

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

God Sends Help: A Study from Judges

Lesson 3: Turning to God

Bible Text

Judges 3:12, 14-23, 26-30

Memory Verse

"[God] answered me, 'I am all you need. I give you My loving-favor. My power works best in weak people.' I am happy to be weak and have troubles so I can have Christ's power in me."
(2 Corinthians 12:9)

Word List

escape: to get out of something or to get away from someone

handicap: a physical condition that may limit what a person can do

ordinary: normal or usual, not different or special

When I was a baby, my parents put my fork way off to the right side. They hoped I would grab it with my right hand and eat right-handed. I always reached over and grabbed it with my left hand. After a week, they decided I was left-handed. In some ways, left-handed people have a hard time. Many things in our world are made for right-handed people. It was hard for me to cut with scissors made for

right-handed people. Left-handed people have more accidents than right-handed people.

Today we will study a person who was left-handed. The Hebrew Bible says his right hand was "shut" and did not work. Without the use of his right hand, he would have been considered **handicapped** by the people of his day. He would not have been seen as a great fighter. But God used this unlikely person to do His will.

God often uses unlikely people for His good purposes. Remember how God chose David, a young shepherd boy, to defeat the giant Goliath? David later became Israel's greatest king. About 1,000 years later, God chose Paul, a man who hated Christians at first. Paul became the greatest Christian missionary ever. God uses **ordinary** people in amazing ways.

The same can be said for the judges we will study. Some were great fighters, but most seemed to be ordinary people who obeyed God. We can learn so much from these men and women who lived long ago.

Israel's Sin and Punishment

(Judges 3:12-15)

12 The people of Israel sinned in the eyes of the Lord again. So the Lord gave Eglon king of Moab strength against Israel, because they had sinned in the eyes of the Lord.

...14 The people of Israel worked for Eglon the

king of Moab for eighteen years.

15 But when the people of Israel cried to the Lord, the Lord gave them someone to save them. He gave them Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. The people of Israel sent taxes by him to Eglon the king of Moab.

The book of Judges is mostly the same story repeated with different people's names. The people sinned. God allowed their enemies to conquer them and rule them until Israel cried out to God. In this case, God allowed Eglon, king of Moab, and his allies to rule the Israelites.

Moab was a small country located to the southeast of Israel on the eastern coast of the Dead Sea. The Moabites had been enemies with Israel ever since the Exodus (see Numbers 22 and following). At this time, they joined armies with the nearby nations of Ammon and Amalek. Together, they beat Israel's armies.

For 18 years, Israel served Moab and King Eglon. Eventually, the people cried out to God. He sent a deliverer—Ehud.

Ehud was left-handed and could not use his right hand. Most people were right-handed in that day. Even today in parts of the Middle East, the left hand is considered unclean. People would have been surprised to think of Ehud as a leader.

Ehud Kills the King of Moab

(Judges 3:16-23)

16 Ehud made a sword for himself with two sharp sides, almost as long as an arm. He tied it to the top part of his right leg, under his coat.

17 Then he brought the taxes to Eglon king of Moab. Now Eglon was a very fat man.

18 When Ehud had finished paying the taxes, he sent away the people who had carried the taxes.

19 But he himself turned around at the stone gods of Gilgal and returned to Eglon, saying, "I have secret news for you, O king." Eglon said, "Keep quiet." And all who stood by him went away from him.

20 Ehud came to him while Eglon was sitting alone in his summer room. And Ehud said, "I have news from God for you." The king got up from his seat.

21 Ehud put out his left hand, took the sword from his right leg, and pushed it into Eglon's stomach.

22 The whole sword went into his stomach and the fat closed over it. For he did not pull the sword out of his stomach. The insides of Eglon's stomach ran out.

23 Then Ehud went out the back way. He closed the doors of the summer room behind him, and locked them.

Ehud was selected to bring the taxes from the Israelites to Ehud. This seems to have been a position of trust. The Bible does not say, but it is likely that the Moabites would not let an armed Israelite near their king. Since everybody used their right hand to hold a sword, they may have thought that Ehud (being left-handed) was not a danger to their king. They probably searched everyone, including Ehud. Everybody wore a sword on the left leg, so they did not notice Ehud's sword. His homemade sword was hidden on his right leg under his coat.

Ehud was traveling with other Israelites who helped him bring the taxes to King Eglon. As they were all leaving the city, Ehud turned around. Ehud said he had a secret message for the king. The king invited Ehud into his summer room, alone. Ehud then grabbed his sword, pushed it deep into the king's belly, and left the sword there. He **escaped** out the back door and locked it.

The servants seemed to think the king

was using the toilet and left him alone for a while. (In the Hebrew language, a verb in verse 24 can mean squatting to use the toilet.) The servants waited and waited. Eventually, they unlocked the door and saw their king was dead.

Israel Gains Peace (Judges 3:26-30)

26 Ehud got away while they were waiting. He passed the stone gods and got away to Seirah.

27 When he got there, he blew the horn in the hill country of Ephraim. Then the people of Israel went down with him from the hill country. Ehud went in front of them.

28 He said to them, "Go after them. For the Lord has given into your hands the Moabites who hate you." So they went down after him. They took over the crossing places of the Jordan beside Moab. And they did not let anyone cross.

29 At that time they killed about 10,000 Moabites, all strong men with strength of heart. No one got away.

30 So Moab was crushed under the power of Israel that day. And the land had rest for eighty years.

While the servants were waiting, Ehud made his escape. He went to the hill country and blew a horn. Israelites from the tribe of Ephraim came. He led the Israelites to war. They captured all of the crossing places of the

Things to Think About

1. What area in your life do you feel weak or limited? How can God use that weakness to accomplish His will?
2. Do you wait until hard times come before turning to the Lord or do you always try to stay close to God?
3. Are you waiting expectantly for the trumpet of the Lord? Do you respond quickly to His call?

Jordan River which were easily defended.

Moab and most of its army were on the other side of the river. Ehud had just killed the king of Moab, so they had no strong leader. They could not escape across the river or get help from their homeland on the other side of the river. The Israelites were eager to gain their freedom, so they were able to defeat the Moabites. After this, Israel had peace for 80 years.

Things to Remember

Ehud was left-handed. That is one of the few things the Bible tells us about him. Today, it is not a big deal to be left-handed or right-handed, but it was important back then. Not being able to fully use his right hand would have been hard for Ehud. But since Ehud's right hand could not use a weapon, he was not considered a threat to Eglon. Not being able to use his right hand was a weakness, but God used that weakness to bring judgement on King Eglon.

When people saw Ehud, they probably felt sorry for him. But God used Ehud in a big way. Ehud saw an opportunity to use his weakness to kill the enemy king. Then Ehud led a military victory that freed Israel. We do not know if Ehud had told the people of Ephraim to be ready for battle. But we know that this was part of God's plan. The people were waiting for a chance for God to give

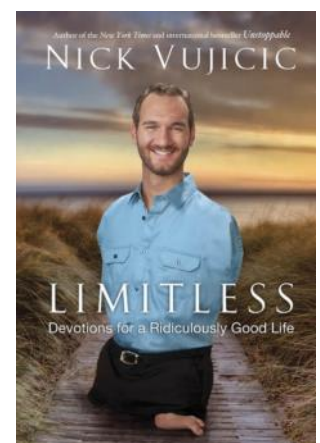
them a leader. Once a leader came, they came and fought for their freedom.

Our Memory Verse is from the New Testament. Paul had some type of trouble in his body that he asked God to heal. God told him that he (Paul) needed God more than he needed healing from his problem. God's power works best in weak people. But what does this mean? Is it good to be weak?

Our world honors people who are strong, fast, beautiful, and smart. Certainly, God can bless their work if they turn to Him. But God wants to use every one of us for His kingdom work. He wants to use each of us to love others in Jesus' name and to help all nations come to know Jesus as Savior and Lord. It does not matter if we are strong or smart, right-handed or left-handed.

At the beginning of this lesson, I said I am left-handed. As we have learned, Ehud was left-handed. But Nick Vujicic was born with no hands and no legs. Yet God uses Nick to help millions of people know God loves them and Jesus can be their Savior and Lord. He speaks all over the world and has written books about faith.

What the world sees as weakness, God uses for His good purposes — when we (like Ehud) turn to God.



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