

# Four Ways to Lose the Lord's Presence

by Walter Beuttler

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*Four ways to lose the presence of God: losing our consecration, disobedience, neglect, and other ways such as busyness and preoccupation.*

**Scripture:** Judges 16:4, 1 Samuel 16:14, 1 Chronicles 15:1, Luke 2:42

**Topics:** "Consecration", "Disobedience"

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## Description

Walter Beuttler preaches on the story of Samson and Delilah, emphasizing the danger of losing the secret of consecration, as seen in Samson's downfall due to revealing his source of strength. Beuttler warns against trifle with the secret of consecration and highlights the importance of maintaining consecration to avoid losing the presence of God. He also discusses the consequences of disobedience, substitution of God's will, and neglecting personal devotion, all of which can lead to losing the presence of the Lord.

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## Transcript

"And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. And the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and said to her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lies, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and we will give you every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver." Judges 16:4-5

Obviously, these Philistines valued Samson. Otherwise, they would not have paid such an immense sum in order to get at his strength.

"And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death; that he told her all his heart, and said to her, There has not come a razor upon my head; for I have been a Nazarite to God from my mother's womb; if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man. And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he has showed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and brought money in their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And she said, The Philistines be upon you, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he knew not that the Lord was departed from him." Judges 16:16-20

All of us know the story of Samson. Notice here this word "enticed." She enticed him and got him into a place where the man told her all his heart. Basically, what we have here is this:

Samson lost the secret of his consecration.

He was a Nazarite. As a Nazarite, he had to meet certain conditions. He could not drink wine; he could not eat grapes; he could not eat raisins - not even raisin pie; he had to let the locks of his hair grow, and in those days, that was a sign of reproach. A Nazarite had to bear reproach for the Lord's sake.

Delilah so pressed upon this man that finally he gave away the secret of his power. Why did this man trifle with the secret of his power? She said, "Samson, the Philistines be upon you." Then she did it a second time, and she did it a third time. Why this man did not come to his senses, I do not know. Perhaps he was so overwrought that in spite of the fact that he saw he was gravitating toward trouble, could not muster sufficient strength to get out of that place and run for his life. He played along, and gravitated toward disaster.

About a year or two ago I watched a movie on TV about Samson and Delilah. I have often seen it advertised over the years, but I do not go to the movies, but when they showed it on TV, I thought, "I will see what this is all about."

I was amazed at the reproduction of the times in those days. It was an education of the times in which this story took place. They showed how Samson was finally robbed of his power. Eventually he was pulling at the mill, and the lords of the Philistines were laughing and drinking, making fun over Samson.

Delilah stood by, and you actually could tell she was very remorseful after what she had done. The king of the Philistines, and other kings, had come to laugh about Samson. Delilah stood not far away and said to this king, "Well, your army has finally conquered Samson." The king said very gravely, "No, my army did not, you did."

This was so impressive that I will never forget it. An army of warriors could not defeat Samson; but a woman did. You know as well as I do that many a ministry has been wrecked, many a home broken up by a similar enticement. It seems that Satan is especially anxious to get at the ministry, if he possibly can, because if he can drag down a minister, he is going to drag down many other people who have put their confidence in him. These Delilah's are all over.

I sat in Rio de Janeiro at the sidewalk café, drinking what they call down there a "guala naught," a drink made from berries, which I very much like. I was just sitting there when a lady spotted me, because as you know, an American stands out like a sore thumb. An American is recognized anywhere. She walked up and said, "How do you do, Mr. American?"

"Fine," I answered. I knew right away what was up, but I played along and said, "Fine."

"How do you like Rio de Janeiro?" she asked. "Fine," I said. "Been here before?" "Oh yes, many times." "Are you alone?" "Yes." "Are you married?" "Yes." "Are you staying at a hotel?" "Yes." "Which one?" I said, "Oh, now wait a minute, lady. Here is where we stop. How about it?" She said, "I thought maybe you were lonesome, and I could keep you company for a night." I said, "No, I'm not lonesome, and I do not need company."

These things happen all the time and many, many a minister has stories to tell along these lines. Therefore, we need to watch our consecration. Our consecration may not be lost, just along these lines. There are other areas. Let's look further at Samson.

Here was Samson, and they took the secret of his power from him. Notice: he said, "I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself." Well, he shook himself, and his shook was an empty shook. He went through the same format, the same formula, "I'll shake myself, and he knew not that the Lord was departed from him."

We have here the suggestion that it is possible to lose the presence of the Lord without knowing it, until it is needed. We can hang onto mere formulas, without actually having the power to effect any results. When I was seeking the Baptism, I was under the power of God, lying on the floor. We used to have that, but I have not seen it in many years.

Two ladies worked on me, as they wanted me to receive the Baptism. They had a lot of "shook," but nothing in their "shook." One pounded my chest: "Bring it up, brother, bring it up, bring it up.," I did not want to bring anything up, I wanted to be filled. One of them took hold of my Adam's apple, began to look for it and squeeze around my throat and said, "Brother, now say, Ga, ga, ga, goo."

They were shouting tongues in my ear; they rubbed me; they massaged me; they did everything. Finally, I was so disgusted, I got up and walked home. I know what they were trying to do, but I do not know what they thought. The Lord may have uses for the laying on of hands with the power of God flowing through our hands, healing people, baptizing people. I have seen ministers go through what they used to have. Once there was the power, now there is the shake, the form, the format. We can lose the presence without being aware of it. We will surely lose it by losing our consecration, the secret of His presence.

In I Samuel 16:14 is something that is tragic. Maybe I should add something, as it came to mind. I had a very godly pastor, and he said to me, "Brother Beuttler, the devil tries to get the ministry anyway he can." He told me this story: I was sitting in my study with the door open toward the street. It was a hot day. A woman came in to get some counseling. (counseling sessions can be extremely dangerous). Suddenly, she jumped up and sat on his lap, put her arm around his neck and said, "Preacher, I have come to make you fall."

He said, "I shook her off like a snake and chased her out of the house." He commented, "Brother Beuttler, just think, if somebody had walked past the house with the door open, and had seen this at the right moment." There are risks in the ministry.

I was walking along a street in France, as I like to go for walks. I was meandering up toward the central railroad station. All of a sudden, a woman came along and hooked me here in my right arm. I turned and knew right away who she was. I tried to pull my arm out and could not. I tried to keep walking, and she walked right with me, as though we belonged together. That would never do. I used on her what I have used every so often, which is the German equivalent to our "Enie, menie, minie, mo," and rapidly said it in German, and she looked stunned and let go.

It has never failed to work, except once with an Arab boy in Algeria. A little shoeshine fellow that pestered me. Do not you get your shoes shined. "What's wrong with that?" you may say.

An American got his shoes shined in Cairo, and the fellow charged him \$5.00. You may say, "Well, I just would not pay." You will pay, and be glad to. They have a way of making you pay gladly. That little fellow had liquid shoe polish. He stood back, took the cap off and said, "Mr. American, would you rather pay me \$5.00 or have me throw this liquid shoe polish on your nice suit?" He paid \$5.00 - gladly.

But in France, I was concerned as I was known there. I thought, "What if somebody went by in a car or a streetcar and saw us two just at the right moment, me having one of those street women on my arm walking several steps?" So in church that afternoon, I said to the people, "I want to tell you what happened to me in your nice city," and I told the whole story just in case someone said, "Oh look. Did you see it? We saw him with our very own eyes."

"But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." I Samuel 16:14

We have two possible explanations. I will share both, then I will give you the one toward which I lean.

- 1). This can mean that God deliberately sent an evil spirit to Saul to trouble him.
- 2). My personal feeling is that this spirit was trying to get at Saul right along (He was the anointed of the Lord), but could not because of the anointing. But when God removed His Spirit, he was open and the Lord did not intervene. He allowed the spirit the freedom, and in this sense, I think we have these words: "An evil spirit from the Lord troubled him."

I personally prefer this latter view. It is a terrible thing to lose the presence of God. Saul lost the presence because of disobedience.

"And Samuel said to Saul, You have done foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you; for now would the Lord have established your kingdom upon Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue; the Lord has sought Him a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be captain over his people, because you have not kept that which the Lord commanded you." I Samuel 13:13-14

One year, the Lord gave me two definitions: one of pride, and the second concerning disobedience. Pride is the deification of self, or, self-deification. Pride is a terrible thing in the sight of God, because when we are proud, we become our own deity, and that infringes on the deity of God.

Madam Guyon, the French mystic, knew the Lord. She was rated the most beautiful woman in Paris. The men gave her a second look. The ladies envied her beauty, and she admired it. But she was a very spiritual woman who sought the Lord. She came to realize that her pride of face was hindering her in her spiritual development. She asked the Lord to take away her pride, but her pride would not go.

One day she challenged God, "God, do You mean to tell me that You are not strong enough to take this pride out of my heart?" And the Lord heard it. Madam Guyon came down with smallpox. Her face was full of pox. Her friends told her what salve to use to save her face. She said, "I am not using any salve, as I am not saving my face; God is answering my prayer."

She recovered, but her face was full of marks. Her beauty was gone, but so was her pride. She had no more reason to admire herself in the mirror.

Pride is a terrible thing. We had a revival in school, and we were coming and going as the revival continued. I came back to chapel, and sat on one end on the girl's side. One of the girls was sitting at the other end of the row of seats - nobody between us, and she was singing in other tongues. It was beautiful. I think she was the greatest singer we ever had. She had a very unusual voice! The chapel was quiet. Everyone was listening to her, and so was I. Oh could that girl sing!

And the Lord spoke to me, "I want you to go over to Susie (not her real name), and tell her that her singing is an abomination in My sight." I said, "Lord, I cannot do that. I have a good relationship with the students, and she has never done anything out of order. That would be a terrible thing to do." A second time He said, "I want you to go over and tell her that her singing is an abomination in My sight."

She was one of those nice kids, you know. She would get cookies from home from her Mom, knock at my door, "Brother Beuttler, got some cookies. Would you like some?" The Lord dealt with me, and I finally acquiesced. When I was ready to go over, she was gone. Oh, I felt bad. I said, "Father, forgive me. I'm going to go up to the office, and if You will bring her my way, I will obey." I walked up, and down the hall comes Susie.

We passed outside my office door. I said, "Susie, would you mind stepping in my office a moment. I have something to tell you." And she said so nicely, "Certainly, Brother Beuttler," in such a nice way. Now I felt all the worse. She stood here; I stood there. I looked her in the eye and said nothing. I guess she wondered. Finally I said, "Susie, the Lord wants me to tell you that your singing in chapel is an abomination in His sight." I said no more. And that girl looked at me as though lightening had struck her.

I could feel her think, "Brother Beuttler, what have I ever done to you?" Her head came down and she began to weep. She broke out into terrible sobs that I hear for the rest of my life. She took it and wept into it. Her whole body heaved. I could have put my arm around that girl's shoulder and said, "I am so sorry, what can I do?" but I could not do that.

Then she went all the way down the hall to the girl's dorm, crying and sobbing the whole way. And I stood outside the door and watched the girl walk down like that. At times obedience is very difficult. She was the favorite singer. She was the soloist; but she sang no more, and to her credit, she never told what happened. Neither did I.

"Susie, will you sing a solo?" "No," she would answer. "Why not?" "I am not singing anymore," she answered. "What happened?" "Don't ask me," she said.

She refused to sing for about three months. I had chapel service, and the Lord laid it upon my heart to ask her to sing a solo. So I looked her up and said, "Susie, I have chapel tomorrow, and I'd like you to sing a solo for us." She said, "Me?" as though saying, "After what you said, you're asking me?" (She did not say that, that is how I felt.) She only said, "Me?" So I said, "Yes, you."

Her head dropped. She paused a bit and said, "I'll sing." And she sang.

School was out very shortly after that. During the summer I received a letter from her:

Dear Brother Beuttler, I want to thank you for your faithfulness to God, and to me for when I was singing in chapel, I was not singing for the glory of the Lord, I was singing to have folk admire my voice. I knew everybody was listening in admiration, while I enjoyed their admiration. For some time pride had begun to build up in my heart, and I sang for my own glory. What you said made me realize the state I was in. God

humbled me, and broke me, and took the pride out of my heart. I went to the radio station and asked them to cut for you a 12-inch record on which I am singing for you your favorite hymns. Your grateful student, Susie

She came back again the next year and was used again in singing, but her pride was gone. What a price for obedience! Saul lost the presence because of disobedience, and I almost disobeyed the Lord. Who wants to treat a student that way? And yet, what are you going to do?

I want to go to the fourth way to lose the presence of the Lord (Neglect) found in Luke 2.

"And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions." Luke 2:42-46

Now here you have a strange situation: The most unlikely parents (the parents of Jesus), lost the most unlikely son (the Son of God), in the most unlikely place (the temple), on a most unlikely day (their greatest religious holiday, the Day of Atonement). The most unlikely people lost the most unlikely son in the most unlikely place on the most unlikely day. Why?

They did not want to lose their son as they loved him, but there is only one answer - neglect. They were so preoccupied with meeting friends with the holiday season; they noticed his absence, but were not worried, as they supposed him to be in the company, but he was not. It was a religious holiday.

This is what happened to me in Bible school, in 1927. We had four weeks of special meetings. The school was connected with the church, and the students were asked to attend classes, do our assignments, be in every service every night, and be at the altar dealing with people. I had wished many times that I could have told that faculty what a big mistake they made.

I was having a wonderful fellowship with God, and it was noticed by the school and the faculty. In chapel services, the Lord would give me a message and we would have an outpouring of the Spirit. This came out of my devotional life. These four weeks of special meetings robbed me of my relationship with the Lord. There were too many classes, too many assignments, too many hours, with too much to do.

When the campaign was finished, for me, I had lost what I had before, because we were so tired. How could we keep up with the studies, and be in church every night and at the altar? It was something that I will never forget, but things were such that I could not say a word. I simply had to suffer. It took me a long time to regain what I had lost in those special meetings because the pressures were too great.

The parents of Jesus lost their boy through neglect. They did not pay sufficient attention to their boy, and after awhile, he was gone. One way we can lose the presence of God is through neglect; neglect of the Lord, sacrificing our devotional time for study, skipping our personal devotional life. We can be so preoccupied; it is easy for ministers to become so busy with so many things that this personal relationship to the Lord suffers, as things begin to encroach, and very slowly, the presence begins to subside until it is gone.

In summary, I would suggest to you tonight four ways to lose the presence of the Lord:

1). Losing our consecration - How jealously we need to maintain that consecration and not lose the secret of the presence of God.

2). Disobedience - I will give you the other definition. Disobedience is the rejection of the throne rights of God. I think disobedience is probably the greatest of all sins. By the disobedience of one man, all the human race fell; by the obedience of one Christ, the whole human race was saved, that is to say, provision was at least made.

If you can picture God sitting on the throne: Disobedience is pushing God off His throne and seating ourselves on His throne in His place. Disobedience is the rejection of the throne rights of God. Consequently, God cannot tolerate disobedience, rebellion against His sovereignty. As in the case of Saul, persistence in disobedience will surely rob us of the presence of God.

3). Substitution - Allowing other things to creep into our lives. When I was in Bible school, I had a girlfriend. The Lord had warned me against the relationship. The girl was a top girl and students said, "We sure admire your taste." Well, I did too. Her parents thought that I was the best, that as far as they were concerned, the sun was rising and setting on Beuttler.

But inside the Lord dealt with me not to go through with this thing. The Lord had warned me in a dream. In the dream there was a terrible open sore on my shoulder that was draining my life. I looked at it, and woke up, and knew that this relationship was draining my spiritual life.

Nothing was wrong in it, but just the fact of its existence. I knelt one night before the Lord and said, "God, what is wrong with me?" And the Lord gave me a Scripture: "Oh that you had harkened to My commandments, then would your peace be like a river."

It had cost me that wondrous presence of God. I had such a lovely relationship with the Lord, but I was taken up now with something else. And still I would not give in. We went to New York City to a ten-day evangelistic service with Brother Wigglesworth. She and I were sitting up in the gallery where we had a little privacy. They had long benches there, and we were sitting at one corner; she in the corner, I next to her. Wigglesworth was preaching. He stopped, and gave a message in tongues. As he gave the message in tongues, I knew inside instinctively, "Something is coming for me," and it so scared me that I left her sit, and slid up the bench to the other side, and I sat there and let her sit over there. I did not understand it, but I knew it had to do with her.

Then he came out with the interpretation, which was exactly what was going on in my heart. And after he got done about submitting to the will of God, he said, "This message is for a young man in this audience tonight whom God has called." That did it!

But that continued involvement - and I knew it was out of the will of God - gradually drained me of the presence of God, and it did not get restored until I had said, "I am sorry, we just cannot continue. The Lord just is not in it." How careful we have to be not to let things creep in that are out of harmony to the purpose of the will of God.

4) Neglect - neglecting our devotion, neglecting the Lord, simply being so preoccupied with things that we pay little attention to the Lord.

Now in closing, I want to take you to I Chronicles 15.

"And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent." I Chronicles 15:1

I wish I had an hour for this, but I do not. David was a great lover of the presence of God. He prepared a place. In making a place for the ark of God, he made a place for the presence, because as you know, the presence of God was there between the cherubim of the ark. David made a place.

Last night I could not get to sleep till at least 1:00 a.m. At 3:00 o'clock, I was awakened with a very heavy presence and Spirit of intercession. Even though I needed sleep so badly (I am dreadfully tired tonight because I did not have enough sleep), I knew it was time to be up and sit in the Lord's presence.

Our lives become so cluttered with so many things that little by little the presence of God in our lives becomes displaced through sheer clutter. We need to unclutter our lives; remove a lot of the things that do not matter; that occupy our time, attention, our hearts, and make room for the presence of God - pitch a tent for it. The presence of God needs protection against the encroachment of people and things that would disturb it.

Today, I was somewhere around here and had a heavy presence in my spirit, and somebody was going to ask some questions and talk, and I just did not respond, as I did not want to be drawn out because I had to put a shield over the intercessory prayer.

I was going out west one year, and stopped in Ohio where I saw a schoolmate of mine. He said to me, "Oh, I wish I had known you were coming this way. I would have arranged for you to speak. As it is, we have the superintendent." Well I was glad. So we had the meeting and then we had lunch. He sat in front of me, and we were chatting. While he talked, I noticed inside a little presence, not strong, but noticeable. I recognized it as a signal - the Lord attracting my attention. So right away, I spread a tent over it.

Instead of talking freely, I cut conversation and let him do the talking. I cut back with my words to near silence with only a yes and no answer. I did not volunteer; I shielded this presence. And it got stronger. I knew something was up. He kept talking and never knew. The Lord's presence got stronger, and He dropped a Scripture within me, "The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace," and I knew I was going to speak that day. I did not tell him that, as He was the leader.

When I saw that the Lord gave me a Scripture, and the thing began to bud and unfold, I said, to him, "I wonder if you would be so good and excuse me. I just feel that the Lord would like me to be alone." That was all right. I walked into the woods. As I did, this thing grew and grew, and I had a message. I knew I was going to speak, but the superintendent was scheduled, so I went to the meeting. The pastor said, "Brother Beuttler, come and sit with us."

"All right," I said and sat with them. It does not matter where you sit. They were singing. Finally he said, "We have to sing until the superintendent comes." I thought, "You will sing forever, as he will not be here." But I did not tell him that. Then came a telegram, "Unable to arrive due to circumstances beyond my control."

The Pastor said, "Now we are stuck for a preacher. What are we going to do?" I said not a word. Then he said, "My schoolmate from CBI is here. Brother Beuttler, do you think you could perhaps give us a little testimony?" I said, "Oh, I think so."

I turned to my Scripture in Psalms 29 and read it, and the message flowed out like it were dipped in oil for about an hour and a quarter; the thing just flowed; the glory came down; hands went up. We had a wonderful meeting, as I had covered the presence.

David spread a covering over the presence. We need to shield the presence of God against the encroachment of things. As you know, we have a wonderful treasure in the presence of God, but it can be lost through lack of consecration, disobedience, substitution and neglect.

May I say that in all that we do, let's be sure we make room for the presence of God in our lives, moving aside the clutter, the things that do not matter, that there might be room for the presence. And having the presence, spreading a tent over it, protecting the presence of God against the encroachment of things which would dissipate and cause it to be lost.

I trust the Lord will be able to say to you as well as to me, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest."

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