

Avoiding the Holiday Blues

Lesson 02 in the series: "Getting Ready for the Holidays"

I. Elijah must have had high expectations for a revival after God used him mightily at Mt. Carmel.

A. Elijah had just called down fire from heaven.

"O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant. Prove that I have done all this at your command. O LORD, answer me! Answer me so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God and that you have brought them back to yourself.' Immediately the fire of the LORD flashed down from heaven and burned up the young bull, the wood, the stones, and the dust. It even licked up all the water in the trench! And when all the people saw it, they fell face down on the ground and cried out, 'The LORD—he is God! Yes, the LORD is God!'"

1 Kings 18:36-39 (NLT)

B. Elijah had just prayed for rain to end a 3 ½ year-long drought and it poured!

"Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel and bowed low to the ground and prayed with his face between his knees. Then he said to his servant, 'Go and look out toward the sea.' The servant went and looked, then returned to Elijah and said, 'I didn't see anything.' Seven times Elijah told him to go and look. Finally the seventh time, his servant told him, 'I saw a little cloud about the size of a man's hand rising from the sea.' Then Elijah shouted, 'Hurry to Ahab and tell him, "Climb into your chariot and go back home. If you don't hurry, the rain will stop you!"'" 1 Kings 18:42-44 (NLT)

C. Elijah had just supernaturally outrun a team of horses for nearly 20 miles.

"Then the LORD gave special strength to Elijah. He tucked his cloak into his belt and ran ahead of Ahab's chariot all the way to the entrance of Jezreel." 1 Kings 18:46 (NLT)

II. Elijah became afraid, discouraged, & depressed when Queen Jezebel smashed his expectations and threatened to kill him within the next 24 hours.

"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.'" 1 Kings 19:1-4 (NLT)

Note: Elijah was a prime candidate for the blues because:

- Elijah was exhausted.
- Elijah was trying to handle things alone.
- Elijah was focused on himself and his problems.

Life Application: Good news! God answers the prayers of ordinary people who sometimes feel afraid, discouraged, and depressed.

"The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops."

James 5:16-18 (NLT)

III. God took Elijah on a journey that helped him overcome the blues.

A. God sent an angel to ensure that Elijah got adequate food and rest.

"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." 1 Kings 19:5-8 (NLT)

Life Application: To overcome the blues, we need to get proper food and rest.

“Let’s go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile.’ He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn’t even have time to eat.” Mark 6:31 (NLT)

“It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones.” Psalm 127:2 (NLT)

B. God brought Elijah to a place where he could be still and listen.

“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?’” 1 Kings 19:9-13 (NLT)

Life Application: To overcome the blues, we need to find a place where we can be still and listen to God.

“Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” Luke 5:16 (NIV)

“Be still, and know that I am God!” Psalm 46:10 (NLT)

“...your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’” Isaiah 30:21 (NIV)

C. God shifted Elijah’s focus off of himself and onto God.

“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. Then anoint Jehu.. to be king of Israel, and anoint Elisha... to replace you as my prophet. Anyone who escapes from Hazael will be killed by Jehu, and those who escape Jehu will be killed by Elisha! Yet I will preserve 7,000 others in Israel who have never bowed down to Baal or kissed him!’”

1 Kings 19:14-19 (NLT)

Life Application: To overcome the blues, we need to focus on God and NOT ourselves.

“Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.” Psalm 42:11 (NIV)

“Is anything too hard for the LORD?” Genesis 18:14 (NIV)

“And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise... Then the God of peace will be with you.” Philippians 4:8-9 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions

1. Describe a time in your life when you had high expectations for the holidays but were very disappointed. How did you respond?
2. Read James 5:16-18. How does it make you feel to know that the great prophet Elijah was an ordinary person just like us?
3. Discuss the following quotation: “If your intake is less than your output, your upkeep will be your downfall.” – Greg Laurie
4. In 1 Kings 19:9-19, Elijah honestly believed that he was the only person in Israel who still worshiped God. Then God told him that there were 7,000 others who were still faithful to Him. Why do you think Elijah’s perceptions were so far off? Share a false belief you used to hold before God showed you the truth.

5. To get Elijah out of the blues:

- God ensured that Elijah got adequate food and rest.
- God brought Elijah to a place where he could be still and listen.
- God shifted Elijah's focus off of himself and his problems and back onto God.

Which of these strategies resonates with you this year? Why?

6. How will you set limits for yourself this holiday season so you and your family can enjoy it?

7. Discuss Psalm 42:11. What does it look like to put your trust in God? Share with your group one thing you need to trust God to handle this holiday season. Then spend some time praying for each other.