

UNLIKELY HEROES

Judges Part 3: How God Used Ehud

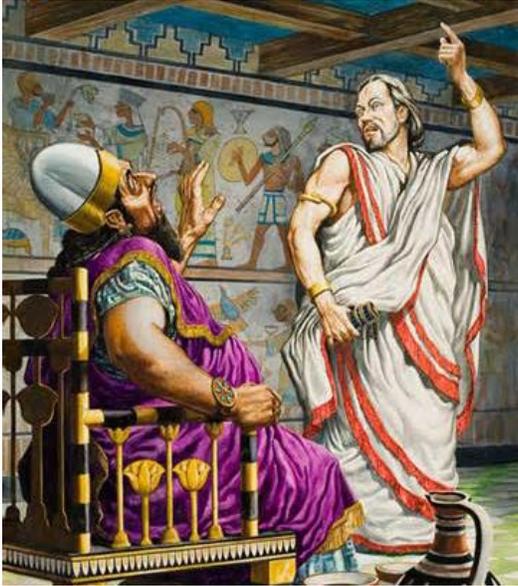
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WARM-UP QUESTION

What weaknesses do you have? Do you honestly believe God can use them for his purposes?

EHUD (Judges 3:11-30 NIV)



"So the land had peace for forty years, until Othniel son of Kenaz died. ¹² Once again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and because they did this evil the LORD gave Eglon king of Moab power over Israel. ¹³ Getting the Ammonites and Amalekites to join him, Eglon came and attacked Israel, and they took possession of the City of Palms. ¹⁴ The Israelites were subject to Eglon king of Moab for eighteen years. ¹⁵ Again the Israelites cried out to the LORD, and he gave them a deliverer-- Ehud, a left-handed man, the son of Gera the Benjamite. The Israelites sent him with tribute to Eglon king of Moab. ¹⁶ Now Ehud had made a double-edged sword about a foot and a half long, which he strapped to his right thigh under his clothing. ¹⁷ He presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab, who was a very fat man. ¹⁸ After Ehud had presented the tribute, he sent on their way the men who had carried it. ¹⁹ At the idols near Gilgal he himself turned back and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king." The king said, "Quiet!" And all his attendants left him. ²⁰ Ehud then approached him while he was sitting alone in the upper room of his summer palace and said, "I have a message from God for

you." As the king rose from his seat, ²¹ Ehud reached with his left hand, drew the sword from his right thigh and plunged it into the king's belly. ²² Even the handle sank in after the blade, which came out his back. Ehud did not pull the sword out, and the fat closed in over it. ²³ Then Ehud went out to the porch; he shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them. ²⁴ After he had gone, the servants came and found the doors of the upper room locked. They said, "He must be relieving himself in the inner room of the house." ²⁵ They waited to the point of embarrassment, but when he did not open the doors of the room, they took a key and unlocked them. There they saw their lord fallen to the floor, dead. ²⁶ While they waited, Ehud got away. He passed by the idols and escaped to Seirah. ²⁷ When he arrived there, he blew a trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went down with him from the hills, with him leading them. ²⁸ "Follow me," he ordered, "for the LORD has given Moab, your enemy, into your hands." So they followed him down and, taking possession of the fords of the Jordan that led to Moab, they allowed no one to cross over. ²⁹ At that time they struck down about ten thousand Moabites, all vigorous and strong; not a man escaped. ³⁰ That day Moab was made subject to Israel, and the land had peace for eighty years."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND FURTHER STUDY

1. What condition existed in Israel when they fell into sin, and what condition existed when they repented? How might this apply to us as Christians today?
2. What does the phrase, "in the eyes of the Lord" suggest about their evil deeds (3:12)?

3. How did Ehud's apparent handicap help him to overpower Eglon? (3:21)

4. In what ways do you see God's hand in this passage?

5. Did the enslaved Israelites suddenly rose up against the Moabites simply because king Eglon was dead? Why do you suppose they now had so much confidence?

6. What key points does the author make in this passage?

BRIDGING THE GAP

- ✓ God can use your _____ for his glory.
- ✓ God can work through what appears to be _____ situations.
- ✓ Give all _____ when he uses your weaknesses for his purposes.

GOD'S POWER IN OUR WEAKNESS

Just as God used Ehud's weakness, he can use yours. Nothing will stop God from achieving his purposes. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" (2 Cor. 12:9b, NIV). At first this does not make sense, we want to be freed from our weaknesses, not be content with them. But contentment is an expression of faith in the goodness of God. It only says, "God, I believe you love me and you know what is best for me." Here are three reasons to be content with our inborn weaknesses.

First, they cause us to depend on God. Paul said, "I delight in weaknesses, in insult, in hardships, in persecution, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Cor. 12:10, NIV). Whenever you feel weak, God is reminding you to depend on him.

Second, our weaknesses also prevent arrogance. They keep us humble. "To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me, (2 Cor. 12:7 NIV). A limitation can act as a speed governor to keep us from going too fast and running ahead of God. Our limitations show how much we need each other. They encourage fellowship among believers.

Third, our weaknesses increase our capacity for sympathy and ministry. We are far more likely to be compassionate and considerate of the weaknesses of others. God wants you to have a Christ like ministry on earth. That means other people are going to find healing in your wounds. (Adapted from "God's Power in Our Weakness," D. Dale