

JUDGES: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

UNITY, OR ENVY AND SELFISH AMBITION? EPHRAIM

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TEXTS: James 3:13-18; Judges 3:27-30; 7:22-8:3; 12:1-6

- I. Dictionary definitions: Envy is a feeling of discontent and ill will because of someone else's advantages or possessions. Selfish ambition is a strong self-centred desire for advancement.
- II. Judges:
 - A. The well-known individuals of Judges: Gideon, Deborah, Barak, Samson ... even Delilah?
 - B. The part played by tribes such as Ephraim.
 1. Judges 3:27-30. Ephraim willingly **follows** Ehud into battle.
 2. Judges 7:22-8:3. Ephraim envies the victory of Gideon, a man of peace, and **criticises** him.
 3. Judges 12:1-6. Ephraim envies the victory of Jephthah, and **threatens** him. Jephthah, a mighty warrior, retaliates and kills 42,000 of Ephraim.
- III. Why did Ephraim do this? What tempted them to act along these lines? Let's look at their history.
 - A. Joshua, of Ephraim, was a great military leader who conquered much of Canaan.
 - B. Jacob, Ephraim's grandfather honoured him above Manasseh, his elder brother.
 - C. Joseph, the father of Ephraim, was exalted above his own brothers and even became the ruler of Egypt.
 - D. Rachel, of Jacob's 4 wives, was the favourite. She was the grandmother of Ephraim.
- IV. What are some of the things that tempt us to envy others?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outstanding success of others• Talents and gifts acknowledged publicly• Wealth that shows• Plush accommodation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilities - the latest, hottest computer• A flash car• A thankful boss• The respect or position given to another |
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- V. Victory over envy in John the Baptist (John 3:27ff). Jesus baptised more people than John but John responded, "He must increase and I must decrease" (John 3:30). Are we willing to allow for the gifting of another church member, missionary or colleague?
- VI. The case of the Airbus. Nations worked together to produce a winner.
- VII. My 1966 OM summer team. They cooperated so well as a team they hardly needed a team leader, let alone me as the team leader!