

MADNESS

RED FLAGS

OVERCOMING THE THREATS TO OUR RELATIONSHIPS

PRECEPT

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-15

¹⁴ Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

¹⁵ What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

PROVERBS 12:15

Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to others.

PROMISE

"Well, that's a red flag!" In our relationships with one another, red flags are signposts of future problems. Merriam-Webster defines a red flag as, "a warning signal or sign, something that indicates or draws attention to a problem, danger, or irregularity."

One Old Testament figure who should have seen the red flags in his relationship was the judge Samson. Samson was mighty and powerful because of his call from God to defend the Israelites, and his strength came from the Nazarite vow not to cut his hair. Though chosen by God, Samson was often tempted to pursue his own desires. He fell in love with a Philistine woman named Delilah. The Philistines were his enemies and wanted Delilah to seduce Samson so they could kill him: "Seduce him, and see where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to humble him. And we will each give you 1,100 pieces of silver." So Delilah said to Samson, 'Please tell me where your great strength lies, and how you might be bound, that one could subdue you'" (Judges 16:5-6). After she asks this question, Samson jokes with her, saying that a person would have to bind him with seven cords to remove his strength. And what happens? Delilah binds him and then tells the Philistines to attack him while he's sleeping. But Samson wakes up, tears off the bindings, and defeats the Philistines, not realizing it was Delilah who set him up! Delilah did this a few more times—each time making it more egregious that Samson refused to catch on to what was happening right in front of him. Samson was in love with a person who was not good for him. And though Delilah is at fault, we wonder why Samson didn't see the red flags. This woman is asking how to take away his strength, doing what he tells her while he's asleep, and somehow is always the one who tells him that the Philistines are attacking! There is all manner of sketchiness here! Finally, Samson tells her the truth about his strength: "And she said to him, 'How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and you have not told me where your great strength lies.' And when she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death. And he told her all his heart, and said to her, 'A razor has never come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man'" (16:15-17). After he tells her this, Delilah cuts his hair off while he's sleeping. The Philistines come, subdue him, torture him, and take him captive to their palace.

Daniel Block describes the issue with Samson, "The problem with Samson was not simply that he loved a woman but the kind of woman he loved. In principle, there is nothing wrong with a man loving a woman. After all, marriage, an institution sanctioned by God, depends upon the love of a man for his wife and the love of a woman for her husband. The issue here is the kind of person he loves."

The Bible doesn't just tell us tragic stories but also gives us wisdom in our relationships. From Scripture, we can learn the types of red flags we should pay attention to so that we can have healthy, flourishing relationships. Proverbs 27:12 tells us, "Sensible people will see trouble coming and avoid it, but an unthinking person will walk right into it and regret it later." Let us seek the counsel of God and allow Him to reveal red flags that we should address in our relationships.

PRACTICE

1. **Red Flags.** What is a red flag? Why is it important to notice red flags in our relationships?

2. **Samson.** What can the story of Samson teach us about red flags?

PRAYER

I. Joy

- May we all find joy in serving God and His people, with all our might and all our strength.

II. Peace

- Ask for peace from our Lord Jesus, the Prince of Peace and the Captain of our Storms.

III. World

- Pray for all the broken souls of this world, that they will find Christ and His undying love.

IV. Retreat

- Pray for a meaningful & blessed couple's retreat.

V. Marriages

- Pray for unity, humility, and selflessness in marriages.

VI. Families

- Pray that we will always look out for each other's interests.

VII. Church

- May we come to know Christ more intimately in our services.