

1  **The Fury of a Woman Scorned: Dealing With Despair**

1 Kings 19

2  **Recap**

- The Kingdom of Israel is in a life-and-death struggle against idolatry – and will be for the remainder of the Divided Kingdom period.
- The reign of Ahab and Jezebel, however, is a microcosm of the moral and spiritual battle that has been raging in the rest of the kingdom.

3  **1 Kings 18 – Dealing with drought**

- After 3 ½ years in hiding, Elijah calls for a final confrontation with Ahab
- Ahab gathers all of the prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth to Mount Carmel

4  **1 Kings 18 – Dealing with drought**

- Elijah proposes a contest – each side will build an altar, and whichever god sends down fire from heaven is the one true god.
- In a miracle that goes far beyond the original terms of the contest, Jehovah proves Himself to be God and the prophets of Baal are slaughtered.

5  **A woman scorned**

- In the aftermath of this, Jezebel (Israel's pagan queen, who originally introduced Baal-worship Israel) makes a vow:
- *Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 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."* (1Ki 19:1-2)

6  **Ahab's complaint**

- Though Ahab dare not touch a prophet of God himself (especially after so public a defeat), he goes to his wife Jezebel and basically gets her to do something about the problem.
- This is a destructive pattern in Ahab's life that we will see throughout the remainder of Ahab's life and will look at in some more detail in later lessons.

7  **A woman scorned**

- Jezebel essentially makes a vow that she will slaughter Elijah just as he has finished slaughtering the prophets of Baal.
- Normally we would expect Elijah's reaction to be courageous and defiant. This is Elijah, who has been through God's seminary of faith for the last 3 ½ years and who has just finished defeating 850 false prophets on their own turf.

8  **The Prophet Runs**










- *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. 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."* (1Ki 19:3-4)








9  **Dealing with despair**









- What causes Elijah's despair?
- What does it teach us about dealing with and understanding our own despair or "burnout"?
- What does it teach us about curing our own despair?

10  **Dealing With Despair**

- The Beginning of Despair
- The Pattern of Despair

- The Cure for Despair
- 11  **1. The beginning of despair**
- Despair will come when you are emotionally drained.
  - Notice Elijah's boldness and courage, and his trust in God in the unlikeliest of situations:
    - Trusted God to feed him by carrion fowl and then by a widow
    - Trusted God to miraculously consume not only a sacrifice, but the stones of the altar, the water around the altar, and even the dirt
- 12  **1. The beginning of despair**
- Elijah has literally been on a rocket ride for the last three and a half years. He has been living in the wilderness and in foreign lands, seeing God provide for his every need.
  - He has seen God miraculously defeat the false god Baal and personally overseen the slaughter of the prophets of Baal – and all Israel has now acknowledged the supremacy of Jehovah.
- 13  **Success**
- You are just as vulnerable to depression and despair at the end of an emotional high as at the end of an emotional low.
  - Elijah was not only emotionally exhausted – he was also physically drained. He had just finished outrunning Ahab's chariot!
  - Elijah had also personally slaughtered the prophets of Baal, a task that by itself would have been grueling.
- 14  **1. The beginning of despair**
- Now, physically and emotionally on empty, the great prophet Elijah is put to flight by an angry woman.
  - So the first thing that we need to understand about depression and despair is that they will often follow our periods of greatest ministry.
  - There are also physical causes for depression, when the hormones that drive our emotions are drained and leave behind them an aching, empty void.
- 15  **Three parts**
- Man is three parts: Spirit, Soul, and Body.
    - The spirit is our eternal nature
    - The soul is comprised of our mind, our will, and our emotions
    - The body is our physical robe that we will wear until the time of our death
  - Similarly, depression can originate in any one of the three parts of an individual.
- 16  **Causes of depression**
- Spirit – Grumbling against God, putting your hope in temporal things, unwillingness to be satisfied in Christ.
  - Soul – Burnout from severe emotional highs or lows, mental exhaustion.
  - Body – Severe physical exhaustion, burning out on caffeine, over-work, sleep deprivation.
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- 17  **2. The Pattern of Despair**
- Elijah's reactions to Jezebel's threat remind us that, despite the great power that God demonstrated in his life, he was still entirely human.
  - Elijah's very humanity reminds us that these are not fairy tales. These are real historical facts that happened to real historical people.
- 18  **The Pattern of Despair**
- Despair is the opposite of faith
    - To flee, Elijah goes to the one place he figures Jezebel can't get to him – Beersheba, the southernmost output of Judah, the Southern Kingdom and rival of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
    - This is despite the fact that God has already preserved him for several months in Sidon, Jezebel's home country and the most dangerous place he could have been.
- 19  **The Pattern of Despair**

- Despair is self-destructive
  - *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."* (1Ki 19:4)
  - Elijah's decision to go out into the wilderness is nothing short of suicide.
- 20  **The Pattern of Despair**
  - Despair has a short memory
    - *There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 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."* (1Ki 19:9-10)
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- 21  **The pattern of despair**
  - Despair is irrational
    - First, Elijah is fleeing because Jezebel is going to kill him
    - Then, Elijah asks God to kill him
    - Then, Elijah is complaining to God again that Jezebel is trying to kill him
  - Depression, regardless of its cause, will cripple your decision-making abilities and enable you to make foolish decisions or commitments.
- 22  **Despair's lies**
  - 1 • "I have been true to God – God owes me"
    - "I'm the only one left"
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  - 2 • The fact is that God is the one who has been true to Elijah. God does not have any obligation to Elijah.
    - There were 7,000 left in Israel who had not so much as participated in a Baal-worship ceremony
- 23  **3. The Cure for Despair**
  - God does not deal with despair in a way that we would at first assume He should.
  - He does not launch into a discussion or an argument with Elijah.
  - We might have been tempted to lecture Elijah on the inevitability of persecution or suffering.
- 24  **3. The cure for despair**
  - Meet physical needs
  - *And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat." 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. 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." 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. (1Ki 19:5-8)*
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- 25  **Meet physical needs**
  - Very often the first step in combating depression or despair is to meet physical needs.
  - When we are deprived of sleep, food, or exercise, we are more susceptible to depression.
  - To better be able to deal with the spiritual causes of depression, we need to be able to eliminate the physical causes first.
- 26  **1 Kings 19:11-12**
  - *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. And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. (1Ki 19:11-12)*

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- 27  **Stand before the Lord**
  - After Elijah gives his first complaint, he is called to stand before the Lord on Horeb (Mount Sinai) – The Mountain of God.
  - There, Elijah waits to hear from God.
  - Note however that Elijah seems to be looking for the voice of God in all of the wrong places.
- 28  **Stand before the Lord**
  - Note however that Elijah seems to be looking for the voice of God in all of the wrong places:
    - In the powerful (a great wind)
    - In the moving (an earthquake)
    - In the exciting (a wild fire)
  - Finally, the Lord speaks to Elijah in a “still small voice.”
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- 29  **Exchange your lie for truth**
  - Spiritual causes of depression almost always result from a lie that you have believed about God or about God’s love for you.
  - This is the essence of idolatry (Romans 1:25).
  - True victory and freedom come with exchanging those lies for the truth about God.
- 30  **Exchange your lie for truth**
  - 1 The lie
    - 2 • *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."*
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  - 3 The truth
    - 4 • *Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."*
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- 31  **Exchange your lie for truth**
  - Most of us at some point have believed or are believing some lie about God & his dealings with us:
    - Nobody knows what I’m going through
    - If God was really a loving God, he wouldn’t be letting \_\_\_\_\_ happen to me
    - I’m damaged beyond repair
    - There’s no way out
- 32  **Exchange your lie for truth**
  - We need to combat the lies that we are believing about God and life with the truth of God’s Word.
- 33  **Get back in action**
  - Immediately after God appears to Elijah, He commissions the prophet to do three specific things (1 Kings 18:15-17):
    - Anoint Hazael to be king over Syria
    - Anoint Jehu to be king over Israel
    - Anoint Elisha to be Elijah’s successor
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- 34  **Get back in action**
  - The final step to dealing with depression, once your physical, emotional, and spiritual needs have been addressed, is to get back to serving the Lord.

- Failure to do so will result in inactivity and self-pity which will prolong your period of depression.

35  **Taking it home**

- 1) Identify the physical, emotional, or spiritual components of your depression:
  - Are you taking care of yourself physically? Are you eating right and sleeping regularly?
  - Have you just come down off of a period of emotional highs or lows, or possibly a long period of stress?
  - What lies are you believing about God or reality?

36  **Taking it home**

- 2) Address the needs in each area of your life
  - Take care of yourself physically to repair the damage you have done to your body by improper stewardship.
  - Spend time with God listening to him, and “be still.”
  - Exchange the lies that you have believed about God for truth.

37  **Taking it home**

- 3) Get back in action
  - Obediently and immediately serve God in the areas and ministries to which He has called you, be they great or small, broad or specific.
  - Inaction itself often becomes a cause for depression since inaction causes a lack of fulfillment with one’s place and role in life.
  - Ultimately, all Christians have a calling: to further the Kingdom of Christ by making disciples and teaching the things that He has commanded.