



## POTIPHAR'S WIFE AND DELILAH: WOMEN OF SEDUCTION

### INTRODUCTION

God created woman to be a *help meet*<sup>1</sup> to man (Genesis 2:18). Eve was tempted and seduced to sin by Satan and in turn she enticed her husband to sin (Genesis 3:1-6). From the moment sin entered the world, women who have yielded to Satan's deception and their own lusts have been used to destroy even the most godly of men. Rather than being a helper, some women have been tempted to manipulate and control men. They use their charm, emotions, and other methods of seduction to get their way. This behavior has led to the destruction of innumerable men who have been caught in the web of the temptress<sup>2</sup>.

Two ungodly women in the Bible, who used seductive and lustful ways in an attempt to destroy men of God, were Potiphar's wife and Delilah. Although both women used sinful behavior in an attempt to destroy and dishonor these men, neither one was able to accomplish her purpose.

In studying Potiphar's wife and Delilah, we will discover some of the schemes that ungodly women use in the seduction of godly men. Most importantly, we will be personally challenged to look at our lives and examine ourselves to see if we practice deception, manipulation, and selfishness in the pursuit of our own desires.

### SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

*Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD<sup>3</sup>, she shall be praised*  
(Proverbs 31:30).

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<sup>1</sup> help meet - Hebrew *ezer kenedgo* a helper suitable for him, a being like him: aid, a front, part opposite; counterpart.

<sup>2</sup> temptress: a woman who draws or entices a man into sinful behavior by means of mental, emotional, physical and/or spiritual seduction. Synonyms are greedy monster, hag, devil, demon, sphinx, harpy, vampire.

<sup>3</sup> feareth the LORD - Hebrew *yare* reverence: the Fear of the LORD dreads God's displeasure, desires His favor, reveres His holiness, submits cheerfully to His will, is grateful for His benefits, sincerely worships Him, and conscientiously obeys His commands (Psalm 33:8, Proverbs 1:3, 7); to hate evil (Proverbs 8:13); the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 1:7); to stand in awe of who God is.

## Names Given to the Women in These Stories

Potiphar's wife	<p><i>... his master's wife [Potiphar's wife] cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, lie with me (Genesis 39:7).</i></p> <p>No name is given to her. She is only referred to as Potiphar's wife.</p>
Manoah's wife	<p><i>And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife [Samson's mother] was barren, and bare not. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son (Judges 13:2, 3).</i></p> <p>She is only referred to as Manoah's wife.</p>
Woman of Timnath Daughter of the Philistines	<p><i>... I [Samson] have seen a woman in Timnath<sup>4</sup></i></p> <p><i>... of the daughters of the Philistines:<sup>5</sup> now therefore get her for me to wife (Judges 14:2).</i></p> <p>Samson's pagan wife who betrayed him (Judges 14:1-20).</p>
Delilah	<p><i>... he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah (Judges 16:4).</i></p> <p><i>Delilah</i> in Hebrew is <i>Dliylah</i> which means languishing. The woman that brought down Samson, a man set apart for the Lord.</p>

## SECTION I - Potiphar's Wife

Joseph was one of the twelve sons of Jacob and the favorite of his father which caused great conflict within the family. His brothers, being envious of him, were driven to sell him into slavery. He was taken to Egypt where he was sold to Potiphar. Despite his many difficulties and trials, he remained a man set apart for God. He honored and glorified God in his life. His experience with Potiphar's wife was just another event in which man meant to hurt him for evil but God used it for good.

READ Genesis Chapters 37 and 39.

1. Who was Potiphar (Genesis 39:1)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why did Potiphar take notice of Joseph (vv. 2, 3)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What responsibilities were given to Joseph (vv. 4-6)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>4</sup> Timnath: a Philistine town in the Sorek valley, four miles south of Zorah in Palestine.

<sup>5</sup> Philistines - Hebrew sea of people: a people who mastered the use of iron.

4. What was the tempting request of Potiphar's wife to Joseph (v. 7)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Potiphar's high-ranking position as an officer to Pharaoh meant a life of luxury and abundance for him, and ultimately for his family. More than likely, Potiphar's wife had everything she needed or wanted, yet she set her eyes on Joseph, the young, handsome slave who was blessed by God.

### LOOK DEEPER

COMPARE Wisdom with the foolish Seductress (Proverbs 7 and 9).

Wisdom: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

the Foolish Seductress: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. How did Joseph respond to the lustful proposal of his master's wife (Genesis 39:8, 9a)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

As well as his loyalty to his master, what words describe his loyalty to the Lord (v. 9b)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Keep in mind, Joseph was only about seventeen years old. He was handsome and had all the physical urges that face young men and women, yet he was able to resist the constant seductive flirtations that came his way by this adulteress woman.

### LOOK DEEPER

LOOK UP the following Scriptures. MATCH the Scripture references that instruct you concerning temptation.

- |                     |       |  |
|---------------------|-------|--|
| Luke 22:46          | _____ | a. you are tempted by your own lust                            |
| I Corinthians 6:18  | _____ | b. God makes a way of escape                                   |
| I Corinthians 10:13 | _____ | c. be sober, be vigilant, the devil seeks to devour you        |
| II Timothy 2:22     | _____ | d. prayer keeps you from temptation                            |
| James 1:2, 3        | _____ | e. by enduring temptation, you shall receive the crown of life |

- James 1:12 \_\_\_\_\_ f. submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you
- James 1:13-15 \_\_\_\_\_ g. it is a sin against your own body
- James 4:7 \_\_\_\_\_ h. flee youthful lusts, follow righteousness
- I Peter 5:8 \_\_\_\_\_ i. test of faith, produces patience

6. How did Potiphar's wife respond to Joseph's refusal (Genesis 39:10)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What action did Joseph take to avoid her deadly advances? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. DESCRIBE what happened in Genesis 39:11, 12. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. How did Potiphar's wife describe what happened (vv. 13-18)? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

Potiphar's wife was literally left holding Joseph's garment. She then proceeded to cover up her actions. She insulted her husband in front of the slaves by blaming him for bringing Joseph into the house. She then reminded her husband that it was *his* slave that attempted to rape her. All of these accusations were lies. Her attraction for Joseph vanished as her lust turned to hate.

**PERSONAL**

What could be the reasons a lustful woman would pursue after a man of God? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How does James 1:12-17 speak to you? \_\_\_\_\_<sup>6</sup> <sup>7</sup>

How does Revelation 21:5-8 comfort you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_<sup>8</sup>

9. What happened to Joseph as a result of Potiphar's wife's lies (Genesis 39:19, 20)? \_\_\_\_\_

10. In what ways do we see that God was with Joseph (vv. 21-23)? \_\_\_\_\_

WRITE verse 23b *because* . . . \_\_\_\_\_

Although godly and ungodly men experience temptation of this sort, we see that an adulterous, seductive woman, as beautiful as she may be, is not the true desire of a God fearing man. Potiphar's wife did not accomplish her purpose with Joseph, she could not destroy this young man, for he feared God and God was with him.

## SECTION 2 - Manoah's Wife

The godly generation of Joshua passed away and another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord (Judges 2:6-10). The Israelites became rebellious and idolatrous; the behavior of this new generation angered the Lord. He delivered them into the hands of their enemies; however, because of their distress, they cried to the Lord and in His mercy, He raised up judges to deliver the Israelites (Judges 2:11-16). One judge that God raised up was Samson who was given tremendous victories over the Philistine enemies.

READ Judges Chapter 13.

1. What difficulties did Manoah and his wife face (vv. 1, 2)? \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>6</sup> crown of life - Greek *miknew* something bought, acquisition: Christ purchased the crown of victory over death with His life.

<sup>7</sup> Father of Light: reference to the creative activity of God (Genesis 1:3-5).

<sup>8</sup> Alpha and Omega: first and last letters of the Greek alphabet; Christ is the Beginning and the End.

2. What did the Angel of the LORD<sup>9</sup> prophesy<sup>10</sup> to Manoah's wife (v. 3)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What divine instructions were given (vv. 4, 5)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

For what purpose would the child be set apart? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Manoah's wife went and told her husband all that had happened, how the Angel of the LORD told her that they would have a son and he would be a Nazarite until his death. The Nazarite vow was an oath to abstain from certain worldly influences and to live a life set apart to God (Numbers 6:1-8). Manoah prayed that the Angel of the LORD would return and show them how to teach this child. He did appear in answer to prayer and expressed that they follow all the instructions previously told to his wife (Judges 13:8-12).

4. Besides the promised child, what instructions was Manoah's wife to follow (Judges 13:13, 14)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What did Manoah not realize (vv. 15, 16)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. How did God reveal Himself to Manoah (vv. 17-21)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What was Manoah's reaction when he realized the man was the Angel of the LORD (vv. 22)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What did his wife believe (v. 23)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>9</sup> Angel of the LORD: a theophany (an appearance by God taking on a divine or human form in order to be visible to human beings) of the Person of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament (Judges 13:21, 22).

<sup>10</sup> prophesy: proclamation of the divine Word, first in oral form and sometimes recorded in writing.

9. What name was given to the child and what happened as he grew (vv. 24, 25)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>11</sup>

In Old Testament times, God's Spirit<sup>12</sup> would come upon His chosen people and empower them to do His will and accomplish specific purposes.

### SECTION 3 - A Woman of Timnath

God moved by His Spirit upon Samson, he became a mighty man of valor. However, despite God's faithfulness in using him to deliver His distressed people, Samson's weakness was discovered; he was open to the seduction of ungodly women. Samson desired a woman from the enemies of his people to be his wife.

READ Judges Chapters 14 and 15.

1. What did Samson demand from his parents (Judges 14:1-4)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What did the enemies of Samson tell his wife to do (Judges 14:15)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>13</sup>

3. What manipulative ways did she use to get the answer to the riddle (vv. 16, 17)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What were the consequences of Samson's wife's deceptive behavior (vv. 20, 15:1, 2)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What was the final consequence (Judges 15:6)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>11</sup> Samson: Hebrew sun like or splendor.

<sup>12</sup> God's Spirit: the third Person of the triune God; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

<sup>13</sup> enticed: allure, deceive, enlarge, flatter, persuade.

## LOOK DEEPER

NOTICE Samson's actions in the following verses. MATCH the Scripture references with the situations where Samson's God given strength was used.

- |                  |       |   |
|------------------|-------|---|
| Judges 14:5, 6   | _____ | a. Samson killed a thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey                      |
| Judges 14:19     | _____ | b. Samson strengthened by the Spirit of the Lord greatly slaughtered his enemies  |
| Judges 15:7, 8   | _____ | c. Samson strengthened by the Spirit of the Lord tears apart a lion               |
| Judges 15:14     | _____ | d. Samson strengthened by the Spirit of the Lord and kills thirty men of Ashkelon |
| Judges 15:15, 16 | _____ | e. Samson breaks new chords like flax as the Lord's Spirit came mightily upon him |

God continued to demonstrate that His anointing was upon Samson despite his foolish disobedience. His physical strength was shown in his victories over the Philistines.

## PERSONAL

The word *manipulate* means to manage or control by shrewd use of influence, in a crafty or unfair and fraudulent way. Have you ever used someone's weakness or lack of knowledge to manipulate them to do what you desired? What were the results?

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Ask God to forgive you!

## SECTION 4 - Delilah

READ Judges Chapter 16.

1. What kind of woman did Samson desire that revealed the downward spiral of his life (v. 1)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What were the enemies planning to do to Samson (v. 2)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How did Samson escape (v. 3)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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4. What were Samson's feelings for Delilah (v. 4)? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What did the lords of the Philistines ask Delilah to do (v. 5)? \_\_\_\_\_

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What did the Philistines offer Delilah if she would agree to their request? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. In accepting the offer of the Philistines, what does this reveal about her relationship to Samson (v. 6)?

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7. How did Samson say he would become weak? Was this the truth (vv. 7-9)? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. When Delilah realized Samson had tricked her, what did she accuse him of doing (v. 10)? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Samson responded to Delilah's continual accusations by doing what (vv. 11, 12)? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. After Samson lied to Delilah three times, how did she finally seduce him (vv. 13-16)? \_\_\_\_\_

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11. What did Delilah notice about Samson's answer this last time (vv. 17, 18)? \_\_\_\_\_

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### PERSONAL

Have you ever used persistent nagging, flattery, or deception to get a person to do something you desired? Do you recognize any of these tactics that Delilah used in your own life? LIST them and ask God for His wisdom.

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READ the following Scriptures and WRITE how the Lord instructed you through them?

Proverbs 20:19 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 26:28 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Jeremiah 17:9, 10 \_\_\_\_\_

As foolish as it may seem, Samson, blinded by his lust for Delilah, trusted her even after she betrayed him three times.

12. Delilah was successfully used as a woman of seduction, DESCRIBE what Samson, a strong man of God was reduced to (Judges 16:19-21).

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What does Proverbs 6:26, 27 warn about to one who deals with a harlot? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### LOOK DEEPER

Women of harlotry are usually paid for their services. Delilah was paid for her wicked seduction of Samson (Judges 16:18). What do the Scriptures instruct concerning the wages of sin and fruit of repentance?

Romans 6:12, 13, 16? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Romans 6:23 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I John 1:5-10 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SECTION 5 - The Fear of the Lord

Potiphar’s wife and Delilah were examples of foolish women who did not fear the Lord. They were concerned only with themselves. Their fleshly desires<sup>14</sup> and sexual appetites controlled them.

The Word of God clearly declares the characteristics of a godly woman, one who is a wise and loving wife, a helpmate, mother, homemaker and business person.

1. READ Proverbs 31 and LIST the characteristics of the virtuous<sup>15</sup> woman. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. How do her children and husband honor her (v. 28)? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Why is this woman so greatly praised (vv. 29, 30)? \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>14</sup> fleshly desires: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness [lewdness], idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries (Galatians 5:19-21, NKJV).

<sup>15</sup> virtuous - Hebrew *chayil* army: valiant, strength, riches, wealth, power, substance, might; wife of valor.

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4. What is her reward (v. 31)? \_\_\_\_\_

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#### MEMORY VERSE

WRITE your memory verse and deeply consider its powerful meaning in your life.

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\_\_\_\_\_ (Proverbs 31:30).

Potiphar's wife and Delilah teach us that any woman yielded to her fleshly desires has the capability to destroy any man. These women were both driven by a need to satisfy self, with no thought for the lives of the men they would destroy. They remained heartless, uncompassionate, and cruel in their dealings with men. God desires that our love for Him and our fear of Him will motivate us to obey His Word. Each day we must choose to either be controlled by our lustful flesh or to choose the Fear of the LORD. As we have learned from these women, only when we choose to fear God will our lives have true meaning, purpose, and fulfillment.

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All Scripture found in this study is from the King James Bible unless noted otherwise.

Due to the holy nature of God, the first letter of all references to Him,  
His holy name, and His Word have been capitalized.

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