

## Silas Charged – Suggested Meeting Format

**Host:** My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Let's open this meeting with prayer, followed by a reading of [CHOOSE 1: Ps 1, Ps 23, Eph 6:10-17]. [Asks someone to pray, another to read the **Bible verse**.]

**Host:** Welcome to this meeting of the Samson Society. We are a **company of Christian men** and also:

Natural *loners* — who have recognized the dangers of isolation and are determined to escape them,  
Natural *wanderers* — who are finding spiritual peace and prosperity at home,  
Natural *liars* — who are now finding freedom in the truth,  
Natural *judges* — who are learning how to judge ourselves aright,  
Natural *strongmen* — who are experiencing God's strength as we admit our weaknesses.

As Christians, we meet at other times for worship, for teaching, or for corporate prayer. Today, however, we meet to talk. **Our purpose is to assist one another in our common journey.** We do so by sharing honestly, out of our own personal experience, the challenges and encouragements of daily Christian living in a fallen world.

Our faith rests in the love of God, as it is revealed in His Word and in the life of His Son. This is the **Great Fact** of the Gospel, which is the foundation of our Charter [Someone reads *The Fact*.]

**Host:** Let's take a moment to **introduce ourselves**. I'll begin and we'll go around the room. Those who wish may give a brief statement of their reason for attending this meeting. If you desire, you may also share how long you have been in Samson and what Stage of *The Path* you are currently working on.

**Host:** We in the Samson Society have been set upon a **Path**, a way of living that leads to godliness and freedom. Here is the description of the Path that is given in our Charter. [Someone reads *The Path*]

**Host:** We have now reached the **sharing portion of our meeting**. In sharing, we speak honestly out of our own experience. We tell the truth about ourselves, knowing that our brothers will listen to us in love and will hold whatever we say in **STRICTEST CONFIDENCE** (*said all together as a group*). We try to keep our comments brief, taking care to leave plenty of time for others. (*We call this the 'Sacred 7'*). We address our statements to the group as a whole rather than directing them toward any one person. We **DO NOT** give advice to others or instruct them during the meeting, believing that such conversations are best reserved for private moments between friends.

The suggested topic today is \_\_\_\_\_ (*choose a Suggested Topic from sheet or short phrase from the Charter – ie: 'God has continued to love me, ...'*) —**but we are not confined to that subject**. If any of you has a burning issue that is commanding your attention please don't feel like you must focus on this topic or relate it some way. (*If the group is larger (8 or more), divide into smaller groups.*)

*Five minutes before the scheduled end of the meeting, the Host signals a 2 minute wrap-up to breakout groups to finish up for closing. When all have returned, the Host says:*

**Host:** The formal part of our meeting is now coming to a close, but you are encouraged to stay around afterward to talk, or to **adjourn elsewhere for more informal fellowship**.

**Host:** As valuable as they are, these meetings are no substitute for daily Christian friendship. Just as our Lord's first disciples were sent into the world two-by-two, we too should look for at least one Christian companion. We call that person a **Silas**. Growth through following *The Path* depends on the Silas relationship. **We strongly encourage you to have a Silas by the third week.** Raise your hand if you have a Silas and would be willing to briefly tell us something you're doing on *The Path* that's in our charter. (*If there are no hands, then you can move on to the definition*)

**Definition:** a Silas is a trustworthy traveling companion for a season. He listens and does not try to fix me, who walks beside me and not in front. He knows when to comfort and when to confront. One who can keep my secrets and points me to the cross of Christ. **He has at least one Samson brother who is his Silas.** If you are willing to accept new responsibility as a Silas, please raise your hand. (*Invite new-comers to stay for a quick, 1-on-1, Silas Orientation, see **Silas Orientation Sheets***)

**Host:** Let us reaffirm **the Pact** under which our Society operates. [Asks someone to read *The Pact*.]  
Let's stand and close with prayer. (*Prayer for the needs expressed, leads into the Lord's Prayer.*)

## Psalm 1

1. Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.
  2. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.
  3. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.
  4. Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.
  5. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
  6. For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.
- 

## Psalm 23

1. The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.
  2. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,
  3. He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
  4. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, <sup>[a]</sup>  
I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
  5. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
  6. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.
- 

## Ephesians 6:10-17

10. Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.
11. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.
12. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
13. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.
14. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup>and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.
16. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.
17. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

# CHARTER OF THE SAMSON SOCIETY

## THE FACT

1. God exists. In the timeless mystery of the Trinity, He is perfectly harmonious, perfectly whole.
2. God is our Creator. He designed us to live in eternal harmony with Him and each other, and to care for the rest of His creation.
3. Spurning God's fellowship, we all have sinned, forfeiting our created place and losing our spiritual lives.
4. I myself have personally defied God's law and rejected His love. Alienation from Him has produced darkness and chaos in my life, for which I have often blamed others.
5. God has continued to love me, even in my active rebellion, and in Christ has done everything necessary to restore me perfectly to Himself.
6. As I accept responsibility for my sin and find forgiveness in the finished work of Christ, I experience reconciliation with God and am progressively restored to harmony with myself and others.
7. Despite the lingering effects of sin, I am a restored son of the sovereign Lord, whose Spirit is at work in my weakness, displaying His glory and advancing His kingdom.

## THE PATH

1. Believing The Fact, I surrender to God in simple faith — making no promises, but merely asking for His aid.
2. I start attending meetings of the Society, and from its members I select a *Silas*, a trustworthy traveling companion for this stretch of the road.
3. In honest detail, I describe to God and to my Silas the course and consequences of my attempts to live apart from God.
4. Encouraged by my Silas and others, I develop the daily disciplines of prayer, study and self-examination. I abandon self-help, asking God instead to do for me what I cannot do for myself.
5. I choose to trust the Body of Christ, weighing the wisdom of my friends when facing decisions and seeking their strength when confronted by temptation.
6. When I can do so without injuring anyone, I make amends for damage I have caused. If direct amends are impossible or inadvisable, I demonstrate my repentance in other ways.
7. I offer myself as a Silas to others. Each day I ask God for the grace to seek His kingdom rather than my own, to serve those He places in my path rather than serving myself.

## THE PACT

1. God is the sole owner of the Samson Society and its only authority. No member may speak for the entire Society.
2. All members of the Society are equals — friends and fellow servants, bound by love and honor. No member may command the obedience of another.
3. The Society owns no property, collects no dues or fees, pays no salaries, incurs no debts.
4. The Society is an extension of the Church Universal. It is not a corporate entity and can make no contracts with congregations, denominations, causes or campaigns, regardless of their merit.
5. Any two or more persons who believe the Fact, who agree to follow this Path and join this Pact, may initiate a meeting of the Samson Society.
6. We hold in strictest confidence any personal information shared by other members, unless permission to divulge it is given by any whom its disclosure might affect.
7. Members are fully authorized to create and distribute, freely or for profit, personal explanations and applications of the Society's principles — if they neither alter nor violate its Charter and do not prohibit others from copying their work.

## SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR SHARING

Acceptance	Escape	Joy	Revelation
Accomplishment	Excitement	Kindness	Righteousness
Adulthood	Exercise	Knowledge	Risk
Adventure	Expectations	Laughter	Romance
Advice	Failure	Learning	Sabotage
Anger	Fairy tales	Liberty	Sacrifice
Argument	Faith	Listening	Sadness
Awe	Faithfulness	Longing	Sanity
Beauty	Family	Loss	Secrets
Begging	Fantasy	Love	Self-Care
Belief	Father	Lust	Self-Centeredness
Betrayal	Fatigue	Lying	Self-Discipline
Blame	Fear	Martyrdom	Selfishness
Blindness	Fighting	Masculinity	Service
Boredom	Focus	Medication	Sex
Bravery	Foolishness	Meditation	Shame
Busyness	Forgetfulness	Memory	Sleep
Certainty	Forgiveness	Mission	Solitude
Chaos	Freedom	Mistakes	Spirit
Clarity	Friendship	Moderation	Stealing
Communication	Fulfillment	Mother	Strength
Comparison	Gambling	Nature	Stewardship
Compassion	Generosity	Neediness	Study
Competition	Gentleness	Normality	Superstition
Compromise	Goals	Nourishment	Surrender
Confidentiality	Goodness	Obedience	Suspicion
Confrontation	Gratitude	Patience	Teamwork
Confusion	Greed	Peace	Temptation
Contentment	Grief	Perfection	Tenderness
Control	Growith	Persistence	Tolerance
Counsel	Gullibility	Politeness	Toughness
Courage	Happiness	Power	Transparency
Covetousness	Hatred	Powerlessness	Trust
Creativity	Health	Productivity	Truth
Criticism	Heroes	Profit	Unbelief
Deceit	Hoarding	Promises	Understanding
Defeat	Holiness	Prayer	Vagueness
Defensiveness	Honesty	Pride	Value
Denial	Hope	Progress	Victory
Destructiveness	Humility	Quietness	War
Determination	Hunger	Quitting	Waste
Diet	Identity	Rage	Weakness
Disappointment	Indulgence	Reconciliation	Willingness
Disclosure	Injuries	Recreation	Wisdom
Dishonesty	Insanity	Regret	Women
Distraction	Integrity	Relapse	Wonder
Education	Intimacy	Relaxation	Work
Encouragement	Intoxication	Resentment	Worry
Enemies	Intrigue	Respect	Worship
Enlightenment	Inventory	Rest	Wounds
Envy	Isolation	Responsibility	Youth

### Stage 2 from 'The Path'

#### **2. I start attending meetings of the Society, and from its members I select a *Silas*, a trustworthy traveling companion for this stretch of the road.**

The biggest struggle in the Samson Society is understanding the *Silas* relationship. If we continue to come to Samson without having a *Silas*, it can become a dangerous walk to despair, a lie. Some of the reasons below are typical of why we don't have a *Silas*.

- If everyone is a sinner and I've been let down, led astray and betrayed so many times, how and why should I trust a man to be a *Silas* for me.
- I don't need anyone confronting me on things. I'm just not ready.
- I feel good about having a community of honest brothers at Samson but I can just work on some things on my own.
- There are certain secrets that I don't trust anyone with.
- No one would understand. They are just not like me!
- It's good enough that I'm coming. This is already a big step for me.
- I'd rather just trust a few men that I can connect with so I can have my bases covered. I really don't have time for just one guy anyway.
- I don't want to burden another man with my problems in this busy world.
- What if I open up with him and he takes off.
- I'm not in **that bad** of shape.
- I let myself down all the time, I don't want to let someone else down too.
- I had a great experience with a *Silas* and then his life changed along with our relationship and I was left alone. I tried and here I am again.
- I kind of have one; I talk to my college buddy every couple weeks.
- I have tried to step-out with a few men and they seem to be proud to sit up on a pedestal and give me all kinds of advice on what I need to do. Whoopee!

\*\*\*To help overcome these fears or concerns, we assign new members a Samson experienced, '7-Day Silas'. This is a temporary relationship to begin to help understand what the *Silas* relationship is supposed to be like and to help new men find their first *Silas*.

When following *The Path*, if we don't have a *Silas*, Stage 3-7 becomes a lie.

**Host:** These are things that healthy Samson men have said about their Silas. This will give you an idea of Silas characteristics and some examples. *(choose a few below to discuss and offer a copy to the new member)*

### 'My Silas...'

- ...continually points me toward Christ and makes clear that he is not my savior.
- ...shows up 15 minutes before our weekly meeting to pray with me.
- ...knows some scripture.
- ...came to my apartment and burned my magazines with me on my grill.
- ...is consistently there for me, regardless of my actions or words.
- ...has an obvious healthy relationship with his Silas.
- ...made me do my coursework before he agreed to be my Silas. Then we went for a walk together.
- ...met me on Friday at a church downtown and prayed with me before going home to my wife and son.
- ...never says 'I'll pray for you.' He prays with me then and there, wherever we are, even over the phone.
- ...has obvious fruit from his walk with God.
- ...came to my work one day for a tour to get to know me better.
- ...relationship lasted only two months, but it was a critical two months where I needed a brother to walk with me.
- ...met me an hour before our meeting for four weeks to hear my course and consequences. To my surprise, he then shared his with me.
- ...tells me we are walking together toward freedom and he means it.
- ...cares about me and not who he'd like me to be.
- ...reminds me who I really am in Christ.
- ...provides a safe place to share my darkest places and also my victory.
- ...encouraged me to join another specific recovery program.
- ...walks beside me and not in front.
- ...desires God.
- ...tells me he is proud of me when I have big and small victories.
- ...is not a judge.
- ...is patient with me.
- ...asked me 'where' I masturbate.
- ...explains his boundaries that are good for him and me.
- ...sometimes just thinks of me and let's me know.
- ...knows me well enough to know how to pray for me.
- ...asks me what I need from him.
- ...came to my house, sat down at my computer and clicked on the un-subscribe buttons on two porn sites.
- ...asks the really hard questions that no one else does.
- ...is not afraid of me.
- ...while I was jobless and having to sell my home, brought in 10 Samson guys to clean up my house.
- ...often shares stories with me and not advice.
- ...doesn't chase me down.
- ...has forced me to think about my emotions, about how I feel.



