

Connecting Through the Word
Dealing with Fear, Fatigue, Disappointment,
Discouragement and Depression
Or
What God Wants You to Do When You Are
Having a Broom Tree Experience
1 Kings 19

James 5:17

Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

1 Kings 19:1-8

1 Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword.
2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow."
3 Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.
4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers."

5 And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat."

6 And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again.

7 And the angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you."

8 And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.

Elijah failed just at that point where we would have expected him to take an unflinching stand. Yet it may be good for us to know that God's greatest servants were men of "like passions with ourselves."

Today is Mother's Day! Let me tell you something interesting about the origin of this special day to honor mothers.

The origins of Mother's Day as celebrated in the United States date back to the 19th century. In the years before the Civil War, Ann Reeves Jarvis of West Virginia helped start "Mothers' Day Work Clubs" to teach local women how to properly care for their children.

These clubs later became a unifying force in a region of the country still divided over the Civil War. In 1868 Jarvis organized “Mothers’ Friendship Day,” at which mothers gathered with former Union and Confederate soldiers to promote reconciliation.

The official Mother’s Day holiday arose in the 1900s as a result of the efforts of Anna Jarvis, daughter of Ann Reeves Jarvis. Following her mother’s 1905 death, Anna Jarvis conceived of Mother’s Day as a way of honoring the sacrifices mothers made for their children.

After gaining financial backing from a Philadelphia department store owner named John Wanamaker, in May 1908 she organized the first official Mother’s Day celebration at a Methodist church in Grafton, West Virginia. That same day also saw thousands of people attend a Mother’s Day event at one of Wanamaker’s retail stores in Philadelphia.

Following the success of her first Mother’s Day, Jarvis—who remained unmarried and childless her whole life—resolved to see her holiday added to the national calendar. Arguing that American holidays were biased toward male achievements, she started a massive letter writing campaign to newspapers and prominent politicians urging the adoption of a special day honoring motherhood.

By 1912 many states, towns and churches had adopted Mother’s Day as an annual holiday, and Jarvis had established the Mother’s Day International Association to help promote her cause. Her persistence paid off in 1914 when President Woodrow Wilson signed a measure officially establishing the second Sunday in May as Mother’s Day.

Now here is what is interesting.

While Jarvis had initially worked with the floral industry to help raise Mother’s Day’s profile, by 1920 she had become disgusted with how the holiday had been commercialized. She outwardly denounced the transformation and urged people to stop buying Mother’s Day flowers, cards and candies.

Jarvis eventually resorted to an open campaign against Mother’s Day profiteers, speaking out against confectioners, florists and even charities. She also launched countless lawsuits against groups that had used the name “Mother’s Day,” eventually spending most of her personal wealth in legal fees. By the time of her death in 1948 Jarvis had disowned the holiday altogether, and even actively lobbied the government to see it removed from the American calendar.

Her negative opinion of these commercial forces was evident in her contemporary commentary, saying:

A printed card means nothing except that you are too lazy to write to the woman who has done more for you than anyone in the world. And candy! You take a box to Mother—and then eat most of it yourself. A pretty sentiment. — Anna Jarvis.

In 1943, she began organizing a petition to rescind Mother's Day. However, these efforts were halted when she was placed in the Marshall Square Sanitarium in West Chester, Pennsylvania. People connected with the floral and greeting card industries paid the bills to keep her in the sanitarium.

Anna Jarvis died on November 24, 1948.

It is so sad, that the lady who is responsible for giving us one of the most special holidays on our calendar, would die a disappointed, discouraged, disillusioned and depressed person in a sanitarium.

This is what happened to Elijah. After a tremendous victorious achievement, he very quickly went down a path that took him to a place in his life where he is asking God to take his life.

Let's look at some of the steps that might lead us to this state of emotions.

Disappointment – Elijah becomes disappointed.

In the previous chapter, it appeared that there was a national revival after God sends fire from heaven. The people proclaim, "The LORD, He is God!" But the leaders of the nation don't repent. When Jezebel hears what has happened, she sends a servant with a message that by the next day, Elijah would be killed.

1 Kings 19:2

Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow."

Life is full of disappointments.

Many disappointments come from unmet expectations.

There is nothing wrong with having a positive outlook in life and having good expectations about people, events and challenges in our lives.

We have expectations about our spouse and how they should respond or treat us.

We have expectations about our children and how they should grow up.

We have expectation about our friends, co-workers, our peers, our leaders, our neighbors, our teachers.

There really is nothing wrong with that but the problem comes when we lose our focus on who God is and His Glory and we begin to look at others and circumstances, we are going to be greatly disappointed!!!!

That's exactly what Elijah did!
In Chapter 18, he was focused on God and His Glory and proclaiming his truth. But got quickly distracted by one woman.

A friend told me something I hope I'll never forget.

“What do you have to do to see your shadow?”
You must turn away from the sun and look behind you. When you begin looking and focusing on the past and the shadows, the hurtful and painful experiences you can no longer see the sun.”

That's what happened to Elijah.

Fear – Elijah is Afraid

1 Kings 19:3

Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

Fear is the opposite of Faith!

Fear is what happens when we have gotten our eyes off the LORD and His purposes and His Glory and we are looking at the immediate future or what's ahead and it doesn't look very good!

What's going to happen now?
What are people going to think?
How am I going to pay my bills?
Where am I going to get a job?
Is anyone going to help me?
Why doesn't anyone care?
Where am I going to go?
What am I going to do?
Everything seems to be against me!
Where is God in all this?

Fear is a powerful emotion!
Fear can be a paralyzing emotion!
Fear can be a motivating emotion!

The feeling of fear is a reminder that we have lost our focus and faith in a great and mighty God.

David

Psalms 56:1-4

1 Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.

2 Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.

3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

4 In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

How many times do you read in scripture, “Do not fear!” “Do not be afraid, I am with you...”

Psalm 23:3

“Yea, when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me...”

The next thing that happened to Elijah was:

Physical Fatigue – Elijah wore himself out.

1 Kings 19:3

Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

He ran from Mt Carmel to Beersheba which almost the entire length of Israel north to south.

As a crow flies, it is about 90 miles... walking in those days, or running, it would easily be over 120 miles.

To me this is interesting.

Many of us when we feel the stress of life in relationships and other circumstances and situations, begin to exert a lot of physical energy.

We work later.

We stay up late.

We take on more projects.

We drive ourselves physically in lots of different ways.

You can apply this to your situation.

And its not long until you are fatigued, totally physically worn out. You aren't sleeping and resting well. You have too much on your plate and on your mind.

We tend to either start eating too much, especially the wrong foods or we lose our appetite and not eat properly or even eat enough.

The Next step to depression:

Isolation – Elijah separated himself from others.

1 Kings 19:3

*Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, **and left his servant there***

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree....

Wow!

How often we see this and experience this when we have been disappointed and get fearful and worn out physically.

We don't want to be around others.

We quit our fellowship group.

We quit Sunday School.

We quit going to church.

We quit singing in the choir, serving with others.

We don't want to go out.

We don't want to do anything.

We don't want to be around people.

We Become Discouraged!

Nobody cares so why should I.

Notice something Elijah said at least three times.

1 Kings 18:22

Then Elijah said to the people, "I, even I only, am left a prophet of the LORD, but Baal's prophets are 450 men.

1 Kings 19:10

He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even

I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away."

1 Kings 19:14

He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away."

He thinks he is the only one that is interested in serving the LORD!

This could be the root problem that led to his depression.

Remember what Peter said when the Lord told the disciples that they would forsake him and flee?

Matthew 26:33

Peter answered him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away."

Elijah was dealing with the issue of pride.

Pride makes us think of ourselves more highly than we should.

All of this led to Elijah becoming Depressed to point that he wanted to die, for God to take his life.

I Kings 19:4

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers."

Over the years, I've noticed something about this journey that leads to depression.

It's like we have three fuel tanks.

If your car runs out of fuel in the gas tank, it doesn't matter how new your car is, how clean it is, how big your engine is, it is going to stop running. It's going to die.

Picture that you have three fuel tanks inside of you.

A physical one.

A emotional one.

A spiritual one.

You need to check the gauge on each one on a regular basis. If anyone of these three runs empty, they will affect the other two and eventually you will begin making some poor choices and end up in a bad condition.

You feel like there's no hope, nobody cares, God is not there for you and there's no reason to try to face life.

No feelings.

Nothing!

You can't feel good and you don't feel anything anymore.

You feel like you have been swept under the rug!

Forgotten by everyone and God Himself!

Depression is like being down in a deep dark bottomless hole with no way out!

But there are some steps to bring us out of this state.

Have you every been in this state?

I have been there and it was simple but difficult journey back to emotional and spiritual and physical stability.

So, what was God's solution for Elijah's depression.

Really some very simple steps back up the ladder.

Elijah Rested and He Ate

1 Kings 19:5-7

5 And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat."

6 And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again.

7 And the angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you."

He first restored Physically.

We need to get away to a quiet place, we need to rest and eat.

For years, I've encouraged people who come to me in a state of depression and encourage them to take the first little step of just doing something positive and good.

Do try to clean the whole house and wash all the dishes in one day. Just wash a couple of dishes. Maybe clean just one room....

Second, Elijah had a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus – "the Angel of the LORD".

The Lord prepared a meal for Elijah.
Bread and water.

For you and me, this is the Word of God!
Jesus Himself, the bread of life and the water that can quench our spiritual thirst.

This is a time you can become spiritually sensitive to the presence of the LORD in your life.

Read the Psalms, listen to melodious music.
Renew the Heart by Kim Hill

Meditate on the truths of God's words versus the lies of the evil one.

Then Elijah went to Horeb, the Mount of God
This was a long journey of about 200 plus miles.
He went back to the place of one of the great revelations of God Himself to His people Israel.
Right after deliverance from Egypt.
Moses struck the Rock of Horeb with the Rod of God and water came out.

Revisit the place where the LORD saved you and you first drink of the living water.
If you can't do it physically, do it with your imagination and relive the experience and refresh yourself with the presence of God.

Notice next.

Twice God Ask Elijah, "What are you doing here?"

Twice Elijah gave God the same answer.

Here Elijah is Observing.

1 Kings 19:11-13

11 And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.

12 And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper.

13 And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Elijah Observed the strong hurricane force wind, the earthquake, and the fire.

What do you think the Lord is teaching Elijah here?

When we get discouraged and depressed, we want God to do something big for us.

Elijah wanted God to send a big revival.

We want God to do a big miracle for us.

We want God to change someone.

Like, save them or kill them.

But God was not in the wind, earthquake or fire.

He was in the "still, low, quite whisper"!

Elijah listened and heard and humbled himself before God.

And again God ask Elijah the question, "What are you doing here?"

Elijah answered with the same previous answer. "I'm the only one...."

You see, Elijah's root sin that brought him to this place of discouragement and depression was his pride.

To start that long journey out of the depression, you need to deal with some root problems in your life.

Temporal Values

Greed and covetousness

Guilt and bitterness

And at the root of them is Pride.

Confess this to a Holy God and experience His forgiveness and cleansing.

Then be ready for the next assignment!

That's what happened to Elijah!!!!

Go anoint a new king over Syria – Hazael.

Go anoint a new king over Israel – Jehu.

Go anoint a new prophet to replace you. Elisha.

How Humbling can that be?

One of his student prophets would take his place.

God was reminding Elijah that he wasn't the only one still loving and worshiping the True God.

God will use your experience of depression to give you a new ministry to those who will carry the mantle of God's message of the Cross to the next generation!!!!!!

So today, be encourage! God is still alive and well and speaking. Listen and Obey!!!!!!