

Elijah and Mission Fatigue

BY BRAD PRICE

Read 1 Kings 19:1-18.

What signs of depression did Elijah exhibit in this chapter of his life? _____

Why was Elijah depressed? _____

When was the last time you had difficulty maintaining the excitement of a spiritual experience or commitment? _____

In what situations do you feel that you are the only Christian around? _____

The mighty prophet Elijah felt just the way that you sometimes feel. In this chapter, Elijah found himself alone, hungry and hiding from an evil woman named Jezebel who wanted to kill him. The strange thing is that Elijah had just had a mountaintop experience on Mount Carmel (see 1 Kings 18:1-40). He had just experienced one of the greatest spiritual victories of all time. You would think that Elijah would be stronger than ever and ready to face up to Jezebel or anybody else.

But Elijah was exhausted. He had worked hard and was tired of running away and starving. He had physically and emotionally run out of gas and now he was in deep depression. He wanted his life to end. But that was not God's plan. God still wanted Elijah to serve Him and had great things for Elijah to do.

When we are with godly Christian friends who care about us and pray for us, we are more energized and supported than when we try to live life by ourselves.

What did God do to help hungry Elijah? _____

What were Elijah's complaints?

How did God respond to his complaints? _____

How did God help Elijah put his situation back into perspective? _____

“... I have had enough, LORD” (1 KINGS 19:4, NIV).

Elijah had been working alone. Being a prophet of God did not guarantee that he would have friends. In fact, it probably got in the way of making friends. Elijah had to do everything by himself, and he was feeling tired and unappreciated. But when Elijah was exhausted and depressed, God cared.

Following God's example, what are three practical ways we should care for people who suffer from burnout and depression?

What advice did Jesus give His disciples when they were so busy serving others that they had no time to eat? (Mark 6:31) _____

As Christians, our spirits will live forever, but our bodies and emotions are human. We get hungry, tired, discouraged and sick. We must take care to rest and maintain balance in our lives if we are to continue to be useful to God and His mission.

Also, when we are with godly Christian friends who care about us and pray for us, we are more energized and supported than when we try to live life by ourselves. God was patient with His man. He knew that Elijah needed a partner, so He sent him to find and become a mentor to a young man named Elisha.

Who was Elisha? _____

How could Elisha help the older prophet? _____

Elijah began to teach and train Elisha to be his successor. Who are you helping to grow in their Christian faith?

Each of us has spiritual highs or mountaintop experiences sometimes. What really counts is what we do when we come back down to earth. Elijah rested, ate, talked to and even complained to God. God then sent him to train a new prophet. Giving our time to help others be successful lifts our spirits and makes us feel more productive.

Do you get enough sleep? Yes No

Do you eat properly and maintain good health? Yes No

Do you give your time to train or disciple someone else? Yes No

Who in your life needs a mentor or partner? _____