How To Recover Your Spiritual Edge?
II Kings 6:1-7 (NKJV)

Please turn with me in your Bibles to our scripture text in II Kings, chapter six. And let’s read verses 1-7:

1. And the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, “See now, the place where we dwell with you is too small for us.

2. Please, let us go to the Jordan, and let every man take a beam from there, and let us make there a place where we may dwell.” So he answered, “Go.”

3. Then one said, “Please consent to go with your servants.” And he answered, “I will go.”

4. So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees.

5. But as one was cutting down a tree, the iron ax head fell into the water; and he cried out and said, “Alas, master! For it was borrowed.”

6. So the man of God said, “Where did it fall?” And he showed him the place. So he cut off a stick, and threw it in there; and he made the iron float.

7. Therefore he said, “Pick it up for yourself.” So he reached out his hand and took it. (2 Kings 6:1-7 New King James Version)

PRAYER

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INTRODUCTION
The account we are looking at in today’s message took place in the 8th century B.C. during the time of the Kings when Israel was split into two kingdoms: Israel in the north and Judah in the south.

After the prophet Elijah was taken away into heaven in a fiery chariot, the prophet Elisha began his ministry. Elisha had trained under Elijah for fifty years to prepare him for this ministry.

Elisha is now training other young prophets of God. This is what is meant by “the sons of the prophets” in verse 1. Think of this as the first Bible College.

Well from what we are told in verse 1, this School of The Prophets had become so large they had outgrown their current dormitory and needed to build something larger to accommodate their growing enrollment.

The eager students approached Elisha their teacher with this request:

v. 2 “Please let us go to the Jordan, and let every man take a beam from there and let us make there a place where we may dwell.”

Elisha simply said “Go!” In other words he was sending them off on this building task with his blessings. But being well up in years by this point, Elisha was not planning on accompanying them. That is until one of the students approached him and requested that he go with them.

Now were these students expecting the elderly Elisha to help them with the strenuous work of putting up a building? NO! They wanted him there for inspiration. Having their teacher there to watch them would be a great source of strength and encouragement for the task.

Well when they arrived at the Jordan River they immediately began to work on cutting down trees, each student doing his part.

But pretty soon a problem arises. While cutting down a tree,
one of the young men has his axe head come flying off the handle into the Jordan River and it sinks to the bottom.

This young man lost his axe head......he lost his “cutting edge”.......he lost his effectiveness in doing the work he had set out to do.

(P A U S E )

Have you lost your “cutting edge?”

Have you lost your “spiritual sharpness?”

Have you lost your “effectiveness” and your “enthusiasm” for doing the work the LORD has called you to do?

Is it possible for one to get his or her “spiritual edge” back once they have lost it? Absolutely! And as we continue on with our scripture text we are going to learn three things we must do to RECOVER OUR SPIRITUAL EDGE.

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First of all...........

I. We Must ACCEPT Responsibility For Losing Our Spiritual Edge (v. 5)

5 But as one was cutting down a tree, the iron ax head fell into the water; and he cried out and said, “Alas, master! For it was borrowed.”

1. That word “alas” literally means, “Oh no!” Isn’t that what you cry out when you’ve lost something?

   -”Oh no, I’ve lost my glasses.”
   -”Oh no, I’ve lost my wallet.”
   -”Oh no, I’ve lost my keys.”

2. This young man cried out, “Oh no Master, I’ve lost my
axe head! For it was borrowed."

The fact that this young man lost something that didn’t belong to him took on even greater significance. He lost something that was not his to lose. He lost something that belonged to another.

3. He didn’t blame anyone else for what had happened! He took full responsibility for what had happened.

In essence what the man cried out was “Oh no Master, I have lost the cutting edge I was borrowing from someone else.”

4. Oh brothers and sisters, when we lose our “spiritual cutting edge” we must accept personal responsibility for it.

-We can point the finger at the preacher and say “I lost my spiritual edge” because the preacher’s sermons are boring and don’t feed me.

-We can point the finger at the Church and say “I lost my spiritual edge” because our Church doesn’t offer programs that fulfills my personal needs.

-We can point the finger at our job and say “I lost my spiritual edge” because my job takes me away from Church too much.

But the truth is, when you and I lose our “spiritual edge” the blame lies with us. We must accept full responsibility.

5. And we must also understand that what we have lost is something we have borrowed. God has entrusted you and me with spiritual gifts to be used in His work. We are not the owners of these spiritual gifts we are just the stewards. And when we lose our “spiritual edge” it means we are no longer effectively using those gifts and abilities God has entrusted to our care. And we must take that matter very seriously!
But not only must we ACCEPT responsibility for losing our SPIRITUAL EDGE........

II. We Must ACKNOWLEDGE Where We Lost Our Spiritual Edge (v. 6)

6 So the man of God said, “Where did it fall?” And he showed him the place. So he cut off a stick, and threw it in there; and he made the iron float.

1. Elisha asked the young man to show him where he lost the axe head and the young man pointed right to the very spot.

   He didn’t scratch his head and say, “Was it over here or was it over there?” He knew exactly where he lost it.

2. Now what happens next is a miracle. It only takes in part of one verse, but it is a wonderful miracle none-the-less.

   v.6b So he (Elisha) cut off a stick, and threw it in there; and he made the iron float.

   There was no human means to recover the lost axe head. The water was too deep to swim to the bottom and get it. The water was too muddy to even see the axe head. Divine help had to be sought in order to recover what was lost.

3. We learn two valuable lessons from this sixth verse:

   (A) First of all, before you can recover something that is lost you have to go back to the place it was lost.

   Isn’t that what we do when we lose something? We try to recall the place where we lost it then retrace our steps until we find it.
illustration: Not long ago I lost my cell phone. And as I tried to think where I knew I had it last, my steps lead me back to my stack of firewood out by the barn.

In order to recover my lost cell phone I had to go back to the very place I lost it.

Any time you or I lose our “spiritual edge” our spiritual effectiveness and enthusiasm, we need to ACKNOWLEDGE where we lost it.

-Did it happen when I stopped reading my Bible and praying every day?

-Did it happen when I stopped going to Church regularly?

-Did it happen when I got angry over something said to me at Church or when the board decided on something I was against?

-Did it happen when I got mad at the preacher and started tuning out his sermons?

-Did it happen when I went back to an old sinful habit?

You see, our tendency is to keep chopping and chopping and not realize our “spiritual axe head is missing.”

-Some times we preachers get so caught up in preaching two sermons week after week after week that we don’t realize we’ve lost our “spiritual edge.” The power of the Holy Spirit is missing from the sermons.

-Some times Sunday School teachers get so caught up in studying their lessons and presenting them every week that they fail to realize the “spiritual edge” has grown dull or its missing altogether and the lessons just aren’t effecting lives.
-Sometimes Church leaders get so caught up in going through the Church business in board meetings that they stop seeking the LORD’S WILL in their decision making and lose their “spiritual edge.”

In order to RECOVER OUR SPIRITUAL EDGE we must ACKNOWLEDGE where we lost it!

(B) And the second lesson we learn in this sixth verse is once we acknowledge where we lost our spiritual edge, we must rely on God’s power to help us get it back.

This is where repentance comes in. We must openly and honestly confess to God that we have lost our “spiritual edge” by our own negligence and we need the power of His forgiveness and the power of His Holy Spirit to recover our “spiritual edge.”

We must ACCEPT responsibility for losing our spiritual edge.

We must ACKNOWLEDGE to God where we lost our spiritual edge.

And thirdly.........
III. **We Must Take ACTION To Recover Our Spiritual Edge (v. 7)**

> 7 Therefore he said, “**Pick it up for yourself**.” So he reached out his hand and took it.

1. **What was Elisha trying to teach this young man by having him reach down and pick up the recovered axe head?**

   For one thing, it reminded the young man of the value of what he had lost. He had lost something that belonged to another. He had lost something which he could not afford to repay.

2. **But perhaps there is a deeper meaning here. Perhaps Elisha was teaching the young man a very valuable lesson on the grace of God. This young man was powerless to recover what he lost. It was by God’s grace and mercy it had been given back to him.**

   Elisha wanted the young man to take the axe head by faith and to go back to chopping down trees. He had recovered his “CUTTING EDGE” and was able to do what needed to be done.

3. **Once you and I have ACCEPTED our responsibility for losing our “spiritual edge” and ACKNOWLEDGED where we lost our “spiritual edge” by FAITH God wants us to “pick up what we lost” and start working effectively once again.**

4. **That means we must take ACTION.**

   - If we have been neglecting God’s word, we need to get back into the word.
   - If we have been neglecting our prayer life, we need to get back into a regular habit of prayer.
   - If we have been neglecting our regular Church attendance we must renew our commitment to be in the LORD’S HOUSE on the LORD’S DAY.
5. And once we have done these things, God will restore our “spiritual edge” which once was lost.

6. But we must take heed, realizing that if we lost our “spiritual edge” once, it is possible to lose it again. That is why we must constantly be attentive to what is going on in our spiritual life.

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C O N C L U S I O N

Two men competed against each other in a “wood cutting contest.”

One man worked feverishly without stopping once for a break, while the other would work for awhile, then take a break, work some more, and take another break.

When the contest was over, the man who had worked so hard and took no breaks was amazed that his pile of wood wasn’t nearly as large as the other man’s.

He turned to his competitor and asked, “How in the world did you cut more wood than me with all those breaks you took?” The man said, “I wasn’t wasting time while I rested, I also took time to sharpen my axe!”

Brothers and sisters, when we are doing the LORD’S work it is important that we take time to “sharpen the axe.”

Sometimes we get so busy “chopping” away at life we don’t think we have time to stop and pray and study the word and meditate upon the greatness of God, when in reality, it is those things that helps us keep our “spiritual edge.”