

# Apply The Word

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## Message Info

### Title:

Un-manipulatable

### Speaker:

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### Date:

May 24, 2020

### Scriptures:

1 Samuel 4:1-7:2

**Theme:** Forsake any impulse to manipulate God and instead entrust yourself to him.

**Introduction:** We are all familiar with manipulation, both from being victims of it and from manipulating others. And the worst kind of manipulation comes in relation to God. Mankind has attempted to manipulate God ever since the Fall; but the Lord calls his people to lay aside attempts to manipulate him and to walk before him in humble trust.

This text relates two attempts to manipulate the Lord's and his responses, in 3 points:

#### 1. God's people sought to manipulate him

The Israelites were defeated by the Philistines, and they brought the ark into the camp as a talisman to try to change their fortunes.

They wanted the benefits that come *from* God without God himself.

Eli and his sons are all killed and the Ark of the Covenant was captured, on the same day, as God's judgment on both Israel and Eli's family.

#### 2. The world seeks to manipulate God

When the Philistines captured the Ark, they brought it into the temple of Dagon. They assumed Dagon was stronger than YHWH; but God showed his power by toppling over the statue of Dagon.

The Lord will not be manipulated by his enemies. He will vindicate his own honor.

For the Philistines, that equaled tumors in the men and mice in the fields.

The Philistines end up sending the Ark back to Israel with a guilt offering.

#### 3. The failure to manipulate God translates into our salvation

As the Ark returns, the Israelites rejoice to see it. They offer a burnt offering to the Lord. They take down the Ark and the Philistine offering.

But even this is a failure to reverence God through how they treated the Ark. In response, the Lord afflicts the men and 70 die.

The Lord's severity in response to human presumption and manipulation is meant to be a lesson to us. God is holy and we must not approach him presumptuously.

Our very salvation comes as we are humbled before our holy God and treat him with the respect and reverence that he is due. We dare not take him lightly.

### Questions:

1. Would you be content with God's benefits without having God himself?
2. Do you attempt to manipulate God? Do you try to use him to serve *your* purposes?
3. How might God be calling you to change how you relate to him?