

The Struggle for Power

Ray Stedman

I. Introduction.

A. Text: Esther 3.

B. This story applies to us right now.

C. We are the king over our bodies. The queen is the new spirit. Mordecai is the Holy Spirit at work within us. Haman is the flesh--the self-life.

II. The unveiling of the process of evil and how God addresses it.

A. Haman was an Agagite, picturing all that is evil. (I Samuel 15, Exodus 17)

B. Haman is the flesh that looks to please itself.

C. It appears as a trusted friend, but it only wants to advance itself.

D. The flesh cannot please God.

E. The most important thing in the Christian life is to understand how the flesh works.

III. The weapons of the flesh.

A. The flesh begins with Mordecai's people, not Mordecai.

1. The world knows the Spirit of God is working in one's life by the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23)

2. The flesh tries to convince us of opposite attitudes.

B. Superstition is a kind of distrust of God--the flesh wants to use this against the person.

C. The flesh distracts the person with pleasure just as Haman distracted the king with money.

IV. The program of defeat.

A. Defeat begins with a decision.

B. When one makes a decision, he hands the authority to another.

1. Once the decision is made, the authority is handed to the Spirit or the flesh.

2. What one decides in the depths of his hearts touches the lives of everyone around him.

C. The final step is delusion.

V. There is a way out provided by the Holy Spirit--we must believe what He tells us about the flesh to find the way out of it.

Application questions:

1. What is the flesh? Why is it so dangerous?

2. How is Jesus' teaching about a person's inability to have two masters supported in this passage?

3. How would you respond to someone who says that his sin is okay as long as it does not hurt others?
