

James 5 verse 16-18

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. 18 Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.

What power with God! Do you wish that you could be like Elijah? Do you wish that you could have that power with God in prayer? Does your heart just long to see God move in a miraculous way in our midst, in our town, in our country? If only I had that power Lord, if only I could be just like Elijah. Yet the scripture tells us that Elijah was nothing special. It says in James that he was a man of like passion, just like you or me. He was very ordinary - his parentage was nothing special, his mum and dad weren't even mentioned, he wasn't the world's snappiest dresser, he had to eat, sleep, wash, just like you and I and we can see from scripture that he was also subject to some of the deficiencies that you and I experience in our lives. In the Bible human nature is painted in its true colour. No doubt if scripture had been written without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we would not have been able to read about Elijah's failures and weaknesses and we would not have been encouraged that if God could use Elijah, He could use us too. So, what were some of Elijah's human weaknesses?

1. He was Fearful of Man (or a woman in his case).

1 Kings 19 verse 1-3

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

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Elijah Part 1. 1 Kings 19. Undated. Unsure if or when shared with SCF *

2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." 3 And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

Picture the scene: Here is Elijah- he had just won a mighty battle for the Lord on Mount Carmel, the prophets of baal had been slain with the sword, God had been exalted and everyone knew that Elijah was man of the moment. Yet at the threat of Jezebel he left the place of victory and ran for his life - Elijah who had not been afraid of 850 false prophets fled at the fear of one. Do you fear man or woman? Does it hold you back from serving the Lord and stepping out for Him?

Proverbs 29 verse 25

The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted. God wants to set us free from that snare just as He had to set Elijah free.

2. He Suffered Discouragement and Despondency

1 Kings 19 verse 4

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers."

You cannot get any more despondent than that! He completely went to pieces. He had taken his eyes off the Lord and what He could do and had focused in on his circumstances and he said to himself *what's the point? I can't go on, I can't take any more let me die!* Does that sound familiar?

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3. He Was Full of Self-Pity

In **1 Kings 19 verse 4**, on page 2 he said *I am not better than my fathers*. How quickly discouragement leads to self pity and that is such a dangerous roundabout to take a ride on. But God didn't leave him there. Elijah threw in the towel under the Juniper tree and God threw it back!

1 Kings 19 verse 8-15

So he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to 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?" 14 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."

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15 The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. 16 Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. 17 Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu.

We read that the Lord sent an angel to minister to Elijah and he went on in the strength of that ministry for forty days. But even after the angel had ministered to him he was still complaining, he was still not seeing things as they really were. He thought he was the only one left that had not forsaken God and in his discouragement we read that he decided to go and stand before the Mount of God. And there he poured out his complaints to God. When we are all mixed up inside, full of fear and discouragement, there is only one place that we can go and that is to God. And we read that the Lord came to him not in the fire, or the earthquake, or the wind but in the still small voice. And God ministered to him; he opened his eyes to see the truth, that he was not on his own. God did not focus him in on his failings but instead he gave him fresh direction and told him that He still had a job for Elijah to do.

Do you still want to be like Elijah? Does he sound a little less like a super hero now? I know I can equate myself with a lot of what Elijah was, yet God does not want to leave us discouraged, fearful, disillusioned, full of self pity and lonely. He is saying *come to the Mount of God and I will open your eyes, direct you and give you new things to do.*

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