

GOD'S LIGHT IN LIFE'S DARK NIGHT
#2 – ELIJAH: GOD'S LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS OF DEPRESSION
I Kings 19:1-17

Intro: *Depression is a condition that all of us will experience. God's light in the prophet Elijah's life shows us how to spiritually and successfully deal with it.*

³*Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, 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."*
I Kings 19:3-4

I. Admit Your Depression Darkness

- What's depression? It's a painful, _____ emotion of anger, sadness and despondency, characterized by moodiness, anxiety, and painful negative thinking (defeat, blame, bitterness, negativism, etc.), caused by stress, loneliness, injustice, defeats, failure, guilt, loss, or "ambush" (an unexpected overwhelming problem).
- Elijah was a man just like us (James 5:17), not a _____. After the extreme stress of the Mount Carmel victory, physical exhaustion, and the Jezebel threat on his life; he suffered burn-out, meltdown, and depression. Rather than receiving national affirmation for his courage, sacrifice, and faith, he had to run for his life.
- Today, even as Christians, we are not _____ from depression. The high stress and insecurities of life, injustices, illnesses, loneliness, loss (jobs, loved ones, etc.), and spiritual confusion can cause our depression.
- The first step in the healing process is to _____ our depression. It's hard to do for us as Christians, because it sounds so unspiritual to us to say we are depressed. Often, others will judge us and tell us to snap out of it. Elijah's story shows us it's a fact of life, and God understands.

Like Elijah, we can deal with depression these ways:

Then (Elijah) lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat."
I Kings 19:5

II. Turn to God for Help in Depression

- Turn to God in _____ – Express your true feelings, and struggles, no matter how negative. Then, experience His response of the true spiritual reality. We need to turn our focus from our feelings to God's facts.
- Allow God's _____ to help you. For Elijah, God sent heavenly angels (messengers) to help Elijah with his needs. For us, God sends his earthly "angels" (people like you) through the church to encourage us, help us bear our burdens, and give us spiritual counsel.
- We all need to be open and receptive to God using _____ as His earthly angels to touch others with needs such as depression.

⁶*He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. ⁷The 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." ⁸So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reach Horeb, the mountain of God.*
I Kings 19:6-8

III. Take Care of Your Physical Needs

- Elijah was worn out _____, emotionally, and spiritually. God's remedy was rest and refreshment. This didn't mean immediately, but was a process that took time.
- Today, to deal with depression, we need to get _____ physically. Too many reach burn-out by pushing ourselves too hard. We feel guilty if we "rest". God made us with needs that must be taken care of, such as rest and proper diets. Take that day off, vacations, and eat right. Rest, refresh, and recreate.
- If your serving God causes wipe-out, burn-out, and _____, you're not in God's will. Jesus says He wants to give us "rest" and that His yoke is easy and burden light (Matthew 11:28).

⁹There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the Lord came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected Your covenant, broken 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." ...¹⁸(God said) "Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel – all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him."

I Kings 19:9-10, 18

IV. Don't Exaggerate the Negative

- When depressed, our overwhelming emotions cause us to exaggerate the _____ and minimize the positive. Our negativism often blinds us to what God is doing around us.
- Elijah had a _____ for himself, even wanting to die (vs. 4)! He even thought he was the only faithful one left (vs. 10)! All these statements exaggerated the negative – the opposite of faith.
- Instead, we should see through eyes of _____, which see God's blessings and provisions in our life. This emphasizes the positives in our life and minimizes the negatives (see Philippians 4:8).

¹¹The 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. ...¹⁵The 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."

I Kings 19:11, 15

V. Experience a Fresh Awareness of God

- Elijah took the time to spend _____ with God and have a new experience with God. This experience was not thunderous, but a quiet whisper.
- Today, to receive a fresh awareness of God, we need to refocus on _____. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6); and has come to bring us abundant life (John 10:10). Remember, when we come to Jesus, we will find rest (Matt. 11:28).
- Our God experience is given not to just make us feel better, but to give a _____ in life to serve Him and experience His blessings and joy (I Kings 19:15-17).

Like Elijah, you can deal with your depression darkness.

Answers: I. Negative; superman; immune, admit. II. Prayer; angels; us. III. Physically; in shape; meltdown. IV. Negative; pity party; faith. V. Time; Jesus; new direction.