

Life is Hard!
*I Feel So Overwhelmed
 and Depressed*

First Kings 19

- 1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword.
- 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."
- 3 And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

- 4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"
- 5 Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat."
- 6 Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again.
- 7 And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you."

8 So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

9 And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

10 So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

11 Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces 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;

12 and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

13 So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

14 And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

15 Then the LORD said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria.

16 "Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place.

17 "It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill.

18 "Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

Depression

- 1 in 10 people who visit a doctor have depression
- Depression is more than just the normal feelings of sadness associated with life events.
- It may be mild, moderate, or severe
- It is not something people just "snap out of"

Depression Causes...


- Feelings of helplessness & hopelessness
- Feeling unworthy and guilty without an obvious reason
- Problems concentrating & remembering; trouble making decisions
- Sleeping too much, feeling tired all the time – or trouble getting to sleep
- Withdrawal – Not moving or talking for hours
- Thinking about death

Depression Causes...

- A loss of energy & motivation – even the simplest movement or task seems too difficult
- Difficulty going to work or taking care of daily responsibilities
- Illogical negative feelings
- Physical symptoms... loss of appetite, digestive problems, headaches
- **The Big Give Away:** Loss of interest in things you once very much enjoyed

Causes of Depression

- Medical issues
 - Thyroid
 - Post-partum depression
 - Chemical imbalance
 - Certain medications
 - Seasonal affective disorder
- Grieving the loss of a loved one
- Highly stressful or sad events
- Ongoing stress such as family problems



A Case Study
Elijah: Prophet of God and Sufferer of Depression

1. A Stressful Situation

- Vs. 1-2 “And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, ‘So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.’”

2. Withdrawal

- Vs. 3 “And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.”
- Vs. 4, NRSV “But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree.”
- 84 miles
- Different country: Judah
- Not a city, but the wilderness
- Didn’t take his servant with him

3. Thinking About Death

- Vs. 4 “...And he prayed that he might die, and said, ‘It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life...’”

4. Feelings of Unworthiness

- Vs. 4 "...It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"

5. Feelings of Helplessness & Hopelessness

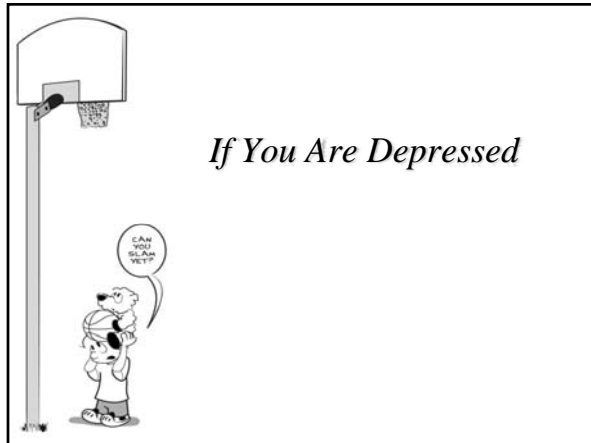
- Vs. 10 "So he said, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.'"

6. Illogical Negative Feelings

- Vs. 14 "The children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

Illogical Negative Feelings

- Vs. 18 “Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”
- Vs. 2 “Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them..." The same gods defeated on Mount Carmel?
- He had just prayed to die – Now which is it?



If You Are Depressed

If You are Depressed

- When you are stuck, get help to get unstuck.
- Go to the doctor and make sure there isn't a medical cause
- Getting unstuck may require a combination of resources including some of these:
 - Medicine
 - Counseling by a trained professional
 - Spiritual: Devotional life, fellowship, repentance
 - Personal discipline in our thoughts & choices

Coping with Depression

- Balanced diet – eat nutritious meals & avoid alcohol (depressant)
- Exercise – burns negative energy
- Good fellowship
- Don't feed your depression and make it worse by brooding...

- “Depression is fed by... mutual gripe sessions... failure to plan... getting behind, resentment, avoiding people, cutting corners, lying, excessive eating, refusal to eat, sleep loss, putting off decisions, and anything else that may lead to the unpleasant feelings of guilt that conscience triggers.” — Jay Adams

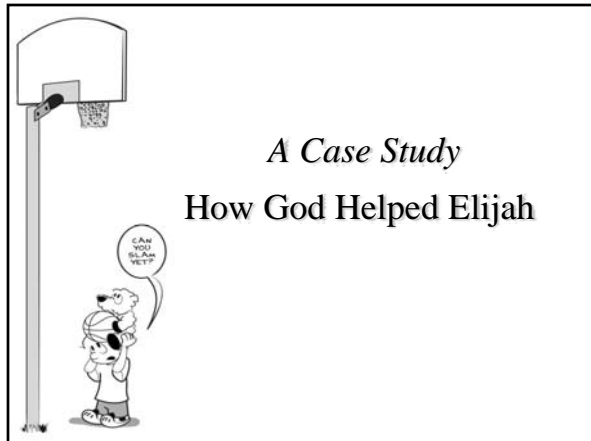
- Genesis 4:6-7, NAS “Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.”
- Doing right helps you feel right.
- Doing wrong makes you feel guilty and more depressed.

- You can't always control the initial problem
- You can't always control how you feel
- But you can control your choices and respond to the problem God's way

When You Don't Know What to Do

Ron Dunn, *When Heaven is Silent*

- "When you don't know what to do, do what you know to do."
- "Sometimes the lights go out because of our neglect of spiritual obligations or just plain old disobedience. You already know what to do about that."
- But if that's not it, still... "Keep walking. Keep praying, witnessing to others, going to church, singing the hymns – when you don't know what to do, do what you know to do."



1. God Fed Him Well

- Vs. 5-7 “Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, ‘Arise and eat.’ Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, ‘Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you.’”

2. God Let Him Rest

- Vs. 5 “Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree”
- Vs. 6 “So he ate and drank, and lay down again.”

3. God Asked Him Questions to Help Him Think Realistically

- Vs. 9 “...And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’”
- Vs. 13 “So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’”

4. God Brought Him into His Presence

- Vs. 11-12 “Then He said, ‘Go out, and stand on the mountain 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 a still small voice.”
- God’s presence is the place of healing, insight, and power.

5. God Told Him the Truth

- Vs. 18 “Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”
- Getting in touch with God is not about believing fairy tales, but getting in touch with reality.
- Choose to believe the truth: What you believe in your heart of hearts will determine much about how you feel.

6. The Lord Gave Him a Job

- Vs. 15-16 “Then the LORD said to him: ‘Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place.’”
- The path to happiness involves responsibility.

"Take the first step, no
more, no less, and the next
will be revealed."
Matthew 11:28
