

# RESCUE

## RESCUE, PART 3: SUICIDE & DEPRESSION

Everyone goes through times where their emotional tanks are empty—even great heroes of the Bible. Consider the experience of Elijah, one of the most important prophets in the history of Israel. After a highlight of his ministry—he went toe-to-toe with a pagan prophet and won—he got a death threat from the queen and began a downward spiral of emotional exhaustion.

### BIG IDEA: Not Everything You Feel Is Right.

Not only should we avoid those five traps, we can also battle depression by getting physically healthy, pouring our hearts out to God, experiencing the power and presence of God, and letting Him give us a new purpose and direction in life.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What types of things tend to get you down the most?
2. *With your Bible or the Bible App, read 1 Kings 19:1-15.*

*When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything Elijah had done, including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal. So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: "May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed them." Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died." Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. But as he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, "Get up and eat!" He looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again. Then the angel of the LORD came again and touched him and said, "Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you." So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai, the mountain of God. There he came to a cave, where he spent the night. But the LORD said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Elijah replied, "I have zealously served the LORD God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too." "Go out and stand before me on the mountain," the LORD told him. And as Elijah stood there, the LORD passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And a voice said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He replied again, "I have zealously served the LORD God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too." Then the LORD told him, "Go back the same way you came, and travel to the wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive there, anoint Hazael to be king of Aram.*

*1 Kings 19:1-15 (NLT)*

3. Elijah is on a hot streak of spiritual victories (1 Kings 18). He's just defeated the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel, he prayed for rain in a time of severe famine and the skies opened, and he outran a chariot in an amazing feat of strength. Despite all he's seen God do, when Jezebel threatens Elijah's life, he cowers in fear and runs away (1 Kings 19). How does fear sometimes create depression? What types of fears have a grip on your life?

4. Have there been times in your life when you've said those words: "I've had enough, Lord"? Describe that time, and how you dealt with it.
5. Immediately following a great victory, Elijah became depressed. In this passage, we find five common contributors to depression: *isolation*, *focusing on feelings and not the facts*, *comparing ourselves with others*, *stinking thinking*, and *exaggerating the negative*. Of these five, which one is your most common challenge in your own life?
6. The first is living in *isolation*. When times get hard, why do you think we tend to pull away from community and friends?
7. *With your Bible or the Bible App, read Galatians 6:1-3.*

*Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.*  
Galatians 6:1-3 (NLT)

8. Why is it important to have Christian friends? Wouldn't it be easier to live as a hermit or monk?
9. The second trap is *focusing on feelings and not the facts*. Because Elijah felt like a failure, he assumed he was a failure. Elijah honestly believed he was the only faithful one left. Yet God replaced this lie with the truth: there were actually 7,000 others who still were faithful. Can you name a similar lie that you believed to be true? How did God reveal His truth to you?
10. The third trap we can get into is *comparing ourselves with others*. How can social media compound the comparison trap? What can you practically do to kill the comparison trap this week?
11. The fourth trap is having *stinking thinking*. Elijah's faulty thinking was that he was taking responsibility and blame for something that wasn't his. How can faulty thinking lead us towards the darkness of depression?
12. The fifth trap is when we *exaggerating the negative*. Which of Elijah's mistakes are you most prone to experience in your life?
13. One of the most common factors that leads to depression is wearing ourselves out. In what areas of your life are you exhausted? What are some things you can do starting today to help relieve that exhaustion?
14. What is a specific way that you can begin working on the first remedy for depression—your physical well-being?
15. When you think back to times of emotional exhaustion in your life, how did you get through them?
16. Why can it be tough to get the rest you need when you're struggling through emotional exhaustion?
17. When you're dealing with emotional exhaustion, it isn't just important to express your feelings to God. You need to express them to other people, too. Who in your life can you safely express emotions to?
18. *With your Bible or the Bible App, read 1 Kings 19:8-15.* What is significant about the 40 days and nights? About Mount Sinai For what does Elijah hope? (*see Exodus 3:1-2; Deuteronomy 4:10-14*)
19. Share your observations from this passage about how God spoke to Elijah. What do you need to do in your life to hear God more?
20. Elijah didn't experience God through his power, the earthquake, wind or fire, but he experienced God's presence through a gentle whisper. When was the last time you experienced God's presence in your life? Describe that time and how you felt closer to God.

*Whispering is typically employed for the sake of **secrecy**. No form of communication is more intimate. And it seems to be God's preferred method here with Elijah. So why did God use a gentle whisper? When someone speaks in a whisper, you have to get very close to hear. In fact, you have to put your ear near the person's mouth. We lean in toward a whisper, and that's what God wants. The goal of hearing the heavenly Father's voice isn't just hearing His voice; it's intimacy with Him. That's why He speaks in a whisper. He wants to be as close to us as is divinely possible! He loves us, likes us, that much.*

21. How would your life change if you heard from God every day? How do you think it would change our church?

## WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Over the next 7 days set aside time every day to be in God's presence. Call a friend from group in the middle of the week to see how you can help support them in this. Come back to group next time to share the difference that made in your life.

## CHANGING YOUR MIND

*And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper.*

*1 Kings 19:12 (NLT)*