



*THE STRUGGLE
IS REAL*

1 KINGS 19:1-8

Introduction

The conversation about **mental health** is becoming more prevalent in our society—and that's a good thing. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) reports that “**approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. (46.6 million) experiences mental illness in a given year.**” Mental illness, while not easily defined, can range from a variety of different hindrances and disorders that make normal, **everyday life a challenge** or **borderline impossible** for the individual.

Mental health issues are complex and are often no one's fault (**John 9**). There are often **no easy answers** because of the **complexity of mental health issues**. Instead, we can **TRUST** that God is **SOVEREIGN OVER OUR STRUGGLES** and that he will be glorified as journey through an often-complicated path. Such a Path requires **wisdom from the Lord, patience,** and **plenty of resources...**

The Bible does not explicitly speak on the topic of **MENTAL HEALTH**; however, it does have a lot to say about the heart and mind, spiritual brokenness, and the condition of the soul.

Mental health is important, as it affects the whole being...

This Dilemma goes against the desire of God...

3 John 1:2 (NKJV)

2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper **in all things** and **be in health,** just as **your soul prospers.**

Introduction

MORE CHURCHES are experiencing the effects of mental illness *within their congregations*. Treatment and care have been topics that many have debated, and while these questions are not easily answered, the Bible provides **INSIGHT** on how *we should view* and *respond* to those who are **BATTLING WITHIN THEIR OWN MINDS**. The enemy will try to convince you there is **NO HOPE** or that seeing a counselor is pointless...

When we encounter people who suffer with mental illness, we should be **HESITANT TO PROVIDE OUR OPINION** on *what the source is or how it should be solved*. Heath Lambert said it best: “Caring for people means being alert to *physical problems* that *require medical treatments* and *spiritual problems* that require **Christ and his Word**.”

Most of us are *not mental health experts*, so we should stick to *what we do know*: **God is good, loves us, and does not forsake his people**. *We Should Pray with those who are struggling* within our church. *Treat them as fellow believers*. **Encourage them to seek professional and medical help**, if need be. *Be available*. Walk with them, shouldering one another’s burdens in order to fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2). Only then will we love as Christ loved and care well for those who are hurting.

Biblical Examples

Moses ~ Numbers 11:10-15 (NIV)

10 Moses *heard the people* of every family wailing, each at the entrance to his tent. The LORD became exceedingly angry, and **Moses was troubled**. 11 He asked the LORD, "Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that **you put the burden of all these people on me?** 12 Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their forefathers? 13 Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, 'Give us meat to eat!' 14 I cannot carry all these people by myself; **the burden is too heavy for me**. 15 If this is how you are going to treat me, **PUT ME TO DEATH RIGHT NOW—** if I have found favor in your eyes--and do not let me face my own ruin."

Jonah 4:1-3 (NIV)

1 But Jonah *was greatly displeased and became angry*.
2 He prayed to the LORD, "O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. 3 Now, O LORD, **TAKE AWAY MY LIFE, FOR IT IS BETTER FOR ME TO DIE THAN TO LIVE.**"

Jeremiah 20:18 (NLT)

18 Why was I ever born? My entire life has been filled with trouble, sorrow, and shame.

1 Kings 19:1-8 (NIV)

1 Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword.

*2 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." 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 desert. He came to a broom tree, 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."*

1 Kings 19:1-8 (NIV)

5 Then he lay down under the tree 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 a cake of 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.*

Introduction

Here In The Text, We are introduced to Elijah...He was called by God, commissioned by God, courageously stood with God

But Yet....

- *He felt like* giving up
- *He felt like* throwing in the towel
- *He felt like* saying, “Does it really pay to serve God”
 - *He felt like* calling it quits
- *He was physically, mentally, and spiritually EXHAUSTED*

He Reached a Point Where The Stress, The Fear, and The Anxiety

*Led him to the **BRINK OF DEFEAT***

And He ALMOST LET GO.....

Yes Elijah....Almost Let Go

*We Are Not **Too Spiritual** To Avoid The Struggle....*

Introduction

Regardless of

- *How many Scriptures you know*
- *How many years you've been walking with the Lord*
 - *How spiritual you are*

*We All Have A **Breaking Point***

*Discouragement now causes him to **FEEL** Defeated
Many people have accepted defeat as their **FINAL CHOICE***

- *They speak the language of **DEFEAT***
- *They have the mindset of **DEFEAT***
- *They keep company with others who are **DEFEATED***

As Believers We Must Not **ACCEPT DEFEAT** as the **FINAL OPTION!!!**

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

*15 But in your hearts **set apart Christ as Lord**. **Always be prepared** to give an answer to everyone who **asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have**.*

But do this with gentleness and respect...

Understand The Voices That Affect The Mind, Body, and Soul

2 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."

The **Threat of Tomorrow** Had An Impact On Him **TODAY!!!**

Ammunition

Matthew 6:34 (NIV)

34 Therefore **do not worry about tomorrow**, for tomorrow will worry about itself.

EACH DAY HAS ENOUGH TROUBLE OF ITS OWN.

Matthew 6:11 (NIV)

11 Give **US TODAY** our daily bread.

Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)

6 Do not be **anxious about anything**, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, **WILL GUARD YOUR HEARTS AND YOUR MINDS** in Christ Jesus.

Failure To Utilize Weapons, Causes Us To Lose Focus

1 Kings 19:3 (NIV)

3 *Elijah was afraid and ran for his life....*

{Emotional... And Physical}

*Worry About Tomorrow, Will Cause Us To Forget What God Did YESTERDAY
And Defeat Us TODAY...*

What Has God Already Done

- ✓ *Predicted It Would Not Rain....No Rain For 3 Years*
 - ✓ *Survived At The Brook with Food from Raven*
- ✓ *A Widow Woman gives her last and God gives her more than enough*
 - ✓ *Stretches out over her dead son and he lives again*
 - ✓ *Calls down fire from heaven and kills 450 prophets*

But Now A Message **ABOUT TOMORROW** Defeats Him...

One Word Can Make A Difference...

{Guard Your Mind}

Don't Lose Focus...

Peter Walked On Water Until He Shifted His Focus On The Wind, Waves, and the Storm...

Failure To Utilize Weapons, Causes Us To Become Fatigued

1 Kings 19:3-4 (NIV)

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 desert.

{Emotional... And Physical}

Elijah was **DRAINED PHYSICALLY**. He went through the Mt. Carmel conflict, ran twenty miles, and had little food intake. **When you are weak or sick, it is easier to become depressed**. You are **VERY VULNERABLE**. Satan tempted Jesus after a forty-day fast (Matthew 4). Lack of rest creates **A PHYSICAL IMBALANCE** which can lead to emotional depression.

God has **A LAW IN SCRIPTURE** that we are to rest every seventh day. If you violate it, it begins to catch up with you. **RESTING** is as important as working. **DON'T NEGLECT REST**

Ammunition

Matthew 11:28-30

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and **I WILL GIVE YOU REST**. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find **REST FOR YOUR SOULS**. For my yoke **IS EASY**, and my burden is light.”

WHEN WE REST... God Restores our Soul...Renews Our Mind... Renews Our Strength...

Failure To Utilize Weapons, Causes Us To Abandon Fellowship

1 Kings 19:3-4 (NIV)

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 desert.

Depression **FEEDS ON LONELINESS**. Elijah puts himself in a vulnerable situation. He has left his servant behind and chooses to fight this battle alone.

This Is Why The Local Church Is So Vital...

Hebrews 10:25 (NIV)

25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, **BUT LET US ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER**--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (NLT)

9 **Two people are better off than one**, for they can help each other succeed.
10 If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

13 **The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience**. And God is faithful. He will not **ALLOW** the temptation to be more than **YOU CAN STAND**. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

Failure To Utilize Weapons, Causes Us To Rely On Feelings

1 Kings 19:4-5 (NIV)

*4 while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, 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 tree and fell asleep.*

James 5:16-18 (NIV)

*16**The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective**. 17 Elijah was a man just like us. **He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years**. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.*

*So when he is fearful... **HE DID WHAT WORKED BEFORE...**
But not BY FAITH... BUT WITH FEELINGS*

Elijah is filled with emotions...which affects his thinking...

If you wanted to die ~ Just stay where you were.... Why send a messenger...why not hitman...

*Crystal Park, PhD, a psychology professor at the University of Connecticut... says people **who pray often** and are active with their faith communities make **generally healthier decisions**... Prayer has **physiological effects on the body**, such as calming your **cardiovascular system** and **reducing your stress**."*

Failure To Utilize Weapons, Causes Us To Rely On Feelings

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*4 while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and **PRAYED THAT HE MIGHT DIE**. "**I HAVE HAD ENOUGH, LORD**," he said. "**TAKE MY LIFE**;*

Jesus Prayed.... Take This Cup....

Paul Prayed... Take This Thorn

Moses Prayed... Take My Life

David Prayed... My soul is downcast... Where are you...

Job Prayed... please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off

***JUST PRAY**... Even when it seems like it is not working.....*

Romans 8:26-28 (NLT)

*26 And **the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness**. For example, we **don't know what God wants us to pray for**. But **the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words**.*

*27 And the **Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying**, for the Spirit pleads for us believers **in harmony with God's own will**.*

*28 And we know that **GOD CAUSES EVERYTHING TO WORK TOGETHER** for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*

God Gives Relief Through Ordinary Resources

1 Kings 19:5-6 (NIV)

5 Then he lay down under the tree 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 **a cake of bread baked over hot coals,** and **a jar of water.** He ate and drank and then lay down again.

God deals with our Mind, Body, and Soul...

PRAYER IS SPIRITUAL... But **REST IS AN ORDINARY RESOURCE**

God Gives Us The Wisdom To Know What Works

Psalm 23:2-3 (NIV)

2 He **makes me lie down in green pastures,** he leads me **beside quiet waters,**
3 he **restores my soul.** He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Mark 6:31 (NIV)

31 Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "**Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.**"

Jeremiah 15:16 (NIV)

16 When **your words came, I ate them;** they were my joy and my heart's delight...

God Gives Relief Through Ordinary Resources

1 Kings 19:7-8 (NIV)

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.

It is a blessing to see how the Lord spoke to this discouraged and defeated prophet. It teaches us that the Lord has compassion on the fearful, the fallen and the foolish.

1. Notice The **Patience Needed**... {We must be patient with those who are dealing with this struggle}
2. Notice The **Provision Needed**... Gives enough for this particular journey
3. Notice The **Power Received From God's Provisions**... Strength For Your Struggle

Isaiah 40:29-31 (NKJV)

29 He gives **power to the weak**, And to those who have no might He **increases strength**.
30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall,
31 But those who wait on the LORD Shall **RENEW THEIR STRENGTH**; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

In Conclusion

Understand The Voices That Affect The Mind, Body, and Soul

Failure To Utilize Weapons, Causes Us To Lose Focus

Failure To Utilize Weapons, Causes Us To Become Fatigued

Failure To Utilize Weapons, Causes Us To Abandon Fellowship

Failure To Utilize Weapons, Causes Us To Rely On Feelings

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