

2-16-20 **WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?** 1 Kings 19

What are you doing here? Have you ever asked yourself this question? If there was ever a time for us to consider seriously what it means **to experience genuine and authentic renewal in our lives**, then it is **such a time as this**. In an essay entitled "The Paradox of Our Age" from his book *Words Aptly Spoken* (Overlake Christian Bookstore, 1995; pp. 197-98), Dr. Bob Moorehead put it like this:

We've learned how to make a living but not a life; we've added years to life, not life to years, we've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul; we've split the atom, but not our prejudice; we . . . plan more but accomplish less . . . we learned to rush, but not to wait . . . These are the days of . . . quick trips, disposable diapers . . . throwaway morality, one-night stands . . . and pills that do everything from cheer, to prevent, quiet or kill. It is a time when there is much in the show window and nothing in the stock room.

We have become a world that is addicted to hurry. Hurry is an emotional pusher. We drive fast when we have plenty of time to get to our destination. We microwave our food even though it tastes better warmed the way it was cooked. We grow impatient waiting in lines when we have no other place to be at that moment. We have to give ourselves permission to slow down. **We need to seriously consider and ponder how to receive genuine and authentic renewal in our lives.**

The Bible is filled with portraits of God's mighty men and women. While we read and marvel at their expressions of faith & courage, we also see that God's Word shares with us the human side, the weak side, the everyday side of these heroes of the faith. And from these revelations, we SEE and LEARN the lessons that **God revealed to His chosen when they needed help**. Prayerfully, we can harness the same lessons and not only apply them to our lives but also embrace them that we may know the abundant & full life that Jesus has come and promised to us. (John 10:10).

1 Kings 19:3-15(a):

³ **Elijah was afraid and ran for his life.** When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴ 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."

⁵ Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." ⁶ 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.

⁷ 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." ⁸ 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.⁹ There he went into a cave and spent the night.

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

¹⁰ 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."

¹¹ 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. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. **And after the fire came a gentle whisper.** ¹³ **When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.**

Then a voice said to him, **"What are you doing here, Elijah?"**

THE CONTEXT LEADING INTO 1 KINGS 19: God had just empowered and enable His mighty prophet Elijah to 'face-down' over 400 prophets of Baal. Elijah prayed fire down upon his sacrifice to God and Elijah prayed for the end of a crippling three-year drought. King Ahab's evil, non-Israelite wife, Jezebel was offended and vowed to have Elijah killed as an act of vengeance.

Even though Elijah had just experienced an incredible victory on God's behalf FEAR overcame and he ran for his life. He was discouraged, despondent, and depressed? **BUT WHY?**

1. ELIJAH WAS NOT THINKING CLEARLY.

- + Failed to consider the source of the threat.
- + "When a mule kicks you, don't let it bother you. Just consider the source." :-)
- + Dear God, I am feeling myself being overcome by fear, I ask you for strength right now. Amen

2. ELIJAH SEPARATED HIMSELF FROM OTHERS.

- + (vs. 3) he left his servant (and went alone) ...
- + DISCOURAGED PEOPLE ARE LONELY PEOPLE!
- + Elijah should have stayed with a trusted friend who could have pumped encouragement, strength, and objectivity into his life...BUT human nature is naturally destructive, when we get discouraged, we naturally work to 'get alone' ... and that is often the WORSE thing!

3. ELIJAH EXPERIENCED A POST VICTORY "LET DOWN."

- + Our MOST VULNERABLE MOMENTS often come after a great victory, achievement, answer to prayer, or success.
- + STORY of famous rock climber --- while the adrenaline rushes for the summit, the greatest danger is often in the descent ... tired, vulnerable, and even careless...hmmm...
- + Elijah was exposed & vulnerable --- CAN YOU RELATE?

4. ELIJAH WAS EXHAUSTED & SPENT.

- + For years Elijah was 'public enemy #1' ... and THEN he had an unimaginable confrontation (and victory) before the people of Israel, the priests of

Asherah and the prophets of Baal... he must have been at the end of his rope --- emotionally, spiritually, and physically AND THEN he was exonerated in a most remarkable, even miraculous way!!! And even then, the Queen declared vengeance against him!!! HOW WOULD YOU FEEL?

- + AXIOM --- THERE IS ALWAYS A LETDOWN after a VICTORY --- and we have all found ways to PROCESS
- + An old Greek saying, "YOU WILL BREAK THE BOW IF YOU KEEP IT ALWAYS BENT"-- **SO BE AWARE!!**
- + TIMES MOST FAVORABLE TO DEPRESSION: The hour of great success...And humanity's NATURAL WEAKNESS claims the right to show itself -- are we ready & prepared?

5. ELIJAH GOT LOST IN SELF-PITY

- + SELF-PITY is a pathetic emotion.
 - It will lie to you.
 - It will exaggerate to you.
 - It will cultivate a 'victim' mentality.
 - It will stimulate wishes of death!!!
- + Let's always turn to God's standard.

LOOK UP TO GOD & LISTEN:

1. God allowed (& provided) time & resources for Elijah to rest and refresh.
2. God communicated clearly & wisely with Elijah.
3. God gave Elijah a close friend. (1 Kings 19-21)

LOOK OUT TO THE WORLD & BEGIN TO ENGAGE AGAIN:

1. ARE YOU TAKING REFUGE IN A CAVE WHEN GOD IS CALLING YOU to COME OUT & GET BACK TO WORK?
2. GOD WANTS US TO THRIVE & TO SOAR.
3. God has CALLED US --- not to self-pity or indulgence BUT TO SERVE, TO HELP & TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD ALMIGHTY!!!!

PRAYER: Gracious and loving God, you are a God of NEW BEGINNINGS, you created us to be whole, unique, & abundant, life-living children of God. Though TOO often, we get TOO BUSY and TOO DISCONNECTED before we even realize it, you are full of grace to help us and to restore us. You bring us back, refresh our spirits, and make us whole again. God, teach us again what it means to live lightly and freely, walking with you each and every day. DEAR GOD, come and be present in our conversations and fellowship. In Jesus' name, AMEN

2-16-20 The Practice of Taking Care of Your Body

Sometimes we think of our spiritual practices and life with God as separate from how we treat our bodies. But we are whole persons, created by God—body, mind, and spirit. God’s desire for our wholeness is not only about our hearts but also about our whole selves.

The past 3 weeks we’ve considered the importance of Spiritual Practices in helping us to be “GAME READY” to better manage the “RAT RACE” of life.

Week 1 – We studied the **23rd Psalm** and were encouraged to consider ourselves as sheep in the care of JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

Week 2 – We studied **Matthew 11:28-30** when Jesus invites “all those who are tired and heavy laden” to let go and turn our feelings and our responses to life over to God. We introduced the Spiritual Practice of “**EXAMEN**” -- as athletes review game-films, we review our day and consider what was good and what we may need to improve.

Week 3 --- We studied **Luke 10:38-42** and considered the problem of DISTRACTED LIVING. Martha allowed “things” & “obligations” to DISTRACT HER from Jesus. We introduced the Spiritual Practice of FASTING from things in our lives that we use and do without even thinking. In FASTING from these things, we are reminded how we ought to remember more frequently our REAL NEED for GOD.

This week, we will seek wholeness by taking care of our bodies.

Day 1: Sleep eight hours. *Look at your schedule for the week and make a plan to get eight full hours of sleep each night this week. As you go to sleep each night, ask God to bring you rest. Pay attention to the way your rested body serves you throughout the day. How does rest equip you for the challenges of each day? How does rest allow for deeper connection to God?*

Day 2: Drink plenty of water. *Over the course of the day, be intentional about drinking eight large glasses of water. With each glass, reflect on Jesus as the source of Living Water that sustains you for a life with God. Notice how hydrating makes you feel—are you more energized? Are you more confident, knowing you are making good choices for your health?*

Day 3: Go for a long walk if you are able, soaking up the sun and taking deep breaths. *Let endorphins kick in, and feel the strength of your legs to carry you. Feel your back straighten as you take long strides. With every breath, breathe in the grace of God; as you exhale, breathe out your praise to God.*

Day 4: Fast from sugar. *Most of us have no idea how much sugar we take in each day. Spend the day taking care of your body by relentlessly avoiding sugar. Say no to the sugary coffee creamer or the honey in your tea. Say no to the office snack drawer or the plate of cupcakes that showed up without warning. Say no to the soda that you’ve thought you had to have at 3:00 p.m. every day. Notice how many ways sugar infiltrates your day without your even knowing it. After today, determine which forms of sugar you could permanently cut from your routine to take better care of your body.*

Day 5: Today, write a letter thanking your body for what it does for you. *God made your bodies in such an awesome way and for incredible things. Consider all that your body does for you. Give thanks for it, and consider how you might take better care of your body as an act of worship to the God who created you.*

Day 6. Find a workout buddy. *Who will be your accountability partner as you set out to take good care of your body? Make that your number-one task today.*

Day 7: Cook your favorite healthy meal, and have dinner with your friends and family. *Fuel your body with healthy food, and fuel your spirit with intentional time with loved ones, gathered at the table. Pray a blessing over your meal and over your friends.*

By: Junius Dotson, **SOUL RESET—breakdown, breakthrough and the journey to wholeness**, UPPER ROOM BOOKS, Nashville 2019, pages 118-120.