

## **ELIJAH WAS...JUST LIKE US.' James 5:17 NIV**

There are times in life when we all feel down. But God's Word shows us the way to get back up. Look at Elijah, who was just like us.' How come he got so far down?

*It happened on the heels of a great victory.* He didn't start out in the doldrums, and he didn't fall into sin. No, he'd just called down fire from heaven and slain 450 false prophets (1 Kings 18:22-40). But that's hard work! So he went from exhilaration to exhaustion. Weary, defences down and vulnerability up, he fell into a natural depression because fatigue strips us of our courage.

*Fear caused him to lose perspective.* The man of God who'd just faced down an evil multitude, ended up running from one woman, Jezebel (1 Kings 19). Fear made him forget God's power; it skewed his perspective and left him feeling suicidal. Exhaustion coupled with fear is a dangerous combination. It invites hopeless, wrong thinking, and creates the illusion that your options are gone.

*He became isolated.* Elijah left his servant at Beersheba and journeyed into the wilderness alone (1 Kings 19:3-4). When you most need support, anxiety, a sense of inadequacy and fear of failure, will push you into isolation. At that point you're in the worst possible company; your own. Elijah thought 'I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me' (vs10, 14 NIV). Translated: 'It's bad and I can't see it getting better!' When you're down, it isn't the time to isolate. That's when you need to reach for God and the people who love you, who can help you back up.

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What was God's prescription for getting Elijah back on his feet? A lecture on the prophet's faltering faith? No, just rest and nourishment! God recognises our limitations, even when we don't. 'A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out...' (Isaiah 42:3 NIV). When we neglect our own legitimate needs, it shows up in our attitude.

God understands that being down is a 'perspective' problem, and getting back up requires adjustment in four crucial areas. So:

*He adjusted Elijah's God-perspective.* "'Get out and stand ... in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by'" (1 Kings 19:11 NIV). The One who gave Elijah victory on Mount Carmel, could also sustain him in the desert of Jezreel. But first Elijah had to spend time with Him; otherwise he was running on an empty tank. Hello!

*He adjusted Elijah's world-perspective.* Elijah said, 'God's covenant is broken, His altar destroyed, His prophets murdered, and I'm the only one left' (v14 paraphrase). But God showed Elijah that He still had the necessary resources and strategies to accomplish His purposes, even in a hostile environment

*He adjusted Elijah's self-perspective.* The prophet saw himself as helpless and inadequate: "'...Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!'" (v4 NKJV). But God showed him there were still kings to anoint, battles to win, and that Elijah had an important role to play (v16).

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