

<p>Questions That Need Answering</p> 		<p>Are You Going to Answer That?</p> <p>(Responding to God's Call)</p> 
	<p>Responding to God's Call</p> <p>While Dealing with Discouragement & Setbacks</p> 	<p><u>Created</u> <u>Called</u> <u>Commissioned</u></p>

“A little girl had been trying for months to learn the art of tying her shoes. She finally grasped the knack and was able to do it by herself. Her parents expected the child to be delighted, but were surprised by her disappointment. Her father asked why she was crying. She sobbed, "I just learned how to tie my shoes." He said, "That's wonderful, Honey, but why are you crying?" She replied, "Because now I'll have to do it all by myself for the rest of my life."

One of the unwritten laws of life seems to be that when you experience a great high in life that a low is coming. It's rare when one gets to live on the mountaintop—usually we get a few moments, and then come tumbling down. There's a phrase that describes it. “Reality is setting in.”

You can count on it in your spiritual life—especially there. After a great victory comes a time of defeats and disappointments. You can see it in the lives of many Christians, and it is bound to happen in our lives as well. It is not long after Peter leads many to the Lord on that first sermon preached that he is arrested and beaten. Paul experienced many lows in his ministries—beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, left for dead. If it has happened to the stalwarts of the faith, it will happen to us'. <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/dealing-with-discouragement-james-buchanan-sermon-on-hardship-of-life-62152>

How to Deal with Discouragement

It is not unusual for even the most spiritual people to have their days of doubt. **Moses**, on one occasion at least, was overwhelmed by his circumstances. After he had listened to the constant complaining of the children of Israel, he basically told the Lord, “*I'm fed up. Just kill me. I don't want to deal with this another day.*” — **(Numbers 11:11)**

King David

Jeremiah, the great prophet, faced it as well. He was ridiculed and harassed for giving out the Word of God. Because he was tired of the pressure he was facing, it made him want to stop giving out God's Word altogether. He said, “*The word of the Lord was made to me a reproach and a derision daily. Then I said, 'I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name'*” — **(Jeremiah 20:8-9)**.

Even the great apostle **Paul** had moments when he was discouraged. He wrote to the church at Corinth, “*We were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life*” — **(2 Corinthians 1:8)**.

You are not the only one who has ever faced doubt or uncertainty or has been perplexed as to why God did not work in a certain way. You are not the only one to encounter doubt and discouragement. We may be in the midst of God's working and can't see the big picture as He can.

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/jimerwin/2007/01/04/1-kings-191-18-how-to-deal-with-discouragement/>

1 Kings 16 - 19

“The prophet Elijah is one of the most interesting and colorful people in the Bible, The Old Testament prophet, Elijah, is mentioned 28 times in the New Testament. He had a popular legacy during the time of the apostles: Elijah’s ministry only lasted around 20 years, but he is considered to be one of the greatest prophets in Old Testament times. His greatness had nothing to do with his family tree, his education, his personal wealth, or assets. In fact, James emphasizes this point by saying in

James 5:16-18...*The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect.* ¹⁷ *Elijah was a human being as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the land.* ¹⁸ *Then he prayed again, and the sky gave rain and the land produced its fruit.*

Let there be no mistake, Elijah’s greatness stemmed from God’s greatness. This is because he dedicated his life in service to God and glorified His holy name, (<https://www.wake-up.org/bible-characters/elijah-tishbite.html>)

Let’s set the picture here of this time in history:

Most of you remember King David (1000_{BC}-962_{BC})

Then his son Solomon (970-930^{BC}), then his son Rehoboam(930-915^{BC})

This is where the story goes awry.

Kings of the Northern Kingdom - Israel

Jeroboam (929-911_{BC})... Nadab... Baasha... Elah... Zimri... Omri... Ahab (875-854_{BC}) ruled 22 years

“History records that Jeroboam ruled over the ten tribes for about 20 years before he was killed and his whole family slaughtered. After Jeroboam’s reign, a series of evil kings followed who were even more wicked than he was! Like a roller coaster gaining speed as it rolls down an incline, sin and apostasy continued to accelerate in Israel after Jeroboam died. About 35 years after Jeroboam was killed, a selfish and temperamental man named Ahab became king of Israel. To add to his issues his wife was a Canaanite/Sidonian woman, named Jezebel, who was notorious for her glamor and her ambition” “The Bible says, ‘*There was never a man like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, urged on by Jezebel his wife. He behaved in the vilest manner by going after idols, like the Amorites the Lord drove out before Israel.*’ (1 Kings 21:25,26) This background information on Israel’s descent into decadence is important if we are to appreciate the appearing, loyalty, courage and actions of a young man, Elijah the Tishbite, who seemed to come out of nowhere. About 3-4 years after Ahab became King northern Israel’s decadence had become so evil that God stepped in. He called a "country boy" (Elijah) from the remote desert territory of Gilead to be His spokesman. (God often chooses the most unlikely people to do awesome work”. (<https://www.wake-up.org/bible-characters/elijah-tishbite.html>)

Read I Kings 16 – 19 for complete story.

“Discouragement is a very real problem in our world today, even among Christians. Have you ever felt so discouraged with life that it was difficult to get out of bed or go to work? There have been plenty of great men and women of God down through the ages who have experienced the same problem! When I am discouraged, I am reminded of two men in the Bible who had a much worse day than me: David and Elijah. The stories of David and Elijah offer us some insight in how we can deal with discouragement and rise victorious.

How To Forfeit Peace, from **Lists to Live By**, by Alice Gray, Steve Stephens, & John Van Diest, p. 204:

1. Resent God's ways.
2. Worry as much as possible.
3. Pray only about things you can't manage by yourself.
4. Refuse to accept what God gives.
5. Look for peace elsewhere than in God.
6. Try to rule your own life.
7. Doubt God's word.
8. Carry all you cares.

“Note some facts about depression:

- (1) It is universal. It is no respecter of persons. It touches the poor and the rich, the weak and the mighty, the educated and the uneducated. It hits everyone because, ultimately, it is not caused by circumstances, possessions, or position, but rather by the way one handles life.
- (2) No profession is exempt from it. It reaches out and grabs doctors, lawyers, businessmen, cab drivers, construction workers, pastors, missionaries, nurses, secretaries, housewives, moms and dads, farmers, truck drivers, athletes, etc.
- (3) Depression has nothing to do with one’s IQ. If anything, people with higher IQs are more susceptible.
- (4) Age is not a defense against it. It attacks the young and old alike. Each decade of age has its own special susceptibility to depression. This is often referred to as the cycles of depression.
- (5) Depression ranges from mild mood swings (which we all face) to deep psychosis.
- (6) It may of course have physical causes. A lack of sleep, improper diet, vitamin deficiency, exhaustion are among the more simple causes. It may also be caused by such things as drugs, low blood sugar, glandular disorders, allergies, brain tumors, and chemical imbalances.
- (7) One of the most common causes, however, is in the area of the spiritual, mental, and emotional. This can also affect the physical ([Prov. 14:30; 17:22](#)). In other words, while there are physical causes, and these should be checked out, the most common causes are spiritual.

Lessons in Times of Discouragement (<https://beyondordinarywomen.org/5-lessons-in-times-of-discouragement/>)

“Lesson 1: Ask yourself—am I forgetting how God has been at work in the past by focusing too much on my present circumstances? When I realize that I am looking at myself rather than God’s power and plan, I shift my attention to God’s past work, thanking him and expressing biblical truth about him, his character, and his promises. I remind myself that his love invites me into his presence.

Discouragement often arises from exhaustion. When Elijah was worn out from running from Jezebel, he decided he should just die.

Lesson 2: Assess yourself physically and look for overwork, stress, and sleeplessness. If I find myself exhausted physically, spiritually, or emotionally, I must rest.

At the end of the 40 days Elijah camped in a cave. He expressed his “poor me” attitude to God, saying that he alone was left to serve God and yet his life was in danger from those trying to kill him. God sent him outside the cave, and eventually spoke to him in a whisper (1 Kings 19:9-13).

God revealed himself not in the spectacular, but in the silence.

Lesson 3: Enter the silence with God and wait for him to speak. For Elijah it took 40 days and more to hear God when he wasn’t tired or overwhelmed by fear. I want God to speak to me immediately, but he may need to prepare me for the answer first.

When God asked Elijah a second time why he was there, and Elijah repeated his whiny answer (1 Kings 19:14-15).

Lesson 4: Be honest with yourself and with God who knows the truth anyway. I have to ask myself, why am I in the place of discouragement? Does my answer reveal that I am focused on me instead of God?

God didn’t argue, nor did he answer Elijah’s subtle charges of unfairness. Instead he gave Elijah specific instructions to follow. Elijah was no longer controlled by his fear but obeyed God’s instructions to return from the wilderness. Before God sent Elijah out, he let him know that he wasn’t alone in Israel; seven thousand people had not worshipped Baal.

Lesson 5: Seek out mature believers to support you. Not only is God with you, but others are there also.

Discouragement paralyzes us from doing God’s work. When it hits, deliberately step back and take time with God so that he can reveal the problem, the solution, and the new direction”.

(<https://beyondordinarywomen.org/5-lessons-in-times-of-discouragement/>)

So, Let me ask you. What are you doing here?

Here in despair.....Here in discouragement.....Here in immoral sexual thoughts or behaviors

Here in addictions.....Here in complacency

It’s time to remember we are Created, Called & Commissioned – Follow God wherever He leads, No matter whether that is on the mountains or in the valleys. In good times or bad.

It’s time to be where God wants you to be, when He wants to be there!

The Story of Elijah & Ahab

1 Kings 16:29-34...²⁹ Ahab son of Omri became king over Israel in the thirty-eighth year of Judah's King Asa; Ahab son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years.³⁰ But Ahab son of Omri did what was evil in the LORD's sight more than all who were before him.³¹ Then, as if following the sin of Jeroboam son of Nebat were not enough, he married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and then proceeded to serve Baal and bow in worship to him.³² He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he had built in Samaria.³³ Ahab also made an Asherah pole. Ahab did more to anger the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him.³⁴ During his reign, Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho. At the cost of Abiram his firstborn, he laid its foundation, and at the cost of Segub his youngest, he finished its gates, according to the word of the LORD he had spoken through Joshua son of Nun.

1 Kings 17... Now Elijah the Tishbite, from the Gilead settlers,^[a] said to Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, in whose presence I stand, there will be no dew or rain during these years except by my command!"² Then the word of the LORD came to him:³ "Leave here, turn eastward, and hide at the Wadi Cherith where it enters the Jordan."⁴ You are to drink from the wadi. I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there."⁵ So he proceeded to do what the LORD commanded. Elijah left and lived at the Wadi Cherith where it enters the Jordan.⁶ The ravens kept bringing him bread and meat in the morning and in the evening, and he would drink from the wadi.⁷ After a while, the wadi dried up because there had been no rain in the land.⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to him:⁹ "Get up, go to Zarephath that belongs to Sidon and stay there. Look, I have commanded a woman who is a widow to provide for you there."¹⁰ So Elijah got up and went to Zarephath. When he arrived at the city gate, there was a widow gathering wood. Elijah called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup and let me drink."¹¹ As she went to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand."

¹² But she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I don't have anything baked—only a handful of flour in the jar and a bit of oil in the jug. Just now, I am gathering a couple of sticks in order to go prepare it for myself and my son so we can eat it and die."¹³ Then Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid; go and do as you have said. But first make me a small loaf from it and bring it out to me. Afterward, you may make some for yourself and your son,¹⁴ for this is what the LORD God of Israel says, 'The flour jar will not become empty and the oil jug will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the surface of the land.'" ¹⁵ So she proceeded to do according to the word of Elijah. Then the woman, Elijah, and her household ate for many days.¹⁶ The flour jar did not become empty, and the oil jug did not run dry, according to the word of the LORD he had spoken through Elijah.¹⁷ After this, the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. His illness got worse until he stopped breathing.¹⁸ She said to Elijah, "Man of God, why are you here? Have you come to call attention to my iniquity so that my son is put to death?"¹⁹ But Elijah said to her, "Give me your son." So he took him from her arms, brought him up to the upstairs room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed.²⁰ Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "LORD my God, have you also brought tragedy on the widow I am staying with by killing her son?"²¹ Then he stretched himself out over the boy three times. He cried out to the LORD and said, "LORD my God, please let this boy's life come into him again!"²² So the LORD listened to Elijah, and the boy's life came into him again, and he lived.²³ Then Elijah took the boy, brought him down from the upstairs room into the house, and gave him to his mother. Elijah said, "Look, your son is alive."²⁴ Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know you are a man of God and the LORD's word from your mouth is true."

1 Kings 18

After a long time, the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year: "Go and present yourself to Ahab. I will send rain on the surface of the land."² So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab. The famine was severe in Samaria.³ Ahab called for Obadiah, who was in charge of the palace. Obadiah was a man who greatly feared the LORD⁴ and took a hundred prophets and hid them, fifty men to a cave, and provided them with food and water when Jezebel slaughtered the LORD's prophets.⁵ Ahab said to Obadiah, "Go throughout the land to every spring and to every wadi. Perhaps we'll find grass so we can keep the horses and mules alive and not have to destroy any cattle."⁶ They divided the land between them in order to cover it. Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went the other way by himself.⁷ While Obadiah was walking along the road, Elijah suddenly met him. When Obadiah recognized him, he fell facedown and said, "Is it you, my lord Elijah?"⁸ "It is I," he replied. "Go tell your lord, 'Elijah is here!'"

⁹ But Obadiah said, “What sin have I committed, that you are handing your servant over to Ahab to put me to death?”¹⁰ As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my lord has not sent someone to search for you. When they said, ‘He is not here,’ he made that kingdom or nation swear they had not found you.¹¹ “Now you say, ‘Go tell your lord, “Elijah is here!””¹² But when I leave you, the Spirit of the LORD may carry you off to some place I don’t know. Then when I go report to Ahab and he doesn’t find you, he will kill me. But I, your servant, have feared the LORD from my youth.¹³ Wasn’t it reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel slaughtered the LORD’s prophets? I hid a hundred of the prophets of the LORD, fifty men to a cave, and I provided them with food and water.¹⁴ Now you say, ‘Go tell your lord, “Elijah is here!”” He will kill me!”¹⁵ Then Elijah said, “As the LORD of Armies lives, in whose presence I stand, today I will present myself to Ahab.”¹⁶ Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him. Then Ahab went to meet Elijah.¹⁷ When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Is that you, the one ruining Israel?”¹⁸ He replied, “I have not ruined Israel, but you and your father’s family have, because you have abandoned the LORD’s commands and followed the Baals.”¹⁹ Now summon all Israel to meet me at Mount Carmel, along with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel’s table.”²⁰ So Ahab summoned all the Israelites and gathered the prophets at Mount Carmel.²¹ Then Elijah approached all the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him. But if Baal, follow him.” But the people didn’t answer him a word.²² Then Elijah said to the people, “I am the only remaining prophet of the LORD, but Baal’s prophets are 450 men.”²³ Let two bulls be given to us. They are to choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and place it on the wood but not light the fire. I will prepare the other bull and place it on the wood but not light the fire.²⁴ Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The God who answers with fire, he is God.” All the people answered, “That’s fine.”

²⁵ Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Since you are so numerous, choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first. Then call on the name of your god but don’t light the fire.”²⁶ So they took the bull that he gave them, prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, “Baal, answer us!” But there was no sound; no one answered. Then they danced^[c] around the altar they had made.²⁷ At noon Elijah mocked them. He said, “Shout loudly, for he’s a god! Maybe he’s thinking it over; maybe he has wandered away; or maybe he’s on the road. Perhaps he’s sleeping and will wake up!”²⁸ They shouted loudly, and cut themselves with knives and spears, according to their custom, until blood gushed over them.²⁹ All afternoon they kept on raving until the offering of the evening sacrifice, but there was no sound; no one answered, no one paid attention.

³⁰ Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come near me.” So all the people approached him. Then he repaired the LORD’s altar that had been torn down:³¹ Elijah took twelve stones—according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, “Israel will be your name”—³² and he built an altar with the stones in the name of the LORD. Then he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold about four gallons.^{[e][f]}³³ Next, he arranged the wood, cut up the bull, and placed it on the wood. He said, “Fill four water pots with water and pour it on the offering to be burned and on the wood.”³⁴ Then he said, “A second time!” and they did it a second time. And then he said, “A third time!” and they did it a third time.³⁵ So the water ran all around the altar; he even filled the trench with water.³⁶ At the time for offering the evening sacrifice, the prophet Elijah approached the altar and said, “LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, today let it be known that you are God in Israel and I am your servant, and that at your word I have done all these things.

³⁷ Answer me, LORD! Answer me so that this people will know that you, the LORD, are God and that you have turned their hearts back.”³⁸ Then the LORD’s fire fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench.³⁹ When all the people saw it, they fell facedown and said, “The LORD, he is God! The LORD, he is God!”⁴⁰ Then Elijah ordered them, “Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let even one of them escape.” So they seized them, and Elijah brought them down to the Wadi Kishon and slaughtered them there.⁴¹ Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a rainstorm.”⁴² So Ahab went to eat and drink, but Elijah went up to the summit of Carmel. He bent down on the ground and put his face between his knees.⁴³ Then he said to his servant, “Go up and look toward the sea.” So he went up, looked, and said, “There’s nothing.” Seven times Elijah said, “Go back.”⁴⁴ On the seventh time, he reported, “There’s a cloud as small as a man’s hand coming up from the sea.” Then Elijah said, “Go and tell Ahab, ‘Get your chariot ready and go down so the rain doesn’t stop you.’”⁴⁵ In a little while, the sky grew dark with clouds and wind, and there was a downpour. So Ahab got in his chariot and went to Jezreel.⁴⁶ The power of the LORD was on Elijah, and he tucked his mantle under his belt and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

1 Kings 19

19 Ahab told Jezebel everything that Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “May the gods punish me and do so severely if I don’t make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow!”³ Then Elijah became afraid^[a] and immediately ran for his life. When he came to Beer-sheba that belonged to Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴ but he went on a day’s journey into the wilderness. He sat down under a broom tree and prayed that he might die. He said, “I have had enough! LORD, take my life, for I’m no better than my fathers.” ⁵ Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree.

Suddenly, an angel touched him. The angel told him, “Get up and eat.” ⁶ Then he looked, and there at his head was a loaf of bread baked over hot stones, and a jug of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again. ⁷ Then the angel of the LORD returned for a second time and touched him. He said, “Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you.” ⁸ So he got up, ate, and drank. Then on the strength from that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹ He entered a cave there and spent the night.

Suddenly, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

¹⁰ He replied, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of Armies, but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are looking for me to take my life.”¹¹ Then he said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the LORD’s presence.”

At that moment, the LORD passed by. A great and mighty wind was tearing at the mountains and was shattering cliffs 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 there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was a voice, a soft whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Suddenly, a voice came to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

¹⁴ “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of Armies,” he replied, “but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they’re looking for me to take my life.”¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him, “Go and return by the way you came to the Wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive, you are to anoint Hazael as king over Aram. ¹⁶ You are to anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel and Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. ¹⁷ Then Jehu will put to death whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death whoever escapes the sword of Jehu. ¹⁸ But I will leave seven thousand in Israel—every knee that has not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.”