

DEFEATING DISCOURAGEMENT
Lesson Four - Discouraged People in the Bible:
Elijah - I
September 29, 2020

Review:

Here are the three verses we've been trying to memorize during our first three sessions:

2 Corinthians 10:4

Psalms 142:1-2

1 Samuel 2:2

Review those and let's quote them together. Nothing is better for you spiritually than to memorize scripture—and these are easy!

Elijah

In this lesson we are going to study a great man of God, Elijah, who went through a deep and prolonged period of discouragement.

1 Kings 18:36 - 40:

At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. ³⁷ Answer me, LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

³⁹ When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!"

⁴⁰ Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!" They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there

This is a scene of great victory. Elijah pulls off one of the great miracles of the Old Testament, and he stands tall and solid as God's prophet. What a man!

1 Kings 18:46 -19:1-4:

"The power of the Lord came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, 'May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.' Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, † while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors."

How would you describe Elijah at this point, immediately following his great victory?

What are some symptoms of Elijah's discouraged condition?

What caused Elijah to be discouraged at this time of great victory?

Discussion Question:

Can you think of a time of discouragement in your life, which followed quickly on the heels of a wonderful spiritual experience?

How Elijah Defeated His Discouragement

You will note how Elijah's recovery is very different from David's. It is important for us to recognize that God deals with us as individuals.

1 Kings 19:5 – 9

Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.”⁶ He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.⁷ The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.”⁸ So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.⁹ There he went into a cave and spent the night.

Note step one for Elijah.

He needed rest and nourishment!

Discussion Question:

Can you remember the last time you were truly exhausted—spiritually and/or physically? (Could it be now?) Did you feel discouraged at that time?

What other feelings accompanied those feelings of discouragement?

Did you—do you—feel guilty when you take time for needed rest?

Our physical, mental and spiritual well-being are all very closely connected. Therefore, when one area is exhausted, the others are adversely affected.

Notice what God directed Elijah to do next, during this period of acute discouragement.

1 Kings 19:11

The LORD said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.”

Time alone with the Lord

1 Kings 19:11b – 13

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

Describe what these passages tell us about God's knowledge.

Isaiah 40:28: Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

Psalms 44:20-21: If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign god, would not God have discovered it, since he knows the secrets of the heart?

Psalms 94:11: The LORD knows all human plans; he knows that they are futile.

Matthew 6:8: Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

1 John 3:20: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

Discussion Question:

If God knows everything, then why does he ask questions? What do you think?

Note Elijah's answer to the Lord's question in **1 Kings 19:10:**

He replied, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

Here we see two other very common symptoms of discouragement;

- Things look much worse than they are.
- We indulge freely in “pity parties”.

Conclusion

How many of these discouragement symptoms have you experienced in your own life?

- You want to quit.
- Everything looks worse than it really is.
- Self-pity takes over your mind.

Do you recognize any similarity between the causes of Elijah's discouragement and your own?

- Elijah was spiritually exhausted.
- Elijah was physically exhausted.
- Elijah had experienced a great spiritual victory.

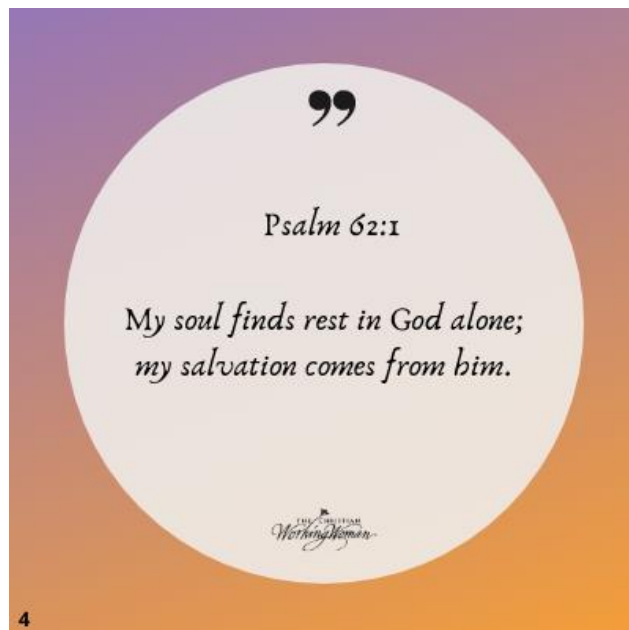
Suggested Assignment

If you're discouraged for similar reasons to Elijah's, follow God's directives to Elijah:

Get needed rest and nourishment.

Spend some time alone with the Lord.

Memorize **Psalm 62:1**:



Lesson One

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2 Corinthians 10:4

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

THE CHRISTIAN Working Woman

1

Lesson Two

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Psalm 142:1-2

I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy. I pour out before him my complaint; before him I tell my trouble.

THE CHRISTIAN Working Woman

2

Lesson Three

”

1 Samuel 2:2

There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.

THE CHRISTIAN Working Woman

3