



O&A Youth.

CURRICULUM

YOU MATTER WEEK FOUR JUNIOR HIGH (YOU MATTER IN THE WORLD)

March 26th- April 1st, 2023

THE LESSON IN A SNAPSHOT:

God helped Elijah begin to work through his depression in 1 Kings 19. Often times we can be confused about why we feel the way we do (vs. 1-4). When in the middle of depression, God is not angry with you, He does not blame you (vs. 7-8). He gently helps us begin to deal with our emotions (vs. 9-10). God seems to speak, especially to the hurting, in gentle whispers (vs. 11-14). You matter in the world. God has a purpose for you in the midst of your pain (vs. 15-17). Every life has a purpose and every purpose matters. What are you going to do about yours?

OPENING QUESTIONS BEGIN WITH HIGHS & LOWS

(Begin with Highs & Lows. Use these if you want to get them talking more before playing the lesson.)

ICE BREAKER (Optional): 20 Questions - If you're not familiar with this game, the rules are simple. One student thinks of a secret object and doesn't tell anyone. The only thing they tell the other students is the kind of thing it is. For example, they might tell them it's an animal, a type of food, a famous person, etc. Next, the students can ask up to 20 yes/no questions to try and figure out what the secret object is. They have to be yes/no questions. For example, if the secret word is a type of food, students might ask "Is it a fruit?", "Is it yellow?", etc. This game is a fantastic way to get students talking.

- 1 | Have you been lost before? Where? What happened?
- 2 | Do you have a good sense of directions? Why do you think that?
- 3 | What is something you hope to accomplish in the future?
- 4 | Where is somewhere you hope to travel to in the future?
- 5 | What is something that fills you with hope?
- 6 | When is a time you have felt hopeless?

SCRIPTURE

1 Kings 19 (Everything read in the message is bolded but probably a good idea to read the entire chapter to avoid confusion.)

19 Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² 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." ³ 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.

⁴ 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." ⁵ And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat." ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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." ⁸ 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.

The LORD Speaks to Elijah

⁹ 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?" ¹⁰ 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." ¹¹ 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.

¹² And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. ¹³ And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁴ 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." ¹⁵ And the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. ¹⁶ And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. ¹⁷ And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. ¹⁸ 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." (ESV)

LESSON/VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In 1 Kings 18 Elijah has this amazing victory where God shows up and rains down fire from the sky only to be severely depressed in 1 Kings 19. In this chapter we see how God relates to someone who is struggling with depression in a profound way.

1. **What do you believe happened with Elijah from 1 Kings 18 to 1 Kings 19? Why did he become depressed?** (It would appear based off vs. 1 that it was because of Jezebel's death threat. Commentators are divided on whether this was an empty threat or not from her, based on her character she would have killed him in a second, but since the people turned to his side in 1 Kings 18 it is unlikely she could have actually done anything to him at the time.)
2. **Why was Elijah afraid of Jezebel? Hadn't God protected him in the past?** (Elijah and the other biblical heroes are not cardboard saints. They were real, flesh and blood men and woman who experience all the fears and anxieties that we face, but they were called by God to extraordinary works in His name. Elijah was afraid because he was human; it is human to fear suffering and death.)
3. **How did Elijah experienced a "crisis of expectation" that left him feeling down? What did he expect after his victory over the prophets of Baal that did not happen?** (He expected that his victory against the prophets of Baal would result in the people and their king repenting. He expected that they would turn back to Yahweh, and they would destroy their pagan altars. When this did not happen, he felt his entire mission to call the nation to repentance had been a failure. Elijah felt he had failed the people, and he felt he had failed God.)
4. **Every time Elijah moves to a new location in the past is because God commands him to do so (1 Kings 17:2-3, 8-9, 18:1). But the "Word of the Lord" is absent here in vs. 3. Why is that important?** (It means that this was not God's plan for him but it happened anyway. God did not command him to run away. God did not cause him to go into loneliness and depression... but He is with Him in the midst of it.)
5. **Why does God send an angel (Literally "messenger" in Hebrew, "malak" מַלְאָךְ).**

Why do you think this messenger came? (It was time for God to take the initiative in a messenger of his own to his prophet, which can also be referred to as a messenger, to make the first move in leading Elijah back onto the path of faith that he has strayed from. He just reminded an entire of who God but has forgotten who God was himself.)

6. **Elijah wanted to travel to Mount Horeb, aka Mount Sinai, aka the mount of God. The same mountain Moses received the ten commandments and spoke to God. Why would Elijah want to there?** (We might not know for certain but it is probably one of two options. The first is that he went there to die. The second one, more likely, he is hoping to have an encounter with God, a literal “mountain top” experience, that will hopefully help him to gain strength and keep going. Most likely he thinks it will fix his attitude, depression and struggle)
7. **If God knows everything, what is the point of Him asking Elijah, “What are you doing here?” in vs 9?** (He is helping him begin to deal with what is happening inside of him and give voice to what is on his heart.)
8. **What do you notice about Elijah’s response to God?** (There is a lot happening here. Commentators are actually hopelessly divided on the tone and mood of Elijah’s answer, but it does appear to be heavily negative. He gets defensive, “I have been zealous for the Lord”, ironically he says this while he is running away from his mission. He does not mention one positive thing, but is consumed with negativity “forsaken.. thrown down your altars... killed your prophets”, and then he emphatically says he is the last one left.)
9. **Is Elijah really the last one left?** (No. Not even close, he is not even the last prophet. In ch. 18, Obadiah mentions how he saved 100 of the Lord’s prophets, and then in vs. 18 of ch. 19, God says there will be seven thousand people who have not worshipped Baal. When depressed you don’t see things for what they really are.)
10. **Why does Elijah not even come out of the cave for the wind, earthquake or fire? But he does for the low whisper?** (He has already seen the power of God, he has seen that before! God meets him where he is at. He seems to speak especially to the hurting in gentle whispers.)
11. **Does this mountain top experience change things for Elijah at this point?** (God gives him the powerful mountain top experience Elijah was seeking but it did not change anything for him. It was the low whisper that got his attention. His answer is the exact same however. He is still struggling.)
12. **What sparks hope for Elijah finally (vs. 15-18)?** (God gives him a renewed sense of purpose. He is going to anoint or take part in eventually anointing a new prophet, priest and king. He goes on to have a student and friend in Elisha and perform even more incredible miracles.) Other because they both require the power of God. One can be proven while the other cannot. You can’t “fake” heal someone but you can pretend to forgive sins.)

PERSONAL APPLICATION QUESTIONS

The truth is you matter to God, you matter to people, and you matter in the world. Every life has a purpose. You have purpose in the midst of your pain. What are you going to do about yours?

1. Why do think it can be difficult to know why we feel the way we do?
2. Have you ever felt like you were struggling with depression because God was angry with you? Almost like you’re to blame for it?
3. So many times when we fail or fear, we are so much harder on ourselves that God is. Why is that?
4. How do you run away from your problems? What do you think would fix your struggles?
5. Based on how God reacted to Elijah, how can we best help others deal with depression? (See the first note under Extra Notes on the Passage for You.)
6. What do you believe your purpose is? (Before anything, God calls us to himself, but we also have passions and talents that we can use to glorify God.)
7. In his message, Joseph listed off truths of who we are in Christ, did any stand out to you? Did you write down any? (Complete list is added at the bottom of the curriculum.)
8. When we are depressed it is hard to picture yourself in the future. Have you ever struggled with seeing yourself in the future? Do you have someone you can go to if that does happen?

Close in prayer.

DIG DEEPER: EXTRA NOTES ON THE PASSAGE FOR YOU

We almost never use these but they are more intellectually in depth insights into the text itself.

- There are actually six concrete steps that come as a form of how to respond to those in depression in this passage. They are (1) Don't blame yourself. God didn't blame and was even willing to provide nourishment so Elijah could run away (v. 7–8). (2) Express your feelings. Elijah needed to talk, even though what he says seems only loosely related to the fear that triggered his bout of depression. You can express your feelings freely to the Lord, or find someone willing to serve as God's listening post (v. 10). (3) Remember God speaks to the hurting in gentle whispers. Don't imagine God is angry or disgusted with you (v. 11–14). (4) Return to work. Inactivity feeds depression. God had a task for Elijah that would give him a renewed sense of purpose (v. 15–17). (5) Reality-test your perceptions. Anyone who is feeling despair will have his or her view of things colored by the emotion. Elijah felt alone, but God told His prophet he was one of thousands who worship Him. Let facts shape your feelings, rather than letting your feelings distort the facts (v. 18). (6) Share with a friend. If you have no close friends, ask the Lord to give you a companion. Loneliness and depression often walk hand in hand (v. 19–21).¹ We did not cover v. 19-21 in this lesson.
- When interpreting the OT (Old Testament), you have to be careful to not allegorize meaning looking for meaning in every aspect and imagery. Principles can be drawn from the narrative, but they must be: Reflected in the text. Timeless, not tied to a specific situation. They must not be culturally bound. They must correspond to the rest of Scripture. They need to be relevant to both the biblical and contemporary audience.
- Principles for 1 Kings 19 could be: We are never really alone. When you fear or fail don't be harder on yourself than God is.
- Elijah went to Beersheba because it was outside Ahab's jurisdiction. It was around a 120 mile journey, v. 3.
- The angel of the Lord people may think of as a theophany (a visible manifestation of God to humankind) but in Hebrew the form of the word does not take the usual pattern when referring to God Himself as opposed to a representative of God, v. 5-7.
- It's worth noting that Moses fasted for 40 days on Mount Horeb, Elijah fasted on his journey to Mount Horeb. Both were precursors to Jesus' forty day fast and temptation. There is a strong link between these three characters in Scripture (the transfiguration for example). Moses was the law giver, Elijah the law restorer, and Jesus the law fulfiller.
- There is a big word called "Typology". It is basically the idea that are foreshadowings of Jesus or "Types" of Him throughout the OT that point to the promise of Him. These "types" all fall short of perfection which Jesus completes. Three prominent "types" throughout the OT are prophet, priest and king. Which Elijah is commissioned to anoint new people to each of these roles in vs. 15-16.
- Interesting side note: When God is called "LORD" in the OT, that is His actual proper name. Much like Baal, the false god, is named Baal. The LORD, Yahweh in Hebrew, was His proper name, He was the God of Israel. When Yawheh (LORD in English) is used it is showing a level of intimacy in the relationship taking place. When God is used, that is the word Elohim, which is the generic word used for gods of any kind.
- Even more interesting side note: We actually do not know how to properly pronounce the word for Yawheh because they did not write it with vowels because of how sacred God's proper name was, it literally looks like this: YHWH, see, no vowels. This is why you hear

¹ Lawrence O. Richards, [*The Bible Reader's Companion*](#), electronic ed. (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991), 236.

Jehovah, that was what we believed how you pronounced it for a long time but now almost all scholars agree that it is not correct and Yawheh is more accurate. There is a big word for this concept called the tetragrammaton.