

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE Recovering Your Spiritual Edge

SERIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE 2 Kings 6:1-7

SYNOPSIS Circumstances may have dulled your spiritual life, but with God's help you can recover your spiritual edge.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ Recovering Your Spiritual Edge

Have you lost your spiritual edge?
Do you feel like God is not as close as he once was?
Does it seem like prayer and bible reading are a chore? Like they are ineffective?
When it comes to the Christian life, have you drifted away?
Are you not as sharp as you once were?

We talked recently about the city under siege and how God did a miracle to save them. That miracle began with 4 lepers who were simply hungry. No great faith; just hunger and a drive to survive. We also talked about how difficult, dry times are used by God to prepare us for what is next. During those times, it's important to keep trusting and not give up on God. You're never really alone and the wilderness is never the end. God is not finished.

But what happens if we go through difficulties and allow those times to dull us spiritually? What if we feel as though we've lost our spiritual edge?

☞ 2 Kings 6:1-7

The company of the prophets said to Elisha, "Look, the place where we meet with you is too small for us. 2 Let us go to the Jordan, where each of us can get a pole; and let us build a place there for us to live." And he said, "Go." 3 Then one of them said, "Won't you please come with your servants?" "I will," Elisha replied. 4 And he went with them. They went to the Jordan and began to cut down trees. **5 As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron axhead fell into the water. "Oh, my lord," he cried out, "it was borrowed!" 6 The man of God asked, "Where did it fall?" When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it there, and made the iron float. 7 "Lift it out," he said. Then the man reached out his hand and took it.**

This seems to be a strange story to include in the Bible.

☞ **God cares about even the little details of your life.**

☞ **God knows how to help you find what you didn't mean to lose.**

Faith; Passion for prayer; Interest in the Bible; Joy; Godly standards

The school of the prophets had grown and they needed to expand, so they had a plan to build. They would go down to the Jordan and cut down some trees in order to build a new facility. While cutting down a tree, one of the young men had his axe head come flying off the handle into the Jordan River and sink to the bottom, halting the construction.

It's sort of like the past few years: things were clipping along nicely, then COVID disrupted everything and progress came to a screeching halt. Then, there were a series of losses that set us back. And, then more troubles came around and now we are reeling and feeling a bit lost.



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. His momentum at progress halted in an instant. His ability to carry on was severely limited. Sound familiar?

Troubles can set us back and even throw us off the tasks at hand. 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 to get your “spiritual edge” back once it is lost? Absolutely!

☞ **Accept responsibility for losing it.**

The fact that this young man lost something that didn’t belong to him took on even greater significance. He could have just said, “oh, well, it wasn’t mine anyway.” But instead, he took full responsibility for what had happened. He didn’t blame anyone else!

When we lose our “spiritual cutting edge” we must accept personal responsibility for it.

☞ **Circumstances may contribute to our situation, but we can’t push the responsibility off to someone else.**

Some may try to point the finger at the Church and say “I lost my spiritual edge” because our Church doesn’t offer programs that fulfill my personal needs. Others may point the finger at the preacher and say “I lost my spiritual edge” because his sermons are boring and don’t feed me. Still others may point the finger at your job and say “I lost my spiritual edge” because my job takes me away from Church too much or my coworkers are too difficult. The list of things to blame can go on forever.

But the truth is, when you and I lose our “spiritual edge” the blame lies with us. We must accept full responsibility. I’m not saying that troubling circumstances haven’t affected us. They have. But ultimately, if our walk with the Lord has become dull, we have to accept responsibility for that.

And we must also understand that what we have lost is something we have borrowed. Everything we have comes from God (1 Chronicles 29:14). God has entrusted you and me with natural abilities and 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.

When we have allowed troubling circumstances to dull us and lose our spiritual edge, we have to accept responsibility for it. Yes, life has thrown us a lot of curve balls lately, but the dulling of our spiritual lives is on us.

☞ **Be honest about where you lost it.**

A lot of “normal” patterns were disrupted in the past few years. We are creatures of habit and the disruptions perhaps got us out of some good habits. Think about it. If you’ve grown dull and lost your edge, when and how did that happen?



Did it happen when you stopped reading your Bible and praying every day?
Did it happen when you stopped going to Church regularly?
Did it happen when you got upset over something that was said to you at Church?
Did it happen when you got mad at the Pastor and started tuning out his sermons?
Did it happen when you went back into an old sinful habit?

For some, the tendency is to keep chopping and chopping and not realize our spiritual axe head is missing. Sometimes even preachers can get so caught up in preaching sermons week after week after week that we don't realize we've lost our spiritual edge. Sometimes Church leaders get so caught up in going through the motions in Church activities that they stop seeking the Lord's will in their decision making and just continue on in the work of the church without any anointing or spiritual direction.

For others, when losing the spiritual edge, the tendency is to simply quit. When the forward momentum ceases, some just give up. When the effectiveness is diminished, some get frustrated and quit. When the progress that once seemed pretty easy gets hard, some can't handle it and throw in the towel.

Neither of these tendencies is the proper response. We need to accept responsibility for losing our spiritual edge and we need to figure out where we lost it.

☞ 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 His forgiveness and the power of the Holy Spirit to recover it. Once we accept responsibility and acknowledge where we lost our spiritual edge, we must rely on God's power to help us get it back.

☞ **With God's help take back what you lost.**

Through Elisha, God made the axe head float, but the young man had to reach out and take it back. You may feel overwhelmed with the weight of your troubles. You may be ashamed of what has come of your spiritual walk. But you need to know this: It's never too late. Forgive yourself. Start fresh today.

☞ **Revelation 2:4-5** Says, "You have forsaken your first love. 5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! **Repent and do the things you did at first.**"

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.

And once we have done these things, God will restore our spiritual edge which was lost. But we need to be careful, 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.

Story has it that there were two men who 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 a while, 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!"

Church, 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 which help us keep our spiritual edge.

☞ And, one last reminder which some need to hear: **God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.** **Romans 11:29.** Just because you've lost your edge, doesn't mean God has given up on you. "Irrevocable" means that God won't change His mind about what He has called you to do. If God has called you, that calling is still there, whether or not you have obeyed. And if God gave you a gift—if He gifted you along a certain line—that gift is still there! Some are called to a certain ministry; others have said they are called to this church. If God has called you, he won't change his mind on the matter.

☞ **God has not given up on you.**

☞ Paul told Timothy in **2 Timothy 1:6** to "**stir up**" the gift that was **within** him. If you want to walk out God's plan for your life, it's time to get your edge back and to stir up that gift within you! It's alright to tell God that we messed up and that we want a restored relationship with Him. Then, at that very moment we receive His grace and forgiveness. It's not too late to get your edge back. God is right there offering grace for recovery. Just as Elisha provided a miracle to make the axe head float, God gives grace for us to recover our edge as well.

Deuteronomy 30:1-5 reminds us that no matter how far we've strayed, when we return to the Lord and obey him, he will restore us and have compassion on us. It even says that if God was the one who punished us for walking away, he will restore us and we will take possession of his promises.

So, if you've lost your spiritual edge, accept responsibility; be honest about where you lost it; and with God's help take it back. Remember, God has not given up on you.