

DEFEATING DISCOURAGEMENT Lesson Five- Discouraged People in the Bible:

Elijah - II

October 6, 2020

Our four memory passages:

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.

Psalms 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.

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.

Psalms 62:1: Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him.

1 Kings 19:11 - 14:

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

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?"

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."

Notice that God asked him the same question he asked in verse 9: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Elijah gave God the exact same reply, word for word (verse 10).

Discussion Question:

What does this tell you about how we're likely to respond when we're discouraged and feeling sorry for ourselves?

How did the Lord respond to Elijah's dismal performance here?

Did the Lord tell him to shape up or ship out?

Did the Lord scold him for his lack of faith?

Did the Lord tell him he was on his own after this?

Did the Lord threaten him if he didn't behave better?

Does it encourage you to see the patience and lovingkindness of God in dealing with Elijah?

Psalm 103:14:

For he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

When you're in a period of discouragement, you may not be able to snap out of it as quickly as you would like to. But please don't give up; remember how patiently our Lord dealt with Elijah, and he'll do the same with you.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

What do you think Elijah *felt* like at this point in time?

Romans 8:1-2 tells us:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

What is the difference in condemnation and conviction?

In the last lesson we saw the first two principles of defeating discouragement that we learn from Elijah:

- Get needed rest and nourishment.
- Spend time alone with the Lord.

Here's another important principle in defeating discouragement that we learn from Elijah:

1 Kings 19:15 – 18

The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. ¹⁶ Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. ¹⁷ Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. ¹⁸ Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.

- *Obey the Lord!*

Fear has taken over Elijah's mind; he is not thinking clearly. It's another common symptom of discouragement—irrational fear.

Remember: Understanding can wait; obedience cannot. Emotions can wait; obedience cannot!

Discussion Question:

Why do you think Elijah was so willing to obey God even though he didn't feel like doing it and it most likely was not what he would have chosen to do?

Isaiah 55:8 – 9

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD.⁹ “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Can you think of a time in your life when the directions you received from God seemed to be directly the opposite of what your own common sense would tell you to do?

What is “Emergency Room Christianity”?

God had a wonderful surprise for Elijah as he traveled back to where he came from.

1 Kings 19:19-21:

So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him.²⁰ Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. “Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye,” he said, “and then I will come with you.”

“Go back,” Elijah replied. “What have I done to you?”

²¹ So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant.

God sent him an encourager by the name of Elisha.

Where did Elijah meet up with this God-sent encourager?

Do you think Elijah would have found this attendant if he had not obeyed God and had stayed at Horeb and refused to go back?

Did Elijah know ahead of time that Elisha would be found on the road back to where he came from?

Put yourself in Elijah's shoes as he starts this journey back to where he came from, in obedience to God. Which of these following words would describe his state of mind as he began that journey?

Joyful

Fearful

Tired

Eager

Excited

Apprehensive

Doubtful

Enthusiastic

Elijah obeyed God in spite of his feelings, not because of them.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

When you obey God in spite of your feelings, what are you demonstrating to God?

Discussion Question:

Why do you think God chose to deal with Elijah by sending him back where he came from instead of instantly solving his problem?

Here's another principle from the life of Elijah to help us defeat discouragement:

- Ask God for your "Elisha"!

Do you have a person in your life who is your "Elisha"?

Are you an “Elisha” to someone else?

We need to share our faith with each other during our days of discouragement. Someone else can have faith for you when you're finding it impossible to believe, and her faith will bolster and encourage you.

Hebrews 10:24 - 25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

If you don't have an “Elisha” in your life, ask yourself why. Have you reached out to others? Are you regularly attending a good church and/or Bible study group where you can find “Elishas”? If so and you still don't seem to have that person who is your encourager, then make it a matter of daily prayer. Meanwhile, let God teach you that you can make it with just Jesus.

Conclusion

Here are some important things we learn from our study of Elijah and his bout with discouragement:

Consider your physical condition. Do you need some rest and nourishment? Find that needed time—and don't feel guilty about it!

Spend some alone time with the Lord. Force yourself to do it, if necessary. Get away from people and noise and other influences and just center down with God.

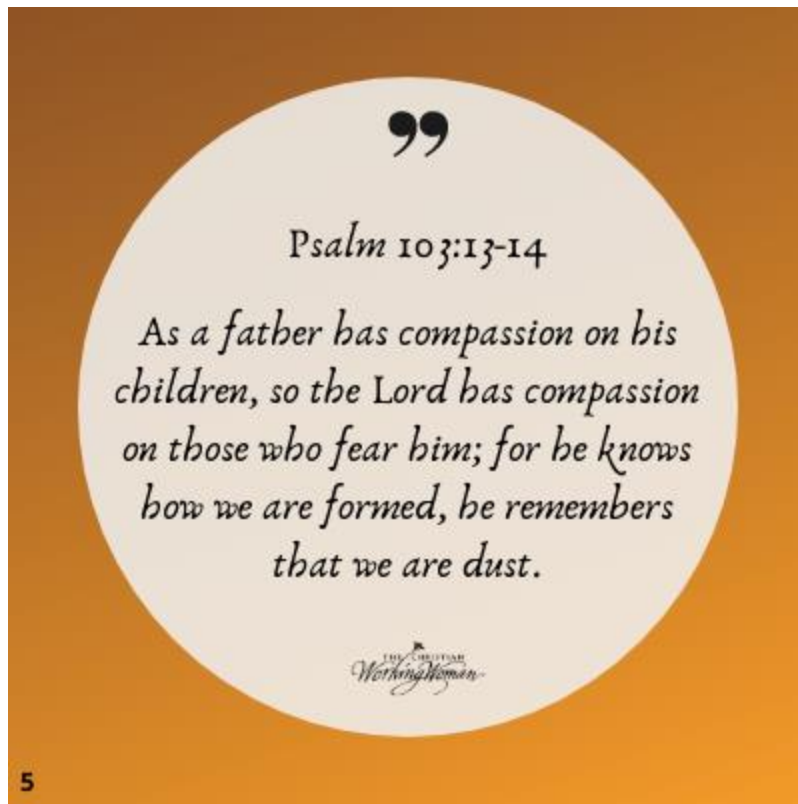
Do what the Lord tells you to do, even if it seems like the wrong thing to do; even if you don't feel like doing it (and you probably won't).

Pray for an “Elisha”—an encourager—if you don't have one now.

Pray that God would reveal to you anyone who is in need of encouragement right now and to enable you to be an “Elisha” to that person.

Memorize this passage: **Psalm 103:13-14.**

As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.



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.*

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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.*

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Lesson Three

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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.*

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Lesson Four

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Psalm 62:1

*Truly my soul finds rest in God;
my salvation comes from him.*

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