us finish strong.

We see this pattern in Samson: God chose him to deliver the Israelites, he resisted, but all was not lost. God rescued and redeployed Samson, and he ultimately fulfilled the mission God made him for. Let's watch how God did this on one more scene from the SAMSON movie.

#### **SHOW VIDEO CLIP 4:**

Samson Finishes Strong

"SAMSON PRAYED TO THE LORD... 'PLEASE, GOD, STRENGTHEN ME JUST ONCE MORE, AND LET ME WITH ONE BLOW GET REVENGE ON THE PHILISTINES...' THEN SAMSON REACHED TOWARD THE TWO CENTRAL PILLARS ON WHICH THE TEMPLE STOOD... HE PUSHED WITH ALL HIS MIGHT, AND DOWN CAME THE TEMPLE ON THE RULERS AND ALL THE PEOPLE IN IT."

JUDGES 16:28-30

#### FOR DISCUSSION:

- Samson ran all of his life from the mission God had given him. In the end
  (in his case, the very end!) he came back to God, found new strength,
  and fulfilled his calling. Have you seen someone in your life come to
  their senses later in life, only to accomplish great things for God?
- When is it too late for a person to follow and serve God?
- Can you think of people in your life who have given up, but who might be inspired by a story like Samson's?
- Let's get personal—have any of you given up on your own mission, only to be renewed by God and to come back and complete the task with renewed vision and vigor? Stories?
- Let's get even more personal... Are any of you right now in a situation where you need that renewed vision and vigor? How can we as a group, or as individuals, encourage you in that situation?
- Do you know people who claim to know God, but who don't think they need the church? Might this biblical emphasis on gathering with believers not just to be fed but to feed others be something that would motivate them to come back into the fold? Are there some conversations you should have this week?
- Is there someone you need to re-inspire with God's help? People whose vision you can speak life into? Friends who need to be redeployed into God's service? Someone who has given up, but needs a fresh chance to be and do what God made them for?
- Stepping back and looking at the example of Samson and the lessons we've been drawing from it, what words of encouragement or challenge might any of you have for the rest of the group?

#### CLOSING PRAYER

Ask God to help every member of your group see the full purpose for which they were created, and then to have the courage to trust God and to obey and fulfill their mission—to Finish Strong! Ask God, as it says in John 15:5, to abide in every person so that they can "bear much fruit." Ask Him to continue, well beyond the scope of this discussion group, to apply the lessons of Samson to their everyday lives.

DEPLOYED

SAMSON

IN THEATERS FEBRUARY 16



SAMSON is based on the powerful, biblical epic of a champion chosen by God to deliver Israel. His supernatural strength and impulsive decisions quickly pit him against the oppressive Philistine empire. After being betrayed by a wicked prince and a beautiful temptress, Samson is captured and blinded by his enemies. Samson calls upon his God once more for supernatural strength and turns imprisonment and blindness into final victory.

From the creators of GOD'S NOT DEAD comes SAMSON, an action-packed biblical epic. Starring Billy Zane, Rutger Hauer and Jackson Rathbone, Samson's journey of passion, betrayal, and redemption inspires audiences to realize that life's failures need not define their future.

TAKE YOUR GROUP TO THE MOVIE OR HOST YOUR OWN PRE-RELEASE MOVIE EVENT:

SAMSONMOVIEEVENTS.COM | SAMSON.MOVIE | #SAMSONMOVIE

(1) / SAMSONMOVIEOFFICIAL (2) @SAMSONMOVIEOFFICIAL (2) @SAMSON\_MOVIE

PURE FLIX ENTERTAINMENT IN INSCRIATION AND BOOMTOWN FILMS PRESENT PURE FLIX RIM "SAMISON" JACKSON RATHBONE RUTGER HAUER CAITLIN LEARY LINOSAY WAGNER FRANCIS DOUGLAS GREG KRIEK NEW BILLY ZANE AND TAYLOR JAMES IS SANSIN 

BRUCE MACDONALD CRAIG JONES BRITTANY YOST 🚏 JASON BAUMGARDNER 🐠 ZACHARY WARREN SMITH 🚏 ZACHARY WARREN SMITH 🚜 JASON BAUMGARDNER 🐠 GALEN GIJBERT 🐠 TIMOTHY RATALYZAK 🕬 BRUCE MACDONALD

