

STUDY NOTES

THE WAYS OF GRACE

A Series At New City Church

newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message "Only the Strong Can Be Weak" on 10/27/19 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this study guide effectively, you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these study notes for group study and reflection should read the biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: JUDGES 13:2-5; 1 SAMUEL 16:11-13

TURNING OUR FLAWS TO GOD

The Enneagram offers nine mirrors for self-reflection. The goal of the Enneagram is to help you let go of the walls you've built because of sin and fear. It should guide you in learning to be more comfortable with your flaws and turning them over to God! The Enneagram type 8 is the "challenger."

THE CHALLENGER

Those considered to be challengers have enormous willpower and vitality, and they feel most alive when they are exercising these capacities in the world. They use their abundant energy to influence changes in their environment.

- *Do you know a challenger? What is it like interacting with that person?*
- *How have you seen the challenger's character traits used for good?*

EACH OF OUR REACTIONS TO SIN

Challenger types act so strongly in order to keep the environment, and especially other people, from hurting them and those they care about. They can seem ego-

centric and domineering and, in certain situations, can become confrontational and intimidating.

The challenger's basic fear is being harmed or controlled by others.

- *How do you tend to respond when someone else harms you?*

Both Samson and David were challenger types. A lot of pressure was placed on them early in their lives. Oftentimes, challengers grow up too quickly because of unrealistic expectations or a lack of support around them. Both men in each story go on to be betrayed or harmed in different ways. For every Enneagram type, our reactions to sin are learned from childhood.

When the sin of the world collides with the sin in us, the impact lasts a lifetime.

- *How has sin impacted your reactions to certain situations and/or people?*

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY WITH VULNERABILITY

Challengers are known for being strong, and are afraid to be weak because they believe that their identity is in their strength. Often, when people go to great lengths to control people or situations, they are acting on a fear of being harmed or controlled by others.

Hiding behind our greatest strength is often our biggest fear.

The call for the challenger (and for each of us) is to trust and to be vulnerable. God calls us to trust and be vulnerable with both himself and others. God promises to fight for us. He promises that he will fight for injustice. But he also places other people in our lives to care for us. Each of us need to be willing to be weak so that God can be strong in us. When we are able to become weak, then we can see the mercy of God in our lives. Here is an example of how David was weak and then how God responded: **Read Psalm 51:1-12.**

- *How can you learn from David's prayer to the Lord in Psalm 51?*
- *Why is it difficult to be vulnerable with others? Give some examples of when others treated you well and when others treated you poorly in a time of vulnerability.*
- *Pray with each other to trust God and be vulnerable with each other.*