

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

1 Kings 19:1-18

All kinds of difficult things happen to us with no warning and no chance to prepare. We find ourselves lost in a strange city, forced into early retirement, a parent of triplets, not a parent at all, disabled by an accident, rejected by a lifelong friend—whatever it is, we weren't ready for it. We look around and ask, "How did I get into this situation? Can't I take a break and lie low for a while?"

The prophet Elijah shared those feelings of confusion and the desire to escape after what was probably his greatest victory. Even in his state of withdrawal, he was not beyond the reach of God's care and mercy.

Group Discussion. After an outstanding success, why do we need to be vigilant about our emotional and spiritual lives?

Personal Reflection. When and why have you wanted to withdraw and not face reality? What did you do, with what results?

Ahab, one of the worst kings of Israel, "did more to arouse the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, than did all the kings of Israel before him" (1 Kings 16:33). Ahab married the idolater Jezebel and set up an altar for Baal, the fertility god supposedly responsible for lightning and storms. Immediately after denouncing Ahab, the Bible introduces the prophet Elijah, who declares that there will be no rain until he gives the word. In the third year of drought, Elijah sets up a dramatic contest between Baal and the Lord; the Lord of course wins, and then rain comes at last. Jezebel and Ahab should be grateful for the rain which ends a disastrous famine. Instead, they are furious that their god has been proved false.

Jezebel swears to kill Elijah, and Elijah flees into the wilderness as far as Horeb (Mt. Sinai). *Read 1 Kings 19:1-18.*

1. Trace the stages of Elijah's withdrawal from Jezreel to Mt. Horeb (vv. 1-9).
2. How would you explain Elijah's prayer (and his mental and emotional state) in verse 4?
3. Elijah prayed to die. Far from taking his life, what did the Lord do instead (vv. 5-8)?
4. The Lord asked, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (v. 9). Would you say Elijah's response (v. 10) was an answer to the question or not? Why do you say that?
5. How would you describe Elijah's mood and attitude as he answered the Lord?

6. In what circumstances have you shared Elijah's feelings?

7. What appears to be the purpose of what happened in verses 11-12?

If you were Elijah, how do you think you would react to what happens?

8. The Lord had told Elijah to "go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD" (v. 11). After several dramatic natural events, there was "a gentle whisper" (v. 12). Elijah heard the same question he had heard before. Would you expect Elijah to answer differently this time, or not? Why?

9. How did the Lord give Elijah a reason to get out of the cave (vv. 15-18)?

10. When and how has the Lord encouraged you to come out of hiding by giving you a purpose and a job to do?

11. What specific step will you take this week to face difficult circumstances with the help and strength of the Lord?



Pray that you will walk forward boldly into a situation you have been shrinking back from in fear.

NOW OR LATER

Study any or all of these Scripture passages, which are pleas for the Lord's help in a crisis:

- 2 Kings 19:9-19
- Psalm 5
- Psalm 17
- Psalm 25
- Psalm 35
- Psalm 69