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Ehud, Eglon, and a Two-Edged Sword

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Series: God's Living Legends (Part 1)

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Ehud, Eglon, and a Two-Edged Sword

I'm convinced that anything you want or need, either to instruct you, or to encourage you, or to rebuke you, or even to amuse you, can best be found in the Word of God. In the Scripture, even the drama and the excitement and the mystery that keeps you entertained, teaches you truth at the same time. It is the world's masterpiece of literary beauty. It is the world's example of literary honesty. It is the world's picture of literary intrigue. And why not? It was written by the hand of the living God, who designed man and gave him the capacity to appreciate beauty, honesty, and mystery. Now Alfred Hitchcock was a master of suspense. But his work rates, at best, a C+ when compared to the unfolding dramas in God's exciting word. This lesson unveils for us a story that puts Hitchcock to shame. First of all, because it is a true story. Secondly, because, as it unfolds, the flower of truth bursts forth to teach us as well as to amuse us. No one but the original author of all things could do that.

In the last lesson we began a study of the transitional period between Israel's rule by Moses and Joshua, and their eventual rule by the kings. We saw that God's choice for His people was total victory. They were to enter the land and drive out the enemies until not a trace of them remained. But Israel chose once again to compromise. One by one they entered the land, but did not drive out the enemy. Instead they settled down alongside their enemies. They determined to co-exist with them. It was a bad choice to be sure. So God said, "Okay, gang, here is what I will do. If you won't drive them out, I won't drive them out either. I will leave them right there beside you and they will become snares and traps to you. Like thorns in your eyes, they will blur your vision and bring you pain. You won't finish the job, and neither will I. Instead, I will let them become to you as tools by which I will test you to see how much you love Me."

So the inevitable pattern followed. The people intermarried

Ehud, Eglon, and a Two-Edged Sword

with their enemies. Then they began to worship their gods. God would allow their enemies to subdue them. His children would then cry out and He would send judges to deliver them. When the judges lived, the people obeyed. When the judges died, the people rebelled. It was an inconsistent life to say the least. But what a God of mercy. Every time God's people hit the low side of their roller coaster, God would respond, "Here come the judges to save you." Here come judges number 1 and 2 in this lesson. The strange title of our strange story is "Ehud, Eglon and A Two-Edged Sword." It is all found in Judges 3.

Now there is always the question of where to start in a story like this. Do you start at the beginning of a particular incident, at the beginning of a certain period of time in history, or at the beginning of the nearest chapter? As I pondered the deep implications of this theological puzzle, I was reminded of a famous quotation of a by-gone era. This astonishing excerpt of unbelievable insight goeth like this:

Oh, when thou knowest not
Where thou shouldst start, my son,
Why doest thou not use wisdom
And start reading with verse one?

So never wanting to reject such deep theological counsel, we begin reading at Judges 3:1

Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan;

Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof;

Namely, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath.

And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

(Judges 3:1-4)

God says, "Here is what I'll do. I will teach you the reality of warfare, especially those of you who have never really experienced it before. Guess who your instructors will be? You got it. The old

Ehud, Eglon, and a Two-Edged Sword

thorns and snares themselves. You refused to drive them out, so don't ask Me to do it. I will leave them in your life, and I will use them to annoy you so that you will learn to fight My way. I will learn just whose side you are on when the heat of the battle separates the gold from the dross."

And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites:

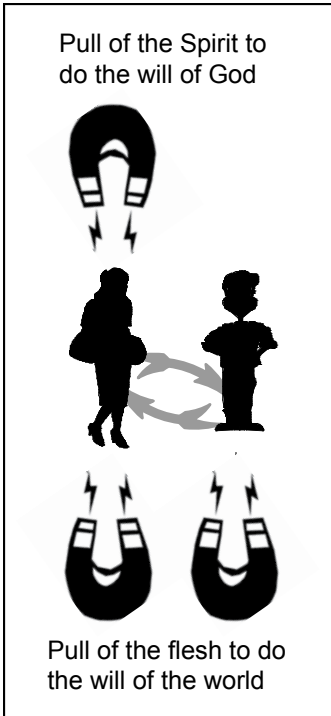
And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves. (Judges 3:5-7)

So God's children did what God's children always do when they hold hands with unbelievers. They began to walk with them to the altars of the idols of this world. Our God has a broken heart whenever that happens. That is why He warned them, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." That is why He warned them to take unto themselves no graven images. He warned them to never blaspheme through idolatry that Name which is above every Name. But He knew all along that they would. It was a predictable consequence when you don't drive out the enemy. It always is.

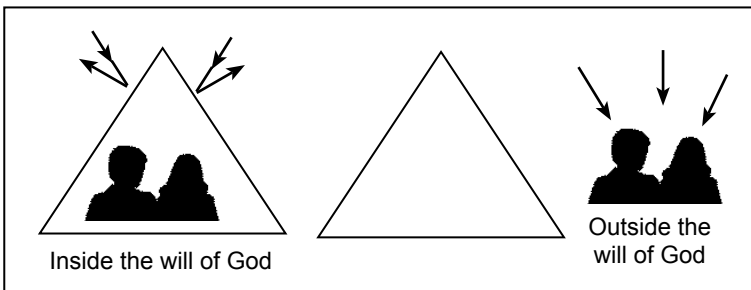
First, they compromised their principles of fellowship. Then dating relationships developed. Then God's guys married their daughters and their guys married God's daughters. Then God's people began to worship at the shrines of the world. "Why?" you say, "Why don't God's people pull them up? Why do they always pull us down?" We have covered this in previous lessons, but I want to cover it again, at least in passing.

In a peer level or authority type relationship that comes short of yoking, where we join together for a common purpose in unity, we can, in the Spirit, be witnesses and as such we must remain in the world. That is evangelism. But when we join with them in a yoking relationship, whether it be a marriage, a business partnership, dating or whatever, two fatal things happen.



Disaster number one is that the believer has two opposite magnets in his soul: the pull of the Spirit to do the will of God and the pull of the flesh to do the will of the world. We are torn between the two. The unbeliever, with whom we join ourselves, however, has only one basic pull. That is the magnet of the flesh that draws them to the world's idols. Now this person may basically be the most moral, educated, and cultured person you know. But without the Holy Spirit, they have no attraction to do the will of God. None. They cannot even understand it because it is spiritually discerned. So just take the simple law of gravity. With two forces pulling south and one force pulling north, which one is likely to win? But you may say, "Isn't He that is in us greater than he that is in the world?" Yes, but look at disaster number two.

Disaster number two shows a triangle. In that triangle is a Christian. It is a portrait of a Christian in the will of God. Over to the side you see a Christian outside of the will of God. In the will of God you have power, the same power that raised Christ from the dead. But when you become unequally yoked together with unbelievers, (I Corinthians 6:14), you step outside of the will of God. You then become defenseless. That is why I don't believe that young Christians should date unbelievers, and *then* pray for God's protection.



Ehud, Eglon, and a Two-Edged Sword

You may well forfeit God's protection and tempt God when you distinctively violate His word and step out of His will. I also believe that is why God often cries at weddings. We cry at funerals and rejoice at weddings. I believe that sometimes it is the reverse with God. Sometimes a sovereign God rejoices at funerals knowing that His will has been done and His child is safely home. It is the same way a parent feels when his child is out in the world in the evening. He or she feels joy in his heart when he hears the door open, and he knows the child has returned safely. But I also believe that God cries at many weddings. He cries because He sees the compromise, the confusion, and the consequences, both spiritually and emotionally, that lie ahead when a Christian and a non-Christian are married. God weeps when His children miss the mark. But God also gets angry. He gets angry because now Satan has 50% occupancy of a home that was reserved for the King's children.

Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years.

And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim.

And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died. (Judges 3:8-11)

So God sold His people into the hands of Chusanrishathaim. He was now the king of Mesopotamia. I am convinced that he was king because there wasn't room for anyone else's name on the ballot. At any rate, God sold His children. This is the Hebrew word *makar*, and it is used when you give up a daughter in marriage, or you sell one of your own into slavery. It literally means that He surrendered the temporary custody and control of His people into the hands of another, because by giving them up for a season, He might get their attention for eternity. Ah, but that beautiful phrase in verse 9, *and when they cried to the LORD, He raised up a deliverer*. He always does. Here comes

God's first judge.

The first judge for Israel was Othniel. He was Caleb's nephew. We read in verse 10 that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel, and he became Israel's first delivery boy. He led them against the enemy and God delivered the enemy into the hands of God's deliverer. He always does that too. God ended eight wasted years of bondage, and God's people rested. They rested for forty years in the arms of God.

So much for ACT I. The second part of our story begins in verse 12. We choose to call it Eglon's Indigestion. It starts out like this:

And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD.

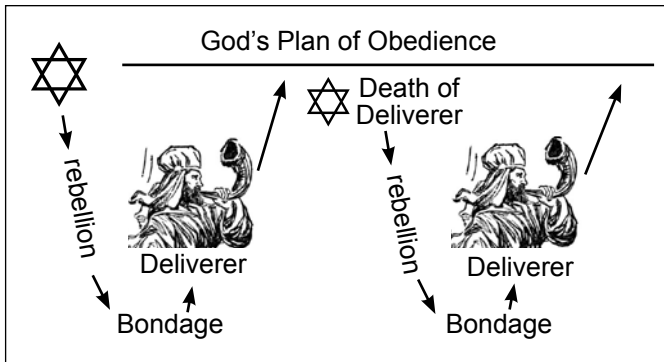
And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees.

So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years. (Judges 3:12-14)

Now the curtain goes up on Act II. God's supermen have disappeared back into their telephone booths and have come out again as Clark Kents in rebellion. Once again God had delivered them. Once again they had settled down to enjoy the enemy's fellowship. This time God picked an enemy that was even closer and could thus easier be a thorn, a snare, and a trap. We read this amazing phrase in verse 12 — *the LORD strengthened Eglon, the king of Moab*. Now Eglon was God's enemy. Israel was God's anointed. But God strengthened His own enemy until he brought His own people into captivity. Why? I will tell you why, because "whom the LORD loveth, He disciplines" (Hebrews 12:6). He disciplines because He loves.

Now God had long-range plans for Eglon, and they weren't too swift. But for now, from God's vantage point, His children were off the track, and somehow He needed to get their attention. He got their attention in a most effective manner. It would not have been necessary if Israel had obeyed, but they chose to ride the Disneyland Dipper, the high-riding roller coaster of life that looked something like this:

Ehud, Eglon, and a Two-Edged Sword



The straight line you see at the top is the will of God for Israel: to drive out the enemy. That is the will of God for us. But here is what happened. First, there was compromise in the guise of peaceful co-existence. This led to intermarriage and idolatry. God then gives His strength over to the enemy. They capture His children and put them in bondage. This is shown at the bottom of the illustration. Then at last they cry out to God, "Help, Lord, we are in trouble." Every time we see that response, God sends a deliverer or a judge. While the judge rules, they defeat the enemy and enter into rest. Up the roller coaster now, life as it was intended to be.

But, ah, the judge passes away, and the people pass back down the road of compromised co-existence, and down the hill they go again. Since they have chosen the Disneyland Dipper, God must discipline them again and again and again and again by strengthening their enemies. But remember this: the discipline of God is always an exercise of His love. Remember, *whom the LORD loveth, He disciplines, even as a father disciplines the child He loves*. It is always an expression of His patience. Because of His patience, He disciplines us to repentance rather than destroying us and replacing us with another people. His purpose is always two-fold in disciplining us. These two purposes are: to cause repentance that we would turn around and run back into His arms, and to give us His best. We can only have His best when we walk in His will. So we can see the love and the patience of God, even when He seems to be strengthening our enemies. He is waiting and writing a new concert to be played by the orchestra of our experience, the chorus of which always resounds:

Ehud, Eglon, and a Two-Edged Sword

Oh, love of God, how rich, how pure,
How measureless and free.
It goes beyond the highest skies
And reaches to the deepest sea.

So God once again delivered Israel into the hands of their enemies. This time it was into the hands of Eglon, king of Moab. But it is never for ever. All He waits for is in verse 15:

But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man lefthanded: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab.

(Judges 3:15)

As soon as the children of Israel cried for help, God goes into the bull pen and comes up with a south paw. He sends him with a gift-wrapped surprise to his temporary thorn, ole' Eggie himself. Now here the story gets really interesting. Once a year the captured and conquered Israelites had to send a tribute or taxes to their enemy king. So this year God decides to send it by way of Ehud. But he has tucked within the package a little surprise for Eggie. Now remember that God always lets the enemy rule only so long and then as the Psalmist records this:

Then the Lord awakened as one out of a sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.

And He smote His enemies in the hinder parts: He put them to a perpetual reproach.

(Psalm 78:65,66)

Now what that verse literally says is this: when God gets satisfied that His children have had enough, He turns the enemy over His knee and paddles them on the south side. He embarrasses them good in the process. That is what that verse says. And God is so creative in the process. Listen to how He did it.

But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh.

And he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon was a very fat man.

And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present.

But he himself turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king:

Ehud, Eglon, and a Two-Edged Sword

who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him.

And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat.

And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly:

And the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out. (Judges 3:16-22)

So here is the scenario: Ehud, God's Israeli delivery boy of the hour, heads for town with a Happy Birthday card, a box of W-2 forms, and a bag of big bucks for the king. It's tax time. He also made for himself an eighteen-inch, two-edged sword. It was sharp on both sides. He put it under his clothes and strapped it to his right leg. As he reached the quarries by Gilgal, the area where all the graven images stood in defiance of God, Ehud sent the rest of his troops back to the bushes. He proceeded to Eglon.

Now Eglon was a pork chop. He had a spare tire that would fit a Greyhound Bus. Now this is not an indictment against obesity. Don't use it as a basis for a new diet tomorrow, it is just a statement of fact. Some people are designed heavier than others. They just drive by a bakery, smell a loaf of fresh bread and gain five pounds. Others pig out and never gain an ounce. So if you say fat is bad because of Eglon, then you have to covet being a southpaw because of Ehud, so cancel that justification. You may or may not need to lose a few pounds, but don't use Eglon as your excuse. Anyhow, Eglon was a big man in every sense of the word. He was taking life easy at his summer parlor. Ehud arrives with he special delivery message from God.

Now the Hebrew phrase translated "summer parlor" means literally a chamber of cooling. It was not uncommon for Oriental rulers or wealthy people to build two or three room hideaways which were accessible only by private stairways. These stairways wound up to an area with specially designed openings to draw in air from the top or the north and draw it out the other sides of the room. It is said that it got so cool at night in these summer places that those who were so privileged to have them had to wear winter clothing to stay warm. So Eglon was enjoying the first rich man's air conditioning when Ehud makes his personalized

Ehud, Eglon, and a Two-Edged Sword

presentation. He said, “I have a secret.” The big guy says, “Hush, we’ll keep it just between us.” He sees to it that all the king’s troops are sent to take their afternoon nap. Then in verse 20, Ehud makes this profound announcement before the cutting remarks that were to follow. In verse 20 we read,

I have a message from God unto thee.

With that Titanic teaser, he gets up, walks over to King Kong, takes his left hand, reaches over into his right thigh, pulls out his hand-made, double-dipped dagger and it disappears handle and all into the mighty monarch’s tremendous tummy. Enter Eglon’s eternal indigestion. Now we will overlook the gory details in verse 22, but suffice it to say that God is graphic in His portraits, but never unnecessarily. Anyway, it appears that Ehud has manufactured the world’s first disposable double-edged blade. Ehud has disposed of Eglon, which incidentally means “little calf” (but by now he was more like a big cow), and he has just met up with his earthly exterminator. Ehud leaves no stones unturned to give himself time to disappear before the body is found. Let’s continue:

Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them.

When he was gone out, his servants came; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlour were locked, they said, Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber.

And they tarried till they were ashamed: and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour; therefore they took a key, and opened them: and, behold, their lord was fallen down dead on the earth.

And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath.

(Judges 3:23-26)

Now Oriental locks consisted of a bar that slid across the doorway from the inside. They fastened by teeth or catches that held this bar in place so it wouldn’t move. The lock was placed on the inside with a hole drilled in the door so that you could stick your hand through the hole in the door and pass through with a key. Now the keys were made of wood or brass and they had a wire pin on the end that would fit in with this combination. They would loosen the lock of the slide so that you could open it. The keys were sometimes two feet long. They were so heavy that they usually had to be carried on your shoulder. So you weren’t so

Ehud, Eglon, and a Two-Edged Sword

likely to inadvertently lose your key, nor were you very likely to carry them with you all the time. Anyway, the king's troops came back and see that the door was locked. They presumed that the king was indisposed, and they went their way. Finally they began to worry, so they went and got their king's key, hauled it to his room, unlocked the door, and "holy heavy weight", the king was deadlier than a doornail. His clever murderer had slipped through the field of idols and made a great escape.

Now you and I would probably stop here. Music would swell and the screen would be ablaze with credits. The actors would have played their parts perfectly and they would have had their mission accomplished. End of story. But God would have to dub in here and say, "I don't think so." Remember God's plan? The story isn't finished until the enemy is. From God's perspective Ehud still had some unfinished business.

And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them.

And he said unto them, Follow after me: for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over.

And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man.

So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years.

(Judges 3:27-30)

I hope you see the significance of this passage. While the enemy tarried, God's people made plans to finish them off. There were no treaties, no compromises, or premature victory celebrations while an angry army of Moabite Madmen closed in for the kill. They blew the trumpet, meaning that they acknowledged a battle. They took care of the fords in Moab's future by cutting them off at the Jordan so that not a man could cross over. Then they killed them one by one. They killed ten-thousand able-bodied, experienced soldiers. Not one of them, not ONE of them escaped. Only when all of the enemy had been laid to rest, did God's people have rest for eighty precious years. This was the longest era in this part of Israel's history in which the

people had rest before God.

Now I don't know if today's television detectives would rate this case as the perfect crime. But perfect or not, it surely accomplished God's perfect purposes. They finished off the enemy. This enabled the people of God to find rest at last. They found rest from the constancy of compromise. They found rest from the indecision of double-mindedness. They found rest from the drain of daily little skirmishes that are inevitable when you are entertaining the enemy as though God intended him to be there and approved of his presence.

It is certainly an interesting story, wouldn't you say? God has no shortage, incidentally, of interesting stories. But God's stories are of infinitely more eternal import than those of Nero Wolf or Perry Mason. Hidden in the recesses of every sentence are spiritual Polaroid photographs which develop before your eyes, until there surfaces vivid, crystal-clear color images of the drama that is still developing between Satan and God over the lordship of your life. As we mentioned in the last lesson, we too often fail to finish the task of driving out the enemy completely from those secret caves of our lives. Instead, we grant those enemies asylum, and give them a piece of less desirable real estate, and assume that they will stay in that place until God drives them out. As we also learned in the last lesson, it doesn't work that way. If we fail to drive them out, God won't drive them out.

Now Satan is residing today in some of our lives quite comfortably in his own summer place. He needs all the air-conditioning he can get. For one day soon his thermostat will fail, and he will spend all eternity where the fire is never quenched and the worm never dies. South Texas in August would seem like Colorado in December to him. No north wind will cool his brow. He and those he has deceived will find themselves on slow broil for all the ages of eternity yet unborn. The question is, are we to leave him meanwhile, in the air-conditioned summer place of the unyielded territories of our lives and allow him to feed off the compromises there until he becomes as round as he is ruthless? I don't think so.

Our Ehud has come to deliver us from such a fate as that. His name is Jesus Christ. His answer is the same as Ehud's was. "Satan," He says, "I have a message for you from God." No presumptuous dealings with him ourselves, the message comes

Ehud, Eglon, and a Two-Edged Sword

from God. Our responsibility is to carefully have right next to us at all times the double-edged sword of the spirit. Paul tells us in Ephesians 6 that the sword of the spirit is the Word of God. The writer of Hebrews tells us that the Word of God is alive and powerful and is sharper than a two-edged sword. That is what it takes to silence the enemy, the two-edged sword of the Word of God. It will silence him as you wield it in prayer like Moses, claiming the territory of the promises that are yours.

Do you know how to use the Word of God to pray? That is where the power is. It will silence Satan as you use it to share your faith like Peter, and thus rest on the authority of God and not on the opinions of man. It will silence him as you cry out as the Psalmist did in the anguish of his heart, in the midst of hand-to-hand combat of spiritual warfare. You can cry out, "It is written..." and then fill in the blanks as you call to your remembrance portions of the Word that have been stored in the memory bank of your heart. It will silence him as you allow the Word to cleanse you, as you take it into your life day by day, purging you of attitudes and activities that encourage the enemy to stay there. The Eglon that camps in the summer place of our lives can't survive the two-edged sword, the Word of God. Satan can't survive if we use the Word of God to do battle with him any more than he could when he was in the wilderness, when Jesus simply answered, "It is written, it is written."

Finish him off, my friends. Get a new handle on the sword and come to realize that one reason we have it is to slay the enemy. Then, like Ehud, lock the door when you go out. Close up the secret entrances of your life that allow the enemy such easy access to those weak areas, those corner rooms so conveniently hidden from view. If it means giving up certain influences, certain relationships, certain pleasures, certain activities, even things that other people may seem to be able to do, give them up and lock the door and race past the idols in the garden to real freedom at last. Then you call all the troops together into battle as we discussed in the last lesson. Realize that your task is to finish what you have started. God has delivered the enemy into your hands. Cut him off at the pass and watch God slay him until you are free, and you can enjoy the rest of God.

I'm not talking about sinless perfection. I'm not talking about some mystical experience. I'm talking about purposing in your heart before God that you are tired of living like Israel, up one

Ehud, Eglon, and a Two-Edged Sword

day and down the next, yielding again and again to the same old enemies of your soul because you have never *really* wanted to get rid of them. The question God asks us is, “Why not win the battle?” We were designed to live in victory. Paul said, “Woe is me, I still do the things I don’t want to do.” But that is not God’s plan. Then Paul shouts the chorus of triumph, “But thanks be to God, He gave it to me, the victory is mine. It is in Jesus Christ.” Sure we won’t see total victory until we see heaven. There will be skirmishes and occasional surface wounds. *But we are not supposed to be taken captive anymore.* We are the victors. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

As we discussed in our last lesson, I don’t know where your battlefields are, but I sure know where mine are. I do know that some of us have signed peace treaties with the enemy and settled down, assuming that we have to live the rest of our lives in spiritual mediocrity in those areas. From the story of “Eglon, Ehud and the Two-Edged Sword” I bring you good news. God wants to finish what He has started in our lives. He wants to drive out the enemy from his place of close-quartered co-existence, and He wants to use the two-edged sword of the Word of God. A few of Eglon’s troops may remain around to attack occasionally from an unexpected hillside. They may try to toss an occasional mortar shell from behind a city wall. But God never intended us to suffer the endless frustration of having Satan to share our living rooms or picnic in our back yard.

Satan, we have a word from God for you today: It is written, greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world. He that hath begun a good work in us will finish what He started. Get thee behind us, Satan. We are children of the King, and the King has anointed us to live in His kingdom as conquerors. You, Satan, are the defeated foe. We do hereby this day pronounce you dead on arrival at the gate of eternity. By God’s grace, we declare you hopelessly helpless in controlling our lives. Get thee behind us, Satan, we have a message from God for you. It is the sound of triumph, and as it resounds from heaven, it says that the victory is ours in Jesus Christ.

GOD'S TWO-EDGED SWORD

Oh, Satan, our evil Eglon
So comfortably reclined,
We have a little gift for you
We trust that you won't mind.

We have a message from our God,
Enjoy your summer breeze,
For in an instant, God's great sword
Will bring you to your knees.

And this time, Mr. Eglon
We do not plan to stay.
We'll bolt the door behind us
And we'll be on our way.

We'll go and muster all God's troops;
Your men can wait in dread
For God won't stop when they attack
'til every one is dead!

We have a message, Eglon,
A message from Ehud to you,
Get out of our lives and stay out!
Our bland co-existence is through!

We plan now to finish the battle
As our God unleashes His powers.
We plan to be victors, Eglon,
And claim what is rightfully ours.

We plan to wield God's two-edged sword
And destroy all that turmoil and strife.
We plan to finish you, Eglon,
And live the victorious life.

For Focus and Application

The key thoughts in this lesson are two-fold. The first is the compromise that takes place when we fail to heed God's specific warning about unequal yoking. The second is the principle of "roller coaster Christianity" that comes from leaving remnants of the enemy's strongholds in our lives.

1- Where did the phrase "unequal yoking" come from? What Old Testament illustration depicts this sin?

2- Paraphrase 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. Write it in your own words in modern day language. Take the four illustrations given in the passage and try to depict in your mind *how totally incompatible these two kinds of things are*. In the light of that, *how could we compromise this principle?*

3- List at least four ways Christians violate this principle. What are the usual consequences? How can we teach our children the importance of this issue?

4- Study the two illustrations on page 6. Try to explain in your own words why the believer is the one at risk in these kinds of relationships.

5- Based on this story, why do you think so many believers fail to live in consistent victory?

6- Make a list on a piece of paper for no one but you and God to see. List the "secret" sins that you know come between you and God consistently that you have allowed to remain in the hidden places of your heart thinking nobody will ever know. Then list the things you know about in your life that God has clearly called you to do that you have not been consistent in doing. (Bible study, Scripture memory, sharing your faith, worshipping and praising, obedience in submission, in relationships, in stewardship, etc.)

7- Draw a picture of a crossroad. That is where you are today. You can, like the children of Israel, continue to live a roller-coaster kind of life, responding only when God gets your attention, then drifting back into a life of compromise until He startles you again. Or—You can become accountable for someone to help you drive some stakes in the ground and make some commitments to do *whatever it takes to come face to face with God and deal with those hidden areas of your life*.

Ehud, Eglon, and a Two-Edged Sword

8- Begin to praise God for the victories *He is about to win in those areas of your life where victory has never been consistent.* Tell Him you are willing to fast and pray, to do anything it takes to take over the territory you have surrendered.

9- By God's grace, mark on your calendar that this date is the day you began again to possess the land. It is yours. In His power, by faith, take it.

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