

# What Happens When Foolish Leaders Do Whatever They Want?

Have you ever worked in an organization where a foolish leader felt like they could get away with doing whatever they wanted? I have.

Years ago, I worked for a man, and we'll call Tom. Tom thought he could run his organization anyway he wanted. He rigged sales contests so the person he wanted to win, won. He tried to fire several strong performers just because he didn't like them. Tom lied to superiors by forging reports. To top it all off, Tom, a married man with kids, even carried on an affair with an employee!

Tom seemed to get away with all this until one fateful day when the bosses found out what was happening. The company gave Tom 30-days to find a new job working for someone else!

Tom was a foolish leader who thought he could do whatever he wanted. He chose to lead to satisfy his personal passion for power and lust.

It turns out there were consequences for his poor decisions. For Tom, the consequences took the form of a lost job and divorce. For the organization, the consequences were increased turnover, low morale, decreased productivity, and lower sales!

Foolish leaders like Tom abound in our businesses, governments, churches, and non-profits. No sector of the economy is exempt!

## Foolish Leaders in the Bible

Foolish leaders even existed in Biblical times. There are several foolish leaders portrayed in the Bible who made the same mistake of thinking they could get away with anything they wanted.

The Old Testament recounts numerous examples of foolish leaders who thought they could get away with doing whatever they wanted. Often these were leaders who started out strong. They followed God, and His commands carefully. But eventually, they strayed from God and started leading their way. And that's when the trouble started.

Let's look at just two Old Testament examples of foolish leaders, Gideon and Sampson.

## Gideon's Foolishness

Most of us are familiar with Gideon. God came to Gideon telling Gideon to save the people from their enemies. Gideon didn't believe God picked him, so Gideon tested God twice (Judges 6).

Eventually, Gideon believed God, summoned an army, and conquered their enemies.

Gideon's military success caused him to become prideful. He took credit for the victory and collected spoils of war for himself. From the gold he received, Gideon made a priest's ephod and led the people in worshipping the ephod and away from worshipping God.

Along the way, Gideon married numerous women and had several concubines. One of these concubines was a Canaanite woman in direct disobedience to God not to intermarry (Deuteronomy 7:3). Gideon fathered a son, Abimelech, with this concubine.

After Gideon died, Abimelech, murdered the families of both his mother and father.

The consequence of Gideon's prideful lifestyle was direct disobedience to God, worshipping idols of foreign gods, and ultimately, leading his family and the people of Israel away from God.

## **Sampson's Foolishness**

Sampson is another Bible character whose story many of us know pretty well (Judges 13-16). From before he was even born, God had a special plan in mind for Sampson. God picked Sampson to lead the people of Israel against their Philistine oppressors.

Sadly, Sampson's life was characterized by his lustful passion and lack of self-discipline. He saw a Philistine woman and had to have her in marriage. Before they were even married, this woman turned on Sampson and married another man. Sampson then took his revenge, killing thousands of Philistines.

Having learned nothing from the disaster with the first Philistine woman Sampson fell for another Philistine woman, a prostitute named Delilah. Delilah took bribes from the local Philistine leaders to turn Sampson over to them.

Sampson was captured, blinded, and forced to tread grain in a mill like an ox. His final act of revenge on the Philistines came at the cost of his own life.

God picked Sampson to be a judge and deliverer for the people of Israel. God supernaturally equipped Sampson for the task. Yet, sadly, Sampson's lust and lack of self-discipline prevented him from achieving all God had for him.

Gideon and Sampson were both picked by God to do a specific work. God equipped them for their task. Yet, both men were foolish leaders thinking they could get away with doing whatever they wanted and not bear the consequences.

They were both wrong!