



**E D W A R D S**

**Ray Edwards Show, Episode 437**

**Higher Levels, Bigger Devils**

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**[00:00:00] Announcer:** It's Wednesday, February 5th, and this is *The Daily Ray*.

**[00:00:07] Pastor Ray:** Today's show is entitled, 'Higher levels, Bigger devils'. It's about this saying, 'higher levels, bigger devils', meaning when you reach higher levels of achievement, influence, and impact, you will face bigger devils or bigger kinds of resistance if you don't believe in devils. Some people take issue with this, I used to be one of those people. I used to say, "That's a terrible, false belief you should not have.

Higher levels, smaller devils. Squash the devil, defeat the devils." Here's the fact, that you believe, as I believe, that we have an enemy who hates us, who's out to destroy us, whose name is Lucifer, Satan, the devil. Whatever you want to call this force, the resistance. The more difference you make, and the more on your path of destiny that you are, the more resistance you're going to get from that force.

From chaos, from the unmaker, whose mission, in his life, is to unmake you. If you're languishing doing nothing-- not stepping up, not fulfilling the dream that God put in your heart, the mission that he put you on this planet to achieve. If you're not doing any of that-- if you're just binging on Netflix and watching reality TV and complaining about what people say online or wasting your life, the devil is not going to bother with you. He's going to make your life as comfortable as possible because he wants you to stay right there. If, however, you make a commitment for the kingdom and you proclaim it, loudly, to the world, look out because you just put a target on your back. I'm not saying 'lookout' as in be afraid, I'm saying look out as in, be aware.

Know where the arrows are coming from, it's important. Otherwise, you could get thrown off track by those arrows. Let me tell you about a little subject I like to call 'Spiritual Warfare for Fun and Profit'. Now, I used to get upset when people talked about spiritual warfare because I felt like they were the Christians who saw demons behind every coffee pot. "Lookout, there's a demon behind that coffee pot. He's going to jump out and get you." Carmen Sanchez says, "Pushback from Satan and his minions because of your destiny, he wants you to stay stagnant". Yes, exactly. Exactly

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what I'm talking about, spiritual warfare for fun and profit. Spiritual warfare is more subtle. It's not demons behind every coffee pot, it's demons behind every shadow, lurking in every disempowering thought, every fearful reflection, every doubtful meditation.

Our enemy has only one trick up his sleeve. It's the only trick he's had since the beginning of our recorded time with him, which is, he whispers to us in a voice that contradicts the voice of God. There's been a lot of questions about, "Ray, what do you actually believe about God? We've heard you say some strange things out there." I'm going to clarify all that in just a few moments, so if you've been waiting for that, stay close. Here's the story, thus far. I, as you know, over the last couple of three years, I've been on a spiritual journey. I've been going through a midlife awakening, thinking about the effect that Parkinson's disease is having on my body, and my brain, and what that means to my business and my life. What it means about some of my beliefs about God, how he operates.

Here's the one thing I know, God is real, and God is truthful, God never lies. If I see a behavior that seems to indicate that God did not tell me the truth, guess who's mistaken? It's me, I'm mistaken. Something's got to shift. God didn't move, God didn't change his promise. He did not suddenly become unable to fulfill. I misunderstood, is the more likely explanation. I began listening to the wrong voices. It started at our conference, earlier this year. There was a friend who was collecting survey information for us, stats and information from attendees of the conference. The conference was off-the-charts huge and impactful. Lives were changed, marriages were saved. People were healed, missions were clarified. People went out with the clarity they sought, and it was a beautiful thing.

There were a few people there who were upset because it was too spiritual. Look, folks, I have never hidden my spirituality from anybody. I've made it very clear, I'm a Jesus man. I'm for the Jesus man. If you are offended by that, you will be offended by me and what I say. I don't say that to divide or to set myself against you, I'm just telling you the truth, so make no mistake-- Now, what do I mean by 'the Jesus man'? What do I mean by being for the 'Jesus man'? I'm going to think carefully about what I'm going to-- No, I'm not. I'm just going to say what's on my heart. I believe in God, I believe in his Son, Jesus Christ. I believe in the Holy Spirit; I believe that God became incarnate as a man named Jesus. Jesus lived as a perfect example of what it's like to be a human, inhabited by, guided by, led by, and in accordance with the spirit of God within him.

He's our example of how to live on Earth. Anything that you believe about God or the Bible or the devil or spirituality that is contradictory to what you see in the life and the words of Jesus is wrong. That's my belief. You should reexamine your premises. There's a few things that I believe so firmly about Jesus, and I'm going to share those. For those of you who are offended by this, right now, who are thinking, "Well, then this is not the place for me because I'm gay," please stay, please don't go. There's no judgment for me about your being gay. Now, that's going to offend some of the other people here. Please, you people, don't go. Hear me out. For those of you who are concerned about my politics, I don't have politics. You want to know my politics? I'm a theocratic monarchist. I'll let you sort that out.

I have clearly put that flag in the ground, about being a Jesus man. We had a conference; it was a business conference that the Lord invaded and changed lives. My statistician and my stats, and my surveys came back, and the emphasis that was handed to me was, "Your people do not like this stuff. You need to accept that. You think bringing in the religious stuff is good? No, leave that out. That's the wrong way to go." And I was persuaded by the data. I was like, "Maybe I'm doing the wrong thing. Maybe I got off on the wrong track." We had started a membership called 'The Miracle Factor', so I shut that down. I backed off, and things began to go wrong. I felt I was off course, my team felt I was off course, the numbers showed we were off course. We drifted for a while.

Then, I had agreed to speak in Redding, California at Bethel Church for Sacred Word, which is this week. If you haven't signed up yet, you still can. I would love to meet you there. I will take time to speak with you and meet you and talk to you if you come to that event. It's in Redding, California, this week, Wednesday through Friday. It's called 'Sacred Work', there's room for you to be there. I get nothing for telling you that, other than the pleasure of your company if you show up. I began to question whether I should go. I was tired, I was feeling weary. My Parkinson's symptoms were becoming much more severe. There were things happening in the business that were causing us lots of stress, overwhelm. The team was overloaded.

It felt like we were flying a ship or starship, it was coming apart at the seams, and I remembered a word I got, earlier this year, 'the captain is back at the helm'. I remembered Captain Sulu and that movie where his engineer told him, "If you're going too fast, you're going to fly the ship apart," and he said, "Fly her apart then." That's what my command to our team, "Fly her apart then. We are going to Redding."

Then, I got the real spiritual assault. I had a communication with a friend, with a former client who spoke to me in an odd way that confused me. First, it was couched in love and respect, and in the center part, it was like a different voice came in and said-- I'm quoting him, "You are not a spiritual authority, you have no right to be a spiritual authority in my life. You are imperfect, you have no integrity. You know your faults; you are not an authority. Do not put yourself as a spiritual authority."

Then, we went back to love. I left that conversation confused and a little hurt, and I retreated for a few hours and asked God, "Is that true? Have I falsely set myself up as an authority? Is this not my mission? Am I not who I thought I was?" The next morning, I woke up with a clear view of what had happened. Now, hear me, I'm not saying this person was my enemy. No person is my enemy, no person is my enemy. God loves the world, everybody in the world. Yes, even that person that you're thinking of right now. There were spiritual forces at work, and their determination was to stop me from going to Redding, which it almost did. I considered canceling my trip to Redding. I considered calling my friend, Andy Mason, and saying, "You don't want me there, I'm not worthy of doing this."

I realized this assault on my spiritual identity had almost taken me out of the game. It almost plunged me back into victimhood, but the minute I saw it, God released me from that and showed me how every area of our life in this business, and in my personal life, that had been under attack for weeks and even months before was all designed to keep me out of Redding, California this week.

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This was terrorism, pure and simple, and here's something I learned from one of our great presidents, we do not negotiate with terrorists. It's on. Satan, you want to play this game? It's on. Game on, challenge accepted. I'm going to Redding. I don't care if they have to drag me there in a wheelchair or on a gurney, in chains, I'm going to be Redding. I'm going to deliver what I was meant to deliver; I'm going to impart what I was meant to impart.

I went to my Bible, which is a good place to go, and I saw where one of the servants of the Lord said to him, "I will go where you send me, but only if you go with me." That was under the old covenant. Under the new covenant, the Lord says to us, "I will never leave you or forsake you," so I'm going. Here's what I stand for, Jesus. I'm not talking about the Jesus that has been portrayed by so many people in television ministries and the hateful organizations that call themselves the church and set themselves up against people who are gay, people who've had an abortion, people who are one political party or another.

Jesus is not a politician. Stop trying to co-opt him as a politician, that's not who he is. He was against the political spirit. He said, "Watch out for that political spirit." Jesus brought us grace. Here's the central, core message that Jesus brought-- and I'm going to share with you some things that he said, and I'm going to tell you, right now, you're never going to hear me talking about, "If you don't believe, you're going to hell." You're never going to hear me talk about, "If you engage in these behaviors, you're damned."

That is not my place. The Jesus that I know says my job is to love people and love God, period, and to pray for God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. In heaven, there is none of this ridiculous conflict. There's none of this murderous, hell-born, demon-spawned behavior. Jesus said this, "Come to me all you that labor and are heavy laden." Does that ring for anybody here? Are you labored? Or are you heavy laden? "Come to me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke on you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Jesus was a Rabbi; he was a wandering teacher. People knew this about Him. This is why when he said to his apostles, his disciples- actually, the best word is 'apprentices'. When he said, "Follow me." The reason they stood up and followed him was not because he pulled a Jedi mind trick on them, which is what most people think. It's because they knew he's a Rabbi and they're waiting-- the young men are waiting for their Rabbi to say to them, "Follow me." That means the Rabbi has found you worthy to be his apprentice and become like him. Being his apprentice means to be with him, to learn to be like him, and then, ultimately, to be released into the world to be like him to other people, to duplicate his life. That's our assignment as his apprentices. We are his apprentices now.

So, "Come to me you that labor and are heavy laden--" And he was speaking specifically not just to work, but also, of religion. "I will give you rest." Then, he used a metaphor that we would not understand today, but the people of that time would understand clearly. This was an agricultural society, they understood about the yoke. The yoke was the beam that the oxen put on each shoulder so they could pull the load together. It was a way to carry the load together which made it lighter for each oxen, which made it possible for them to carry more.

The yoke was heavy. If you remember elsewhere in the stories of the Bible, there was a point where the Pharisees, the professionally religious people, were condemned for placing a heavy yoke on the people they could not bear, a yoke of religion. Jesus says, "Take my yoke on you and learn from me because I am meek and lowly in heart." In other words, I'm not a pompous ass like all of these religious professionals, "And you will find rest for your soul for my yoke is easy and my burden is light. I will not lay anything heavily on--"

This is borne out in the old testament, in prophecy. Isaiah 28:12 says, "To whom he said, "This is the rest which you may cause the weary to rest and this is the refreshing"."

Jeremiah 31:25 says, "For I have satiated the weary soul and I have replenished every sorrowful soul." John 7:37, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink"." In other words, be refreshed. Where am I headed with this? What I'm saying is just this, following Jesus is about grace, unmerited favor. It's not something you work for or something you can earn. There's no list, there's no to-do list of, "Don't do this, and do that, and you can get into heaven." There is, "If you want to live in the kingdom of God now, follow me, copy me." We're released from the law, all the commandments. All the 630-some-odd rules that the Jewish people lived by at that time, which were meant to demonstrate their need for release from all that by their Messiah, by Jesus.

Jesus says, in John chapter 15, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love." Lots of people take that verse to say, "See, you've got to follow the commandments, 10 commandments. Follow those commandments." Well, let's read the rest of it. It says, "If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love." He goes on to say, "This is my commandment--" So, there's one commandment, "That you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends," which Jesus would shortly do, what he came for, so we could walk in freedom.

It's not up to us. He said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you, and I appoint you to go and bear fruit so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you." Then, he said it again, "This is my command to you, love one another." What part of that is unclear? No part of it is unclear. "Those who have ears, hear this message," that's the Jesus I follow. He's graceful, he's true. There's many views of him, there's many opinions about him, but what his words mean? I just know this, he is love, he is grace. He is not damning, he is not condemning, and he is not angry with you.

What I stand for is, I love God and I love people. Don't assume you know what I mean by any of that. Seek within and hear the voice of God in yourself. You don't need me or some special priest or spiritual guru, you just need to listen for what God is saying in your heart. If it is consistent with love and grace, it is good. It is from God. Higher levels, bigger devils. As I've planted my flag for the kingdom and moved forward and said 'yes'-- We have Kingdom-Builder Masterminds. We have a company mission that is built around the kingdom. In fact, I'll show it to you.

This is from my company employee manual. This manifesto is revisited each year to ensure everyone knows and agrees. Changes are made if needed. Manifesto. You will

love working here if you like our culture or manifesto. We keep things simple. We constrain our focus on a few big goals. Everything needs to support the mission of being an example of what is possible for a kingdom business. That is our mission.

That's a lot different from most company mission statements, isn't it? Our mission, 'be an example of what is possible for a kingdom business'. What is a kingdom business? A kingdom business is a business run on the principles of the kingdom of God. We are disciples or apprentices to him. No matter what we do in terms of what service we provide-- We may be a hair-cutting salon, a car dealer, a bank, a real estate company, an online teaching company, an author, speaker, trainer, coach, therapist. Whatever you do, I believe that if you're a believer, a follower of Jesus Christ, you are a kingdom business, and if you're hiding that, you've put your light under that basket that he talked about not doing.

A kingdom business is a business run on the principles of the kingdom of God. We are disciples or apprentices to him, to Jesus. We teach others to be the same. And lest you think that means we're poor, it does not. If you claim to be a Christian business and you think that's an excuse for being broke? You have made an error, that I, hopefully, am going to help you correct right now. He's our financial target, \$100 million in 2030 is something that we all get behind. We move very fast around here. We're efficient and prepared, we get ridiculous results. We are committed to managing our own minds.

This helps us own our mistakes and take responsibility for our thoughts, feelings, actions, and results.

That's what we do, that's how we do. This is how we roll up in here. I don't want there to be any confusion. When you come to Ray and you come to his company and his business, you're coming to a Jesus man and Jesus women. That's how it is. You don't have to agree with us on that. You are welcome to be part of our trainings, to be in our classes and our programs. We will teach you, the stuff we'll teach you will work for you. You just have to sort through all the Jesus stuff that you don't like, but, careful, it may get on you. You may like it, it's happened.

I will not try to convert you. I will not try to convince you of anything, that's not my job. That's between you and your creator. That's none of my business. There's a comment on Instagram, "Your theology is a little more conservative than mine, Ray, but I appreciate you and your openness and the love and non-judgment you send to everyone of different walks." Yes, absolutely.

Look, I don't know everything. I know this, my concept of Jesus and God is woefully inadequate to the truth. I just have enough humility to know it. I know that he's good and that if you're following him and you're doing your best to see what he's up to and emulate that, and you're operating out of love and non-judgment-- He said, "Don't judge because however you judge, it's going to come back on you. You're judging yourself," that's why I don't judge. I want to be real clear about that.

Christians are known for what they're against. Ask 10 people on the street, 100 people on the street, what Christians are about, and 70 or 80 of them will say, "Well, they hate gays, they hate people who have abortions. They hate Democrats, they hate social

justice." Well, I love all those things. I love all those people, without judgment. Without feeling like I need to change them. I do not have to make you wrong for me to be right. That's the kind of Jesus follower I am because that's the kind of person he was.

He hung out with the people all of the religious people couldn't stand to be around. If we're not being accused of that-- People aren't saying to you, "I thought you were a Christian, why are you hanging around all those weird people?" If you were being like Jesus was in this world, you'd be getting accused of the same things Jesus got accused of. Being a drunkard, being a party animal, hanging out with whores and cheaters, and gamblers, and sexually promiscuous, immoral people. That's what he was accused of. His number one female companion was a prostitute.

Jesus loved everyone, even the people who nailed Him to the cross. He said, "Father, forgive them. They don't even know what they're doing." I don't know that I can live up to that standard, but I'm working toward it. What I'd like you to draw from this is, really, this is a declaration, a manifesto from me about what we are about. What we are about is being an example of what is possible for a kingdom business, and if that's not for you, God bless you. I really do bless you. I hope you grow and prosper, and that I'll do anything I can to help you. I love you; I'll be your friend. I'll hang out with you. You don't have to believe what I believe for me to love you, but this is who I am.

I don't want anybody to feel like they've come into our company, our programs, our groups, and say, "I'm surprised." I don't know how that's possible for anybody to have done, in the past, but I don't want anybody surprised. I will point you back to this, and say, "Here's me, this is what you're signing up for. Here's the deal." I hope to see you soon, I promise to keep showing up for you every day, as long as the Lord empowers me to do so. I pray that you are blessed, I pray that you're given a revelation of his grace and love.

You're free from any judgment or guilt the church may have thrown on you. I apologize if the church has ever hurt you. As a representative of the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth, I apologize for any hurt we've caused you. I'm deeply sorry. That's something we were told to do, and we've got off track. Forgive us, please. We're here to love you. That is all. I love you very much. Have a wonderful day.

[music plays]

**[00:23:58] Announcer:** *The Daily Ray* is recorded live, every weekday, at 5:00 AM Pacific on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. Back live, tomorrow, with another *Daily Ray*.

**[00:24:09] [END OF AUDIO]**