

February 3, 2019
Home Group Notes

SHARE IT

Have you ever had a mountaintop experience followed by the “Monday morning” blues?

NOTES TO LEADERS: This is our subject for the evening: How to rely on God’s presence when you don’t seem to experience His power. Said another way, ‘How can we trust God when life is discouraging?’

LEARN FROM THE BIBLE

Read the background story of Elijah (God’s prophet) and Ahab, the evil king. (1 Kings 18:16-46)

How would you describe the demonstrations of God’s power? What might Elijah have been feeling?

NOTES TO LEADERS: Elijah saw God bring a drought, protect him for years, have courage to challenge the king and his prophets, saw God bring fire from heaven, eliminate 450 evil priests, and provide rain to end the drought.

Now read 1 Kings 19:1-18. What happened that made Elijah fearful? What might Elijah have experienced that made him vulnerable to being overwhelmed with fear and sadness?

NOTES TO LEADERS: The queen, Jezebel, send a messenger to Elijah with the promise to kill him. At this time, he was weary of doing battle with the enemy, had been alone against a great king, had run a long distance, and now the attack is personal.

What did Elijah say or do in his situation that made him vulnerable to being overwhelmed with fear and sadness? How could he have handled this better?

NOTES TO LEADERS: To begin with, God didn’t tell him to run away. He was commissioned to be where he was – in Israel / Samaria. Therefore, he disobeyed God. He also did the following:

- He went alone to a lonely place
- He went while being scared and discouraged
- Instead of resting, he was running
- He made decisions while exhausted and afraid
- He compared himself to ancestors and others who disobeyed God
- He dwelt on the negative circumstances and forgot about what God had just done
- He failed to depend on God’s character, promises and past actions.

What kinds of things do we also do that make us vulnerable?

NOTES TO LEADERS: Like Elijah, we disobey, put ourselves in bad places in times of discouragement, we fail to be with and talk with others to get a different perspective, we fail to pray and trust in God’s character, etc.

What was God’s initial response to Elijah?

NOTES TO LEADERS: God was patient, caring, and providing what he needed (rest, food, etc.)

Elijah traveled to the mountain where Moses and the nation had a significant encounter with God. What was the nature of God’s questions to Elijah? (9, 13) How did Elijah respond?

NOTES TO LEADERS: God was challenging Elijah to consider why he was there instead of the place of his calling (Israel/Samaria). His questions invoked a response from Elijah. God was encouraging Elijah to stop and consider God's perspective, God's plans and provisions. Elijah had walked to the place where the covenant with Israel had begun. Elijah answered God by affirming his (Elijah's) own works, informed God of the situation (as if God didn't know!), complaining that he had been abandoned and left to an impossible situation and was in grave danger.

What did God then reveal to Elijah? (11-18) What can we learn from God's response?

NOTES TO LEADERS: God revealed a glimpse of His glory, power, and superiority to any earthly person. He also revealed that Elijah was not alone (which is what Elijah stated), that God had a master plan, and that He is sovereign over the nations and people.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

Elijah went from an amazing experience of God's power to deep sorrow. What was wrong with his perspective? Why do we sometimes do this?

NOTES TO LEADERS: Elijah was viewing everything from his own limited perspective. He did not turn to nor trust in God. We do this because (1) fear and anxiety get ahold of us, (2) we have short memories and forget how God has worked in the past, (3) we can get prideful and think it was our victory, (4) we forget that we are doing God's work and are operating in His plans, and (5) we like being in control of our own destiny.

What kinds of things discourage you the most? How could reliance on the character and presence of God help us out of discouragement?

NOTES TO LEADERS: Please take time to listen, NOT TRY TO FIX, and appreciate the trust and vulnerability of people.

God shows up to Elijah in an unpredictable manner. How does God "whisper to us?" What helps us hear His voice? What helps you not feel like you are "the only one left?"

NOTES TO LEADERS: God speaks to us (1) in the Scriptures as we are intentionally listening to Him, (2) listening to His whisper every day as we pray and entrust our days to Him (this is a learned practice), (3) listening to His people as they speak with us, (4) taking on His perspective of circumstances, (5) trusting Him to bear fruit and giving Him the glory, and (6) living a life of thanksgiving in all things.

May our Father encourage you as you shepherd His people,
Steve