



A SIX-WEEK STUDY
Quarter 3
2025



G R O W I N G
TOGETHER

Young Adult

SDA CHURCH CURRICULUM

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Growing Together Sabbath School Curriculum

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The Widow and The Prophet: Faithfulness Through Obedience



There are times in our lives when God calls us to unfamiliar places or leads us down difficult paths. Yet, when we choose to follow this calling, it becomes an act of faith on our part—one met with God's unwavering faithfulness. In this lesson study, we will explore how the Widow of Zarephath and Elijah experienced God's provision and protective care through their obedience.

Read: 1 KINGS 17:8-24

The Widow and The Prophet:

FAITHFULNESS

THROUGH

OBEDIENCE

starting point

AGREE OR DISAGREE (and discuss):

- Faithfulness is more about trust than certainty.
- Obedience to God always leads to immediate rewards.
- Self-preservation should come before generosity.
- Community plays a key role in deepening faith.

TRANSITION:

Faith and obedience often require stepping into uncertainty. The widow of Zarephath had no assurance that helping Elijah would lead to provision, yet she followed God's leading. Today, we'll explore how faithfulness and trust in God's provision shaped her story—and how it can shape ours.

exploring scripture

READ 1 KINGS 17:8-24

- How do the widow's actions illustrate the relationship between faith and faithfulness?
- What is a takeaway from this story for you? Are there times we should choose not to be generous?
- How does the intertwining of Elijah's and the widow's willingness to help each other highlight the role of community in deepening faith?
- In what ways did their shared encounter increase their faith?

experiencing the story

READ THE HOT TAKE AS A GROUP.

Choose a partner and discuss it for five minutes, and then gather and share.

"Capitalism often prioritizes self-sufficiency and accumulation, but faith calls us to trust in God's provision. The widow's generosity was an act of faith, not a calculated investment."

- Do you agree? Why or why not?
- How does this challenge cultural norms around security and self-reliance?

REFLECT: "Faithfulness is not about avoiding hardship—it's about trusting God through it."

SONG SUGGESTION: "Jireh" by Maverick City Music

driving it home

CHALLENGE: A FAITHFUL STEP FORWARD

For the next two weeks, reflect on areas where God may be calling you to trust more deeply. Choose one action step to demonstrate faithfulness:

- Surrender Something: Like the widow giving her last meal, identify something you're clinging to for security and consider what it would be like if you were to release it in faith.
- Serve Others: Find a way to support someone else in faith, whether financially, emotionally, or spiritually.
- Journal & Pray: Write down where you struggle with faith and ask to see God's provision.

Faithfulness doesn't always bring immediate relief, but it does position us to experience God in profound ways. Where is God calling you to trust today?

FOR DISCUSSION

- **HOW** do the widow's actions toward Elijah illustrate the relationship between faith and faithfulness?
- **WHAT** does the widow's journey—from scarcity and fear to faith and provision—teach us about the relationship between obedience and God's timing?
- **HOW** does the intertwining of Elijah's and the widow's obedience in the story highlight the role of community in deepening faith?
- **DISCUSS** the ways the shared encounter between Elijah and the widow possibly increased their faith.

REFLECTION

God brought Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath together through their shared obedience and their deep need. In 1 Kings 17, Elijah boldly announces to King Ahab that there will be no rain until he gives the word. Following this proclamation, God instructs Elijah to hide by the Kerith Brook, where he is miraculously sustained by ravens delivering food in the morning and evening, and by drinking from the brook. When the brook dries up, God directs Elijah to a village near Sidon—promising that a widow there will provide for him.

The widow's introduction into the story highlights her faithfulness. Though God instructed her to feed Elijah, she could have chosen to ignore God. When Elijah asks her for bread, she reveals her dire situation: she has only enough flour and oil to prepare a final meal for herself and her son before they expect to die. Despite her fear and scarcity, Elijah reassures her not to be afraid and encourages her to act in faith. The widow obeys, choosing trust over self-preservation. In response to her faith, her meager supply of flour and oil miraculously sustains her, her son, and Elijah for an extended period.

This story underscores how a single act of obedience to God can be life-changing. Both Elijah and the widow embraced the call to obedience, yet their faithfulness did not shield them from hardship. After some time, the widow's son falls gravely ill and dies. In her grief, she questions Elijah, asking if his presence has brought tragedy to her household—a reflection of the common perception of prophets in the Old Testament as bearers of judgment.

Moved by compassion, Elijah takes her son and urgently petitions God. He asks why this tragedy has befallen the widow, who had shown such faith and hospitality. Stretching himself over the child, Elijah prays fervently. God hears his prayer, and the child's life is restored. Witnessing this miracle, the widow becomes even more convinced that Elijah is a man of God and that God speaks through him.

This divine encounter teaches us several lessons. First, it reveals the beauty of following God's instructions, even when those instructions lead to uncertainty. Elijah, who declared the drought as God's judgment, was also subject to its effects. Similarly, the widow, who faithfully obeyed God by providing for Elijah, still endured the heartbreak of losing her son. Yet, throughout their struggles, God was present—sustaining them with daily provisions, restoring life, and being revealed as their ultimate Provider and Life-Giver.

Another profound lesson revealed through this story is the power of community. This is not merely a story of a prophet helping an individual but one of mutual blessings. Elijah's and the widow's obedience brought them together in a manner that allowed them to experience God in transformative ways. If Elijah had not followed God's call to go to Zarephath, he would never have met the widow. If the widow had not opened her heart and home in obedience to God, she would not have encountered Elijah. It was their shared faithfulness that positioned them to witness the miraculous resurrection of her son. Through their faithfulness, they both gained a deeper understanding of God's character and power.

This story is a powerful reminder that the people in our lives deeply influence our relationship with God and that our obedience to God profoundly impacts those around us. The faithfulness we display in our walk with God flows into every area of our lives, shaping our relationships, our communities, and even our understanding of God. Our obedience may not remove life's difficulties, but it positions us to experience God's presence, provision, and power in ways we could never imagine.

digdeeper



HOT TAKE

Capitalism, with its emphasis on self-sufficiency and self-advancement, often runs contrary to the heart and message of gospel. In a world that celebrates individual achievement and the accumulation of resources, the actions of the widow in 1 Kings 17 stand out as profoundly countercultural. Because of their transactional sacrifice, they experienced a deeper level of faith which can only come through community. The widow gave Elijah the last of her resources without any assurance that doing so would lead to a positive outcome. If she had been certain that her act of generosity would result in years of sustenance, it would not have been an act of faith. How does this story challenge our modern understanding of generosity and trust, especially in a culture that often prioritizes security and self-preservation?



EXPLORE FURTHER

Elements of this story can highlight the delicate tension between security and allowing God to sustain us—a balance that our world rarely teaches. We are taught to hoard treasures to secure our futures, often to the exclusion of trusting in God's provision. This is not a call to abandon all possessions or become wanderers like Elijah, unless we are specifically called to live that way in order to serve God more fully. Instead, it is an invitation to reflect on how we might forfeit experiencing God in meaningful ways by relying solely on ourselves for sustenance.

Consider this deeply personal question: If you were in the widow's position, would you have given the last of your resources to a stranger, or would you have prioritized your own survival and that of your family? The answer reveals much about the tension between faith and the pervasive mindset of self-preservation fostered by capitalism.

Our pursuits, often cloaked in the guise of excellence or ambition, can sometimes conflict with the heart of God and the Gospel. The advancement we seek may be centered on our own glorification or preservation rather than on glorifying God and serving others. Yet, God calls us to give in ways that reflect generosity. If we are unwilling to give generously to God's people, it may be an indication that we do not fully trust God's provision.

The story of the widow and the prophet challenges us to consider this question: Are we building lives centered on self-reliance and accumulation, or are we living in a way that glorifies God and reflects the heart of God to others?



conclusion

When God calls us to faithfulness, God does not promise a life free from difficulty. Instead, we are invited into a deeper trust in God's provision and presence. Obedience may lead us into uncomfortable or even painful circumstances, but it also positions us to experience God's power in profound ways. Sometimes the people we meet on the journey of faith become integral to our stories, helping us see God's hand in ways we could not have imagined.

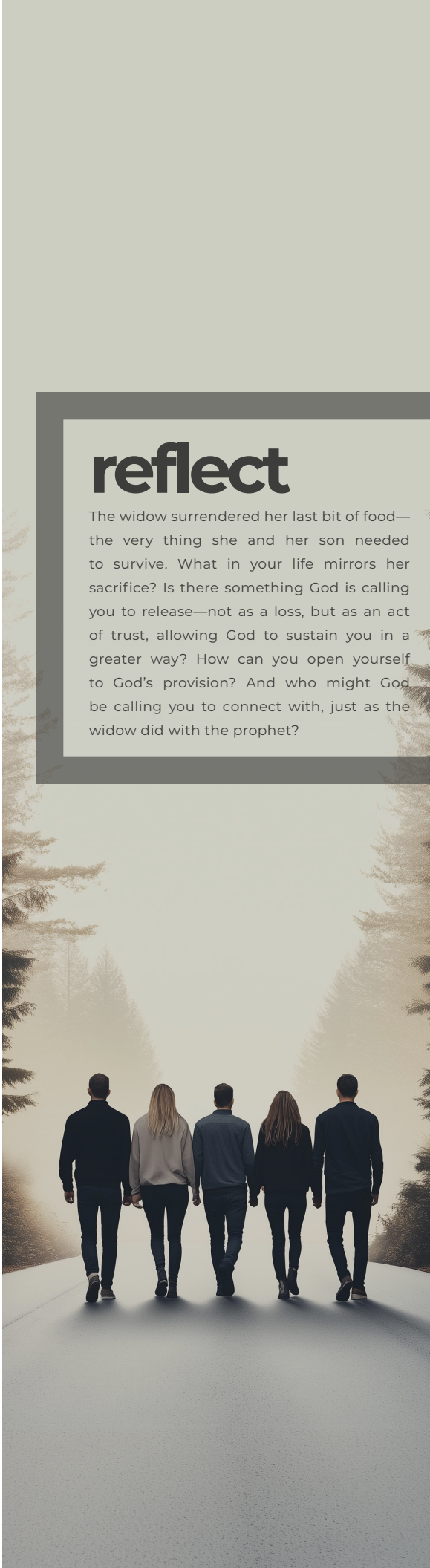
Faithfulness is not about avoiding hardship—it's about trusting God through it. The journey may be difficult, but it's on this path that we encounter God as both Sustainer and Redeemer, Provider and Restorer. And through our faithfulness, we may experience miracles that transform not only our circumstances but also our understanding of who God is.

reflect

The widow surrendered her last bit of food—the very thing she and her son needed to survive. What in your life mirrors her sacrifice? Is there something God is calling you to release—not as a loss, but as an act of trust, allowing God to sustain you in a greater way? How can you open yourself to God's provision? And who might God be calling you to connect with, just as the widow did with the prophet?

challenge

Take time to journal or pray intentionally about these questions. If you sense God calling you toward something, begin crafting a plan of action. How can you step forward in faith and be intentional with that call?



The Showdown: Faithfulness Through Witnessing



Our walk with Christ often requires us to act or believe without immediate evidence. However, there are times when God chooses to reveal His power and presence—not only to us, but also to others, through our faithfulness. God does not demand blind trust; rather, God engages with us and makes Himself known in powerful and dynamic ways. In this lesson, we will explore how Elijah, the prophets of Baal, and the people of Israel witnessed God's power come to life. This study challenges us to consider how we, too, can participate in revealing God's power to the world.

Read: 1 KINGS 18:16-45

The Showdown: FAITHFULNESS THROUGH WITNESSING

starting point

WOULD YOU RATHER? (AND WHY?)

- Would you rather stand alone in faith like Elijah or be surrounded by people who believe something harmful?
- Would you rather wait patiently for God's answer (like Elijah praying for rain) or see an immediate miracle like fire from heaven?
- Would you rather have unwavering faith but face opposition or struggle with doubt but have everyone's support?
- Would you rather call down fire from heaven or make it rain in a drought?

TRANSITION:

The prophets of Baal exhausted themselves, believing they had to work for their god's attention, while Elijah stood in quiet confidence, trusting the one true God. Today, we explore how Elijah's faithfulness in witnessing revealed God's power, teaching us what it means to trust in God's faithfulness.

exploring scripture

READ 1 KINGS 18:16-45

- When you seek God, do you reflect the prophets of Baal's frantic efforts or Elijah's confidence?
- How does the contrast between the prophets' desperation and Elijah's faith highlight the outcomes of misplaced trust?
- How does God's willingness to show up challenge the idea of faith as blind trust?
- What can we learn about the differences between how God answered with fire versus how God answered with rain?

experiencing the story

DIG DEEPER:

"God is always faithful, but that does not mean God is predictable."

Elijah's prayer for fire was answered instantly, while his prayer for rain required repeated petitions.

- How does this shape our expectations of God?
- Why do we tell ourselves that immediate answers are proof of God's care for us?

REFLECT: "God's consistency is not constrained by our timelines or expectations. God remains sovereign, good, and steadfast, even when God's methods are beyond our immediate understanding."

SONG SUGGESTION: "Same God" by Elevation Worship

driving it home

CHALLENGE: DEEPENING YOUR PRAYER LIFE

For the next week, dedicate intentional time to prayer.

- If you're new to prayer: Start with one to five minutes a day.
- If you pray regularly: Extend your time to 10-15 minutes, working toward 30 minutes.
- Be mindful of how you feel: Do you fear God won't listen? Do you plead with God as if God is distant? Observe how your prayer experience evolves.

God invites us into a relationship, not a ritual. God is a God who hears, who sees, and who answers—not always in our timing, but always in faithfulness.

FOR DISCUSSION

- **WHEN** you pray and seek God's blessings or presence, do your actions and attitude reflect the frantic efforts of the prophets of Baal, or the confidence demonstrated by Elijah?
- **HOW** does the contrast between the prophets of Baal's desperate actions and Elijah's calm confidence highlight the outcomes of misplaced faith versus genuine trust in God?
- **HOW** does God's eagerness to be revealed challenge the notion of faith being blind trust, and how can this shape our understanding of the divine-human relationship?

REFLECTION

Three years had passed since Elijah declared that there would be no rain in Israel, and the land had endured a severe famine as a result of the drought. When Elijah appeared before King Ahab, Ahab's initial response was accusatory: *"Is that you, troubler of Israel?"* But Elijah turned the accusation back on Ahab, stating that it was Ahab and his family who had abandoned God's commands and followed Baal. Elijah then commanded Ahab to summon all the people of Israel to Mount Carmel, along with the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah who dined at Jezebel's table. This was to be the stage for a divine showdown.

In verse 21, Elijah poses a question that resonates not only with the people of his time but also with us today: *"How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him."* At its core, Elijah's challenge is about lordship. It's not a question of whether God exists—it's about who the true God is. And it's not a matter of whether we will follow someone; the implication is that we are all following something or someone. Elijah's pointed question asks: *Will you follow the true God?* This challenge highlights the false gods we can be drawn to, just as Ahab and the Israelites had been drawn to Baal.

In verse 24, Elijah issues a clear challenge: *"Call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The God who answers by fire—he is God."* The people agreed, and the showdown began. The prophets of Baal prepared their bull and called on Baal's name from morning until noon, but there was no response. Their desperate efforts escalated—they danced around the altar they had made, crying out even louder. Elijah mocked them, saying, *"Shout louder! Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened."*

This episode highlights a sobering truth: worshiping false gods leads to harm. The prophets of Baal shouted louder and even resorted to self-mutilation, slashing themselves with swords and spears, believing that inflicting pain might earn their god's attention. Similarly, when we worship false gods—or even when we worship the true God in misguided ways—we may adopt self-deprecating ideologies or cause harm to ourselves in order to earn divine favor. But such actions reveal the futility of worshiping gods who do not hear or care.

When it was Elijah's turn, he approached the altar with calm confidence. He repaired the altar of the Lord, arranged the wood, and cut the bull into pieces. Then, in an extraordinary act of faith, he had the altar drenched with water—not once, but three times—until water filled the trench around it. Finally, Elijah stepped forward and spoke, uttering a simple prayer to the God of Israel. God heard his prayer and responded instantly. Fire fell from heaven, consuming the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the soil, and even the water in the trench. The people were left in awe, declaring, *"The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!"*

dig deeper



EXPLORE FURTHER

God does not always answer prayers in the timeframe and through the methods we anticipate!

An interesting contrast emerges in 1 Kings 18 through the experiences of Elijah. When it came to proving that God was the Almighty, God responded instantly—Elijah called on God, and fire descended from heaven. However, later in the chapter, when Elijah prayed for rain, the response was not immediate. He had to pray repeatedly, and it wasn't until the seventh time that a small cloud appeared, rising from the sea.

This contrast highlights an important truth about God's faithfulness. God is always faithful. Yet, while God's faithfulness is unchanging, the ways in which God shows up and is revealed is not always the same in every circumstance. If Elijah had grown discouraged by the delay—expecting God to answer his prayer for rain as swiftly as God had sent fire—he might have stopped praying, and the rain may not have come.

God is always faithful, but that does not mean God is predictable. God's consistency is not constrained by our timelines or expectations. God remains sovereign, good, and steadfast, even when God's methods are beyond our immediate understanding. Trusting in God's faithfulness means recognizing that God's ways, though sometimes mysterious, are always perfect.



conclusion

In verse 37, Elijah's prayer reveals God's heart: *"Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."* This moment teaches a valuable lesson: God desires to be revealed to us. Even when we don't choose God, God does not abandon us. God actively seeks to draw us back, offering evidence of power, love, and faithfulness. God is not a distant deity who demands self-destruction or blind faith; God is a God who invites us into a relationship grounded in reason, revelation, and trust.

reflect

How do you view God? Do you subtly fear God? Do you feel like you have to beg and plead for God's attention? How might your prayer life change if you truly believed that God not only desires to hear from you but also wants to bring resolution to your struggles?

challenge

For the next week, set aside intentional time for prayer. If you're new to prayer, start with one to five minutes. If prayer is already part of your routine, aim for 10 to 15 minutes, gradually working up to 30 minutes with God. As you pray, pay attention to how your body feels—do you experience anxiety or fear that God won't hear you? Do you feel safe and comforted? Do you find yourself pleading or begging because you doubt God will respond to your simple prayers? Be intentional about noticing your experience throughout the week and reflect on how it evolves as you continue to engage in prayer intentionally.

From Burnt Altar to Burnt Out: Faithfulness Through Rest



Sometimes, we develop an unhealthy relationship with rest, believing that we please God by constantly staying busy—whether through service, missions, or the pursuit of our personal goals. This relentless drive can lead to crippling burnout and deep resentment. However, a healthy life and a healthy relationship with God require regular rest. Just as God rested after creating the world, rest is essential for both growth and transformation.

In this study, we will examine how Elijah, even after witnessing a great miracle, became so dejected and exhausted that he wanted to give up. Yet, we will also see how God met him with gentleness and grace, offering rest as a necessary and sacred gift. Through Elijah's story, we are invited to reconsider our perspective on rest—not as inactivity, but as a blessing essential to renewal and spiritual well-being.

Read: 1 KINGS 19:1-7

From Burnt Altar to Burnt Out:

FAITHFULNESS

THROUGH

REST

starting point

AGREE OR DISAGREE (AND DISCUSS):

- Witnessing God's power should eliminate fear and doubt.
- Spiritual strength guarantees emotional resilience.
- Burnout is a sign of weak faith.
- Rest is just as important as action in a life of faith.
- Struggles with mental health should be solved by deeper spirituality alone.

TRANSITION:

Elijah had just experienced miraculous victories, yet he found himself exhausted, fearful, and overwhelmed. Instead of rebuking him, God responded with care. Today, we explore how faithfulness includes rest, and how God meets us in seasons of exhaustion.

exploring scripture

READ 1 KINGS 19:1-7

- Elijah experienced fear and despair after witnessing undeniable miracles. What does this suggest about the relationship between spiritual encounters and emotional well-being?
- How did God respond to Elijah's distress? How does this contrast with how mental health struggles are often addressed in faith communities?
- What lessons can we take from God's approach to supporting those in crisis?

experiencing the story

READ THE HOT TAKE AS A

GROUP. Choose a partner and discuss it for five minutes, and then gather and share.

- Does Jezebel's gender play a role in how she is perceived in the Bible?
- What does this tell us about gender inequality in the interpretation of Scripture?

REFLECT: "Whatever God is calling you to will not destroy your well-being. God desires to replenish and sustain you."

SONG SUGGESTION: "Come to Me" by Bethel Music

driving it home

CHALLENGE: PURSUING REST INTENTIONALLY

Elijah's story reminds us that burnout is not a badge of honor—it's a sign that something needs attention. This week, take time to evaluate your need for rest:

- Identify which type of rest you need most: physical, mental, sensory, emotional, social, creative, or spiritual.
- Create a small, intentional habit: Whether it's setting aside quiet time, journaling, limiting overstimulation, or spending time in nature, make space for replenishment.
- Let go of guilt: Rest is a gift from God, not a sign of weakness. Prioritizing restoration allows you to show up as your best self in life and in faith.

God invites us into a relationship, not a ritual. God is a God who hears, who sees, and who answers—not always in our timing, but always in faithfulness.

FOR DISCUSSION

- **ELIJAH** experienced fear and despair despite having just witnessed an undeniable miracle. What does this suggest about the relationship between spiritual encounters and emotional well-being?
- **WHAT** was God's response to Elijah's distress? How does this contrast with how struggles with mental health are often addressed within faith communities?
- **HOW** can God's approach to supporting Elijah inform how we support people in crisis today?

REFLECTION

Elijah had just witnessed two tremendous miracles from God—calling down fire from heaven in prayer and praying for the return of rain. By all measures, he had seen the hand of God at work in his life and in the lives of the people of Israel. Yet, in 1 Kings 19, when Jezebel issued a stern threat—"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 shaken. She was referring to the prophets who had been slaughtered after God was proven as the one true God. Jezebel felt angered and threatened, and in turn, she threatened Elijah's life.

It is worth noting her choice of words: *"May the gods deal with me."* A reasonable question for Elijah to ask would have been: *Which gods?* The ones that remained silent? The ones that couldn't send fire from heaven? The gods Jezebel invoked as her source of strength had already been proven powerless. Elijah should have known that no god was backing Jezebel because God was with him. And yet, he was still afraid. Verse 3 tells us that *Elijah was afraid and ran for his life*. He journeyed deep into the wilderness and sat under a tree, praying for his life to end. In modern terms, this is what we would call suicidal ideation. In verse 4, he says, *"I have had enough, Lord. Take my life."* Then he fell asleep.

There are many misconceptions about depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts, especially within faith communities. Some believe that diving deeper into a relationship with God will automatically erase these struggles. But Elijah's story debunks that notion. He had seen God move in undeniable ways—fire from heaven, and rain returning after years of drought, among many other miracles in his lifetime. Yet, even after witnessing these miracles, he was exhausted. He was burned out.

In the midst of his deep exhaustion, Elijah still practiced raw honesty with God. He didn't sugarcoat his feelings. He didn't put on a brave face. He told God exactly what he felt: *I'm tired. I've had enough. I want to die.* His deep connection with God

didn't negate his very real and present distress and neither did his distress sever his relationship with God. It is imperative to honor these spaces of exhaustion. Burnout is real, and we see in this story that God does not dismiss it. Instead, God responds by sending an angel—not with a sermon, not with rebuke, but with food and water. The angel provided freshly baked bread and water, allowing Elijah to eat, drink, and rest. This simple act teaches us something profound: sustenance matters. Whether through food, time, or care, replenishment is essential. Elijah had spent so much time caring for others that it was now his turn to be cared for. God addressed Elijah's physical needs first, highlighting that often, when we are deep in despair, the first step toward healing isn't a grand spiritual revelation—it's something as simple as rest and nourishment.

Elijah's encounter with the angel also teaches us the power of hospitality. Being able to see someone at their lowest point, feed them, and help them find rest physically, mentally, spiritually, or emotionally is a divine act. After eating and drinking, Elijah lays down again. The angel returns and tells him to eat once more, saying, *"The journey is too much for you."* This acknowledgment is important, and the message is clear and validating: your calling and journey are not easy, but you are not alone. There is no judgment, no shame, no reprimand—only restoration. Elijah was *encouraged* to rest. He was not rushed into action. And when he was strengthened, only then did he continue his journey—sustained by God's care.

This passage offers a powerful reminder: there is no shame in depression, anxiety, or burnout. No shame in feeling overwhelmed and exhausted or struggling with thoughts of despair. These are not signals that we are not good with God. These are signals—indicators that something in our lives needs attention. They are invitations to slow down, to heal, to be cared for. And most importantly, they are a reminder that we do not have to navigate these struggles alone. Just as God cared for Elijah, God cares for us, too.

dig deeper



HOT TAKE

Jezebel was a leader. And like many leaders before and after her, she was ruthless in her pursuit of power. Throughout Israel's history, the nation encountered rulers—Pharaohs and various conquering kings—who were savage in their dealings with the Israelites. Yet none of these men were ever reduced to their gender. They may have been regarded as flawed men, wicked men, rulers who stood against God's people. But unlike Jezebel, their names were not weaponized to suggest promiscuity.



EXPLORE FURTHER

So why are phrases like “a Jezebel spirit” or being referred to as a “Jezebel” weaponized against women in the church? There are two plausible explanations for the way Jezebel has been historically maligned. The first is simple: she was a woman. Had Jezebel been a man, her legacy would likely have been framed differently—her story judged by her actions rather than her gender. Instead, the name “Jezebel” has become synonymous with a “loose” woman, a sexually immoral woman. Somehow her “supposed” promiscuity overshadows the real issue: she was a powerful and cunning ruler who opposed God's people. If a man had acted as she did, he would have been labeled as evil—but not sexually deviant.

The second, and perhaps more significant, reason highlights a misinterpretation of Scripture. The Jezebel in the book of Kings is often conflated with the Jezebel mentioned in *Revelation 2:20-23*. The church in Thyatira was being rebuked for tolerating a woman named Jezebel who led people into sexual immorality and idolatry. *This* is the Jezebel many people have in mind when they use the term—without realizing that they are referencing a different person entirely. Why this confusion? Why this lack of distinction? Perhaps because it is far easier to vilify a woman, even through a misreading of Scripture, than to acknowledge her leadership capacity.

Was Jezebel a good woman? A faithful leader? A follower of God? A moral ruler? No. But was she a leader? Yes. And it is telling that history diminishes her to little more than a cautionary tale of female seduction. Even biblical men whose sexual misdeeds are well-documented—men highly regarded by God, such as David and Solomon—are not primarily defined by their sexual actions. David, despite his sins, is still called a man after God's own heart. Solomon, despite his hundreds of wives and concubines, is still remembered for his wisdom. But the Jezebel of 1 Kings? She is remembered only as a harlot, despite no biblical documentation of her sexual behavior.

Yes, Jezebel was cruel, vindictive, and malicious. But she was also powerful. Yet the greatest mark against her, it seems, was not her wickedness—it was that she was a woman.



conclusion

God delights in our faithfulness to the calling on our lives, just as Elijah exemplified faithfulness during his lifetime. However, God is most glorified when we live a life of balance.

When we prioritize our well-being, we are able to show up as the best version of ourselves—in the world and in ministry. Whatever God is calling you to will not destroy your well-being. In seasons of burnout, Elijah's story reminds us that God not only cares deeply about us but also desires to replenish and sustain us—if we allow God to do so.

reflect

Reflect on your current journey. Challenge yourself with this question: *Is this the life that the God of rest, sustenance, and restoration has chosen for me?* If the answer is no, consider what changes you can make to either align yourself with a healthier path or make the best of the one you're currently on.

challenge

Abraham Joshua Heschel once said, "If you work with your hands, sabbath with your mind. If you work with your mind, sabbath with your hands." Find a way to rest that feels meaningful and restorative to you. Keep in mind, there are seven types of rest: physical, mental, sensory, emotional, social, creative, and spiritual. Take time to evaluate which type of rest you need most in this season, and make it a priority to actively pursue it.

Quiet Whisper: Faithfulness through Listening



Have you ever had a conversation where one person did all the talking—freely sharing about their life and perspectives but never stopping to listen to yours? Was that conversation fulfilling? Was the relationship sustainable?

Our relationship with God is no different. Often, we speak to God—or even at God—but rarely do we pause to listen. God's voice is not always loud or commanding; sometimes, it is soft and gentle, requiring intentional stillness to hear.

In this lesson, we will explore how, in a moment of overwhelming exhaustion, Elijah encountered God's voice in a new and transformative way. Through his experience, we are invited to consider how we, too, can cultivate the patience and quiet necessary to truly listen to God.

Read: 1 KINGS 19:7-18

Quiet Whisper: FAITHFULNESS THROUGH LISTENING

starting point

AGREE OR DISAGREE (AND DISCUSS):

- God's presence is most evident in grand, miraculous acts.
- If we don't hear God clearly, it means God isn't speaking.
- Silence from God is a sign of God's absence.
- Listening is an active, not passive, part of faith.

TRANSITION:

Elijah expected to find God in the wind, earthquake, and fire, but instead, God spoke in a gentle whisper. Often, we seek God in dramatic moments, yet God is found in the stillness. Today, we'll explore how listening is an act of faithfulness.

exploring scripture

READ 1 KINGS 19:7-18

- How does the contrast between God's presence in the gentle whisper and God's absence in the grand displays of nature challenge our assumptions about how and where we expect to encounter the divine in our own lives?
- In what ways might Elijah's false assertion, "I am the only one left," reflect a common human tendency to misinterpret our circumstances, and how can this recognition influence how we evaluate our personal narratives?
- How does the repetition of God's question, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" invite deeper introspection, and how might asking ourselves this question reveal the gap between our current actions and our sense of purpose or identity?

experiencing the story

DIG DEEPER DISCUSSION:

"God's greatest revelations are not always loud. Sometimes, they come in the quiet, where only those who are listening can hear."

- How does this shift your perspective on waiting for signs from God?
- What are ways we can cultivate stillness to hear God's voice more clearly?

REFLECT: "A whisper from God isn't a sign of God's absence—it's evidence of God's nearness."

SONG SUGGESTION: "Be Still" by Hillsong Worship

driving it home

CHALLENGE: CULTIVATING STILLNESS

This week, intentionally create space for quiet in your life:

- Limit distractions: Step away from social media earlier in the evening or begin your mornings without your phone.
- Practice solitude: Take a walk in silence, sit in a quiet space, or journal your thoughts without external noise.
- Engage in active listening: Speak to God as if God is a close friend—then pause. Let the silence be a space for God's whisper.
- God speaks, but do we create the stillness to listen?

FOR DISCUSSION

- **HOW** does the contrast between God's presence in the gentle whisper and God's absence in the grand displays of nature challenge our assumptions about how and where we expect to encounter the divine in our own lives?
- **IN** what ways might Elijah's false assertion, "I am the only one left," reflect a common human tendency to misinterpret our circumstances, and how can this recognition influence how we evaluate our personal narratives?
- **HOW** does the repetition of God's question, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" invite deeper introspection, and how might asking ourselves this question reveal the gap between our current actions and our sense of purpose or identity?

REFLECTION

Whenever God asks a question—whether in the Old or New Testament—it is not just relevant to the immediate situation but also carries a universal truth. These questions invite us to reflect and ask ourselves the same things. After Elijah experienced what we might describe as a mental and emotional breakdown, God sustained and restored him. Strengthened by divine provision, Elijah embarked on a 40-day and 40-night journey to Horeb, the Mountain of God. There, he spent a night in a cave. Then, God spoke to him with a poignant question: *What are you doing here, Elijah?* Was this a question of geography? Did God want to know the physical route Elijah had taken? No, this was not about directions; it was a question of identity, narrative, and belief. Essentially, God was asking, *How did you get to this point? What has brought your heart to this state? What story did you tell yourself that led you here?*

Elijah responded by listing his efforts: he had been zealous for God, working diligently and faithfully. His response highlighted his burnout and frustration tied to being overworked. Yet, as he responded to God, Elijah made a false assertion: *I am the only one left*. With this answer, Elijah revealed the overwhelming pressure he had been carrying, thinking he was the only prophet still working on God's behalf. This was of course inaccurate, but because Elijah believed it, he carried a pressure and burden far greater than what God intended for him.

In response, God instructed Elijah to stand on the mountain, promising that the presence of the Lord would pass by. What followed were grand and terrifying displays of nature. First, a great and powerful wind tore through the mountains, shattering rocks. Imagine the deafening roar of rocks splitting and the earth groaning under the force of the wind. It was loud, dynamic, and terrifying—an event so grandiose that one might expect to find God in it. But God was not in the wind.

After the wind came an earthquake. The ground shook violently, likely leaving Elijah feeling small and vulnerable as the world around him crumbled and quaked. Yet again, God was not in the earthquake. Next came a fire. It would have been easy to assume that God was in the fire, especially since Elijah had recently called down fire from heaven on God's behalf. The heat, the flames—perhaps they even triggered memories of that miraculous moment. But God was not in the fire. Finally, after all the chaos, there came a gentle whisper—a still, small voice. And that's where God was. At the sound of the whisper, Elijah pulled his cloak over his face and stood at the mouth of the cave. God asked him the same question again: *What are you doing here, Elijah?* The repetition of the question reaffirmed its significance.

Through these displays, Elijah learned that God's presence is not always found in the grand and the dramatic. Instead, God is often in the quiet and the simple. It is in the stillness where God's voice can be heard most intimately.

Elijah responded as he had before, still carrying the weight of his frustrations. But God's answer this time was layered with reassurance and direction. God instructed Elijah to return to Damascus, anoint two kings, and choose his successor. Yet God didn't stop there—God also reminded Elijah that he was not alone. In fact, there were 7,000 others who had not bowed to Baal. This was not just a call to action but a profound reminder: Elijah's work had never been solitary. God had always been with him, not just in the miraculous acts but in the quiet, sustaining presence of the still, small voice.

digdeeper



EXPLORE FURTHER

What is striking about this encounter with Elijah is how it marks a turning point in God's interactions with the people of Israel. Up until this moment, God had often been revealed to the children of Israel through grand, awe-inspiring acts—parting the Red Sea, stopping the sun in its course, and sending fire from heaven. These powerful displays demonstrated God's power and authority.

However, after this encounter with Elijah, such grand miracles ceased, except for the ultimate act of God's coming. This moment signified a shift in the history of Israel. God was showing that there would no longer be a need to rely on dramatic, spectacular acts to communicate with the people of Israel. The grandeur wasn't enough to keep their hearts devoted to God. Instead, God chose to speak through intimate whispers.

Eventually, in the period between the Old and New Testaments there was even a period of silence—no prophets, no revelations, no words from God.

The lesson for us is challenging. How often do we expect to see God in the grand gestures—the miraculous “yes,” the dramatic breakthrough, the big answers like acceptance into school, healing from sickness, or finding a significant other? Yet, what happens when God speaks only through a still, small voice? Will we be attuned enough to hear God? And more poignantly, what happens when God's voice isn't discernible at all? Can we still trust God in the absence of tangible evidence?



conclusion

If you are sitting close to a friend and they want to get your attention, do they yell at you—or do they whisper? Sometimes, we struggle when we don't see God moving in grand ways. We may equate God's presence with visible signs; when those signs don't appear, we assume God is absent. But there is no greater evidence of intimacy than a whisper. When someone whispers to you, it means they are close—it means they trust you. Perhaps this season, if it feels like God is whispering, it is because God is right beside you. God spoke to Elijah in a *still, small voice* because Elijah was attuned to hear God—because he was intentionally seeking God. Consider that a whisper from God isn't a sign of God's absence but of God's nearness.

reflect

If God is speaking to you through a still, small voice, is there enough silence and stillness in your life for you to hear it?

challenge

Carve out meaningful time to be with yourself and with God. This could mean stepping away from social media an hour earlier each night, taking a morning walk without your phone, or setting aside time to read a book. But the most intentional way to spend this time is simply being present—just you and God. Treat it like a conversation with a close friend. Speak to God honestly, then take a moment to listen.

In different seasons of life, we encounter roadblocks, rejection, and opposition. Often, the best way to navigate these challenges is by connecting with someone who has walked a similar path and gained wisdom on their journey. There is undeniable power in learning from those who have gone before us, just as there is great responsibility in becoming a person others can trust in their moments of struggle.

To be a safe, encouraging presence in someone's life—to hold space for their vulnerabilities—is to reflect the very heart of God. In this lesson, we will explore the relationship between Elisha and Elijah, recognizing that at different points in our lives, we will take on the roles of mentee and mentor. When given these opportunities, we must approach them with intentionality, understanding that our influence can lead someone closer to Christ—just as choosing the right influences can shape our own faith journey.

Read: 2 KINGS 2:1-15

Heaven- bound: Faithfulness through Mentorship



Heaven Bound: FAITHFULNESS THROUGH MENTORSHIP

starting point

STORY TIME:

- Option 1: Share a time when a mentor's guidance or investment in you shaped an important decision in your life.
- Option 2: Have you ever experienced a moment where someone's small action or choice had a lasting impact on you? What was it, and how did it influence you?

TRANSITION:

Elijah didn't just perform miracles—he lived a life that made Elisha desire to follow in his footsteps. Today, we'll explore the power of mentorship and how faithfulness is passed down through relationships.

exploring scripture

READ 2 KINGS 2:1-15

- What does Elisha's admiration for Elijah reveal about true mentorship?
- How do modern leadership models prioritize influence over genuine care?
- Elisha's first act of leadership mirrored Elijah's last. What does this teach us about the legacy we leave behind?
- Who in your life has mentored you, intentionally or unintentionally?

experiencing the story

DIG DEEPER DISCUSSION:

- "The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian." Ellen G. White
- Would Elisha have desired a double portion of Elijah's spirit if Elijah had been harsh or unkind?
 - What qualities in Elijah made following in his footsteps desirable?
 - How does this challenge the way we influence others in faith, leadership, and life?

REFLECT: "By beholding, we become changed. What we surround ourselves with shapes who we become."

SONG SUGGESTION: "Find Us Faithful" by Steve Green

driving it home

CHALLENGE: SEEKING AND BECOMING A MENTOR

- Invest in wisdom: Identify someone whose faith or leadership you admire. Invite them for lunch or a conversation, and ask intentional questions.
- Reflect on your influence: Whether you realize it or not, someone is looking up to you. How do your actions, words, and character shape those around you?
- Be intentional in relationships: Mentorship doesn't have to be formal—sometimes, simply showing up for others with love and consistency is the most powerful form of guidance.
- A faithful life leaves a lasting impact. What kind of legacy are you building?

FOR DISCUSSION

- **ELISHA'S** admiration for Elijah extended beyond witnessing miracles; he deeply valued Elijah as a person. What does this suggest about the nature of true mentorship?
- **IN** what ways do modern leadership models—whether in faith communities, workplaces, or personal relationships—prioritize influence over genuine care?
- **ELISHA'S** first act of leadership mirrored Elijah's last, suggesting a direct continuity of spirit, faith, and action. How does this parallel challenge us to consider what we leave behind for those who follow us?

REFLECTION

In the final moments of Elijah's life, he journeyed with Elisha from Gilgal. Elijah urged Elisha to stay behind, as the Lord had sent him to Bethel, but Elisha refused, saying, "As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you." Together, they went to Bethel. This exchange was repeated when Elijah was sent to Jericho and later to the Jordan. Each time, Elijah encouraged Elisha to remain behind, but Elisha insisted on accompanying him. This unwavering commitment reveals a strong bond between Elijah and Elisha. Elijah was not merely a teacher or leader; he was someone Elisha respected and felt safe with. Elisha wasn't captivated solely by Elijah's miracles or his relationship with God—he valued him as a person.

As they journeyed, fifty men from the company of prophets followed them, witnessing these final moments. At the Jordan, Elijah struck the water with his cloak, and it parted to the right and left, allowing them to cross on dry ground. There, Elijah asked Elisha a question that revealed his care and leadership: "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" This question was not just hospitable but intentional, showing Elijah's desire to leave Elisha with the best possible foundation for his new role. Elisha's response, "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," further demonstrated his deep admiration. He didn't merely want to imitate Elijah; he wanted to embody and expand upon the spirit that defined his mentor.

When Elijah was taken to heaven in a whirlwind, Elisha cried out, "My father, my father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" In his grief, he tore his garment in two, mourning the loss of someone he loved. Picking up Elijah's cloak, Elisha performed his first miracle, striking the Jordan's waters and calling on God:

"Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" When the waters parted, it became clear that Elijah's legacy had passed to Elisha. The last miracle Elijah performed became the first miracle Elisha performed, symbolizing the continuity of their mission and relationship.

This narrative offers an important lesson for Christian leadership. Too often, leaders wield influence in ways that alienate rather than attract others. Elijah was different. His character was inviting. Author Ellen G. White once said, "The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian." Would Elisha have desired a double portion of Elijah's spirit if Elijah had been mean, unkind, or judgmental? Would he have chosen to remain by Elijah's side if his presence had been divisive or unpleasant? Would Elisha have known to take up the cloak and strike the water if Elijah hadn't modeled such faith and leadership?

Elijah and Elisha's relationship reminds us that we are often the first introduction people have to God. Our life, actions, and character can inspire others to embrace their God-given calling and draw them closer to the Lord. Elijah's faithfulness and devotion to God were contagious, making a life of service to God desirable and attainable for Elisha. Elijah's success as a mentor was evident in Elisha's success, much like a parent's influence often shapes the life of their child. This story invites us to reflect on our own roles. If you are in the role of Elijah, how does your relationship with God and the way you live influence those around you? And if you are in the role of Elisha, who in your life exemplifies such beauty in their relationship with God that it draws you closer to God as well?

digdeeper

WHAT DOES ELIJAH'S TRANSLATION REPRESENT?



EXPLORE FURTHER

"The Future Kingdom in Miniature—Moses upon the mount of transfiguration was a witness to Christ's victory over sin and death. He represented those who shall come forth from the grave at the resurrection of the just. Elijah, who had been translated to heaven without seeing death, represented those who will be living upon the earth at Christ's second coming, and who will be 'changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;' when 'this mortal must put on immortality,' and 'this corruptible must put on incorruption.' 1 Corinthians 15:51-53. Jesus was clothed with the light of heaven, as He will appear when He shall come 'the second time without sin unto salvation.' For He will come 'in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.' Hebrews 9:28; Mark 8:38. The Saviour's promise to the disciples was now fulfilled. Upon the mount the future kingdom of glory was represented in miniature—Christ the King, Moses a representative of the risen saints, and Elijah of the translated ones." *The Desire of Ages*, 421-422.

conclusion

We are all “influenceable,” no matter how independent or individualistic we believe ourselves to be. This is part of God’s design—God created us for community and connection. As the saying goes, “*By beholding, we become changed.*” Consider: How do your actions influence those around you? And how are you being shaped by the actions of others? If you are the only reflection of Jesus someone will ever see, does your life distort God’s image, or does it testify to the beauty of being made in God’s likeness?

reflect

Are there moments in your life where simply remaining close to a person of faith or wisdom has transformed your perspective? Conversely, have there been times when you distanced yourself from a relationship with God, as a result, from your community? How does the power of presence shape spiritual formation and growth?

challenge

This quarter, make it a point to invite someone you admire to lunch—perhaps your pastor, a young adult leader, a mentor further along in their journey, or someone whose faith deeply inspires your own. Take the opportunity to ask thoughtful questions, listen to their experiences, and gain insight into the lessons they’ve learned. Investing in these kinds of connections not only fosters growth but also strengthens the bonds of community and faith.

Jehoshaphat: Faithfulness Through Praise

In modern times, numerous studies highlight the importance of gratitude. From apps to gratitude journals, many tools help us cultivate a habit of recognizing and expressing thankfulness. Our relationship with God is no different. Choosing to engage in gratitude and praise—especially before circumstances change—can help us navigate some of life's most challenging seasons.

God is not interested in empty platitudes or forced positivity, but God is honored when we choose to trust and praise Him despite our external circumstances. In this lesson, we will study the story of Jehoshaphat and the Israelites, exploring how their victory was won through the posture of praise they maintained—even before the battle began. Through their example, we are reminded that gratitude and worship are not just responses to blessings but acts of faith that align our hearts with God's power and presence.

*Read: **2 CHRONICLES 20:1-30***

Jehoshaphat: FAITHFULNESS THROUGH PRAISE

starting point

AGREE OR DISAGREE (AND DISCUSS):

- Fear should drive us to action, not to prayer.
- Worship is most powerful in times of peace, not struggle.
- True faith means fighting battles with strength, not surrender.
- God only speaks through those in leadership.
- The battle is not ours to fight—it belongs to the Lord.

TRANSITION:

When faced with overwhelming enemies, Jehoshaphat's first response was not to strategize or fight, but to seek God. Instead of preparing weapons, he led his people in worship. Today, we explore how faithfulness in praise shifts our battles from human effort to divine intervention.

exploring scripture

READ 2 CHRONICLES 20:1-30

- How does Jehoshaphat's response to fear compare to how leaders and individuals often react to challenges today?
- How does worship transform our perspective when facing overwhelming circumstances?
- Jehaziel was chosen as God's messenger instead of King Jehoshaphat. How does this challenge societal ideas of authority and influence?
- What does it mean to truly trust that "the battle is not yours, but God's"? Is it possible for the battle to belong to the Lord but still be called to stand for justice and peace in this world? Where have you seen that in Scripture? In your own life?

experiencing the story

DIG DEEPER DISCUSSION:

"They praised God before the victory, not after. Their faith preceded their celebration."

- How does this challenge the way we approach worship?
- Do we wait until God moves to praise, or do we praise in anticipation of God's faithfulness?

REFLECT: "The battle was never won by their strength—it was won through trust, surrender, and worship."

SONG SUGGESTION: "Raise a Hallelujah" by Bethel Music

driving it home

CHALLENGE: THE PRACTICE OF PRAISE

This week, engage in intentional gratitude:

- Write down five things you're grateful for each night. Notice how it shifts your perspective.
- Turn your battles into worship. Instead of fixating on stress, spend time praising God in the midst of uncertainty.
- Remember: The battle is not yours. Ask yourself: what would change in your life if you truly believed that God would fight for you?

Victory is found in faithful praise. Do you trust God enough to sing before the battle is won?

FOR DISCUSSION

- **JEHOSHAPHAT'S** response to fear was to seek God and lead his people in collective prayer and fasting. How does this compare to the way leaders or individuals typically respond to challenges today?
- **IN** your own experiences, how does adopting an attitude of worship or surrender shift your perspective during overwhelming circumstances?
- **JEHAZIEL'S** selection as the messenger highlights God's disregard for status or position in choosing whom to speak through. How does this challenge modern societal notions of authority and influence? What practical steps can we take to create spaces where all voices are valued, recognizing that anyone might be used to deliver truth or insight?

REFLECTION

In 2 Chronicles 20, we read of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites waging war against Jehoshaphat. The Bible describes Jehoshaphat's initial reaction as one of alarm, even fear. Yet, his immediate response was to seek the Lord and proclaim a fast throughout Judah. The people of Judah gathered as a community to seek God's help, interceding in unity.

In verses 6-12, Jehoshaphat offers a remarkable prayer before the assembly, standing in front of his people. He begins by proclaiming God's greatness: the God of heaven, ruler over all kingdoms and nations, whose power and might are unmatched. Jehoshaphat recalls God's past faithfulness, saying, "Did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land?" He affirms their commitment to call on God in times of calamity, declaring their trust that God will hear and save them. Jehoshaphat even pleads with God: "Will you not judge those who are attacking us unjustly?" His prayer climaxes with the humble, faith-filled declaration in verse 12: "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."

This is an admirable expression of trust and faith. To face such a daunting challenge and instinctively turn to God reveals a dynamic and mature relationship we are invited to have. Moreover, Jehoshaphat wasn't just personally faithful—he also led his nation to seek God. His faithfulness influenced those he ruled, fostering collective trust in the Lord.

Then, in verse 14, the Spirit of the Lord comes upon Jehaziel, son of Zechariah. This young man, a follower entreating God alongside the people, is chosen to deliver God's message—not King Jehoshaphat, as might have been expected. This demonstrates an important lesson: God speaks through whomever He chooses, regardless of their position. We are reminded never to discount our potential to be used by God, no matter where we are in life.

Jehaziel's words are timeless: "Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's." What a powerful promise to carry through every phase of life! No matter how overwhelming or insurmountable the challenges before us may seem, we can rest in the assurance that the battle belongs to God. Jehaziel's declaration echoes the humility of David's prayer in Psalm 131: "My heart is not proud, Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me." Similarly, the people of Judah acknowledged their own limitations and sought God, who answered them with this assurance: The battle is not yours; it is mine.

In verse 17, God tells them, "You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you." What an incredible promise! It invites us to reflect on our own lives. How often do we engage in battles unnecessarily, diving headfirst into challenges instead of stepping back to seek God's guidance and deliverance?

In verse 20, Jehoshaphat again encourages the people to have faith in the Lord, promising that they will be upheld and succeed. Then, instead of preparing weapons and sharpening swords, Jehoshaphat does something extraordinary. He leads the people in singing praises to the Lord for God's splendor: "Give thanks to the Lord, for His love endures forever."

It was this act of praise that won the battle—not through human strength or strategy, but through God's power in response to their worship. Their singing became the conduit for God's victory. This moment reminds us that praise is a powerful weapon in spiritual warfare. It is in our worship that God often moves most mightily.

digdeeper



EXPLORE FURTHER

It's important to recognize that the Israelites' act of singing followed their act of belief—faith preceded praise. Often in our faith journeys, we are taught to praise God no matter how we feel, as if praise is a cure-all for doubt or despair. But in this account, we see something different: they didn't just praise God blindly; they praised God after they believed that God's promises would be fulfilled. Their praise flowed from a place of faith.

If we offer praise without genuine trust and belief in God, it becomes a hollow imitation rather than an authentic expression. True praise cannot be forced or cajoled; it is the organic outpouring of trust in God's character and promises. It stems from the conviction that God's love truly endures forever.

Toxic positivity within the church can be deeply harmful. It often teaches us to "fake it until we make it," pushing us to suppress our doubts, struggles, and pain. But belief cannot be fabricated, and neither can a meaningful relationship with God. God doesn't require us to put on a show; God desires authenticity. The battle wasn't won because they sang—it was won because God declared the victory. Their praise was a response to God's words, not an effort to manipulate God into action.

There are seasons when praise doesn't come easily, and that's okay. There are times when mourning, lament, or quiet trust are the most authentic forms of worship. These too are acts of faith, reflecting a relationship with God that acknowledges both the light and the dark, the joy and the sorrow.

Praise that emerges without belief is nothing more than a performance, a fabrication of authenticity. But God isn't impressed with our fabrications. God longs for us to bring our whole selves—the highs and lows, the triumphs and struggles, the light and the darkness. God wants to know it all. Authenticity in worship isn't about always feeling joyful or confident—it's about bringing our real, unvarnished selves to our God who sees, knows, and loves us completely.



conclusion

God had won the battle for the Israelites, and 2 Chronicles 20:29 tells us that when the surrounding kingdoms heard how God had fought against Israel's enemies—not how the Israelites had fought, but how God had intervened—fear of the Lord came upon them. This is significant. King Jehoshaphat, along with the nations of Judah and Jerusalem, encountered God in an unforgettable way because of the battle. They came to know God as the one who fights their battles—but only because they had a battle to fight.

So often in our journey, we pray for hardships to be removed rather than asking God to bring victory through them. Yet it was through the impending war, through the very threat to their lives, that the people of Judah experienced God in a way that transformed their relationship with Him. Even the surrounding nations recognized God because of their victory. This serves as a powerful reminder: we should not shy away from pain or challenges. Through faithfulness, we encounter God in ways we never would if life were always easy. Our battles are often the very stage on which we see God's power and presence.

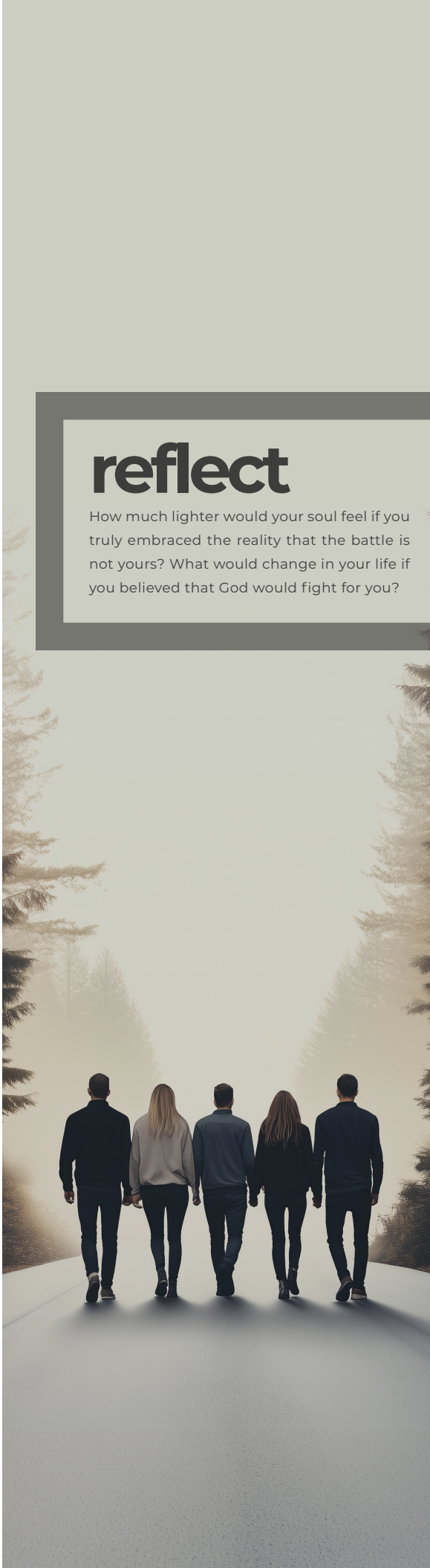
And when we face these battles, what do we have to fear? The battle is not ours—the battle belongs to the Lord. God will fight for us. This truth diminishes the fear of what lies ahead, for God has never fought a battle and lost. Rather than striving to fight in our own strength, we are called to do as Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah did: seek God, trust God, and stand firm in faith. When we do, we will not only see a victory—we will rejoice in God's promises.

reflect

How much lighter would your soul feel if you truly embraced the reality that the battle is not yours? What would change in your life if you believed that God would fight for you?

challenge

This week, write down five things you're grateful for at the end of each day. Pay attention to the changes in your mindset. Do you feel a sense of relief? Do your circumstances seem more manageable? Do you discern God's presence more clearly? Reflect on how adopting an attitude of praise impacts your life.



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