LESSON 11

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
MARCH 16 2024

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 18:41–46; 19:1–18.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 12; 13.

doubt in the valley



Photo by Luis Guerra, Jr.

flashlight

"For the disheartened there is a sure remedy—faith, prayer, work. Faith and activity will impart assurance and satisfaction that will increase day by day. Are you tempted to give way to feelings of anxious foreboding or utter despondency? In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, fear not. Have faith in God. He knows your need. He has all power. His infinite love and compassion never weary. . . . Never will He change the covenant He has made with those who love Him" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 164).

key text

"The LORD said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.' "

(1 Kings 19:11, NIV)

what do you think?

Which of the following things help you when you're feeling down or discouraged?

____ Talking to a friend
____ Spending time alone
____ Listening to music
____ Prayer
____ Talking to a parent, counselor, pastor, or other caring adult
____ Exercise
____ Doing something for someone else
____ Other: _____

did you know?

Spiritual highs are often followed by spiritual lows. Just ask anyone who has ever returned from the excitement of a youth retreat or rally to deal with the problems of everyday life. When you're surrounded by other Christians, singing and praising the Lord, it's easy to feel happy, excited, and filled with the Holy Spirit. Three weeks later when you're coping with parents, homework, and peer pressure you may find yourself crashing into discouragement or despair.

The Bible doesn't promise that God's people will never know unhappiness or discouragement. After his triumphant showdown against the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, the prophet Elijah collapsed into discouragement and despair. But God didn't abandon him—and He won't abandon you when times get tough.

INTO THE STORY

"Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, 'May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.'

"Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. 'I have had enough, LORD,' he said. 'Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

"All at once an angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat.' He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

"The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, 'Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.' So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. . . .

"And the word of the LORD came to him: 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'

"He replied, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.'

"The LORD said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.'

"Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks 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. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave."

(1 Kings 19:1–13, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Elijah had just won a stunning victory for God. What happened right afterwards to make him feel discouraged?

Do you think Elijah was sincere in wishing he could die? Why or why not?

What was the angel's advice to Elijah immediately after he said he wanted to die? Why do you think this was good advice?

Carefully read Elijah's reply to the Lord's question: "What are you doing here?" What do Elijah's words tell you about how he was feeling at that point?

Why didn't Elijah hear God's voice in the whirlwind, the earthquake, or the fire? What is the significance of God's voice being a "gentle whisper" at this point in Elijah's story?

How can you best hear God's voice speaking to you?

punch lines

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" **(John 16:33, NIV).**

"Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD" **(Psalm 31:24, NIV).**

"Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" **(Isaiah 40:30, 31, NIV).**

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you" **(Isaiah 43:1, 2, NIV).**

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" **(Matthew 11:28, NIV).**

further insight

"It is not always the most learned presentation of God's truth that convicts and converts the soul. . . . It is the still, small voice of the Spirit of God that has power to change the heart."

—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 169

Sabbath

Read 1 Kings 19:1–13.

What does Elijah say after sitting down under the broom tree?

_____

How do you think Elijah felt at that moment?

_____

When have you felt most discouraged in your life? Do you think you've ever felt as bad as Elijah did under the broom tree?

_____

List the specific things God says or does for Elijah to help him through this experience:

_____

Look back at the *What Do You Think?* section of the lesson. What helps you most when you are feeling down? What do you think God might say to you at such a time?

_____

Sunday

Read Matthew 11:28.

Look through the *Out of the Story* questions and think about your answers. Elijah had just won a huge victory for the Lord. Yet when Queen Jezebel threatened his life, he wanted to lie down and die.

Spiritual highs are often followed by spiritual lows. We need both—the highs and the lows, the mountaintops and the valleys—to grow spiritually. Elijah learned through this experience that God wouldn't leave him alone, that God's still small voice was still speaking to him.

Monday

Read Isaiah 40:30, 31.

God told Elijah to stand on the mountaintop and get ready for the Lord's presence. Elijah had already experienced an amazing miracle on Mount Carmel, yet just a few weeks later he needs to stand on another mountaintop and meet God again in order to have his faith renewed.

When we experience "down" times in the Christian life, what are some ways we can stand in God's presence again? List some things that help you to hear God's "still, small voice."

_____

Tuesday

Read 1 John 5:14.

In the *Flashlight* section, Ellen White has some specific suggestions for Christians who are discouraged: faith, prayer, and work.

Faith involves trusting God and knowing that He is still with us, even when we don't feel like it. Our faith is not based on how we feel, but on the Bible's promises that God is faithful and cares for us no matter what.

Prayer is our contact with God. Just as God spoke to Elijah through a gentle voice, He speaks to us in times of prayer. Prayer isn't just talking to God; it involves listening to Him too.

Work takes us outside of our own problems and helps us focus on the needs of others. Doing something kind for someone else can help lift our spirits when we're down. Can you think of something you can do for someone else that might help you to feel better too?

Wednesday

The promises in God's Word can be great for encouraging us when we get discouraged. Look through the texts in the *Punch Lines* and find the one that's most encouraging to you. Copy it on a card or a piece of poster paper. You can even decorate it with pictures or designs. Then put it somewhere it will catch your eye and encourage you next time you're feeling discouraged.

Thursday

Read Psalm 31:24.

It's time to put together some of the things we've learned this week into a "prescription" you can use when discouragement hits. Fill in the blanks to write your unique prescription below. It will also be helpful for you to share this with a supporting friend or two, which will strengthen your resolve to implement it. (Go to www.cornerstoneconnections.net to find resources for choosing a support/accountability partner.)

Next time I feel discouraged, I will talk to _____.
I will listen to _____.
I will think about and repeat this Bible verse: _____.
I will pray, asking God for _____
_____.
I will do three things that I enjoy and that are good for me _____.
I will do the following for someone else: _____.

Friday

Read John 16:33.

Ups and downs are natural in the Christian life. But sometimes we can figure out what triggers the down times and start looking to God for encouragement before we get too far "down."

Elijah's discouragement was triggered by fear of Queen Jezebel and her threats against his life. Fear is one emotion that can often send us spiraling into negative feelings. Others include anger, envy, loneliness, and grief.

What kinds of situations trigger you to start feeling down and discouraged? Try applying some of those remedies you made in yesterday's lesson as soon as negative feelings start. God has the power to get you through the bad times and bring you back to the "mountaintop" again!

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 12; 13.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.