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## Elijah (Part II) - The Power of Submission!

**1 Kings 19:12: (NASB) *And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing.***



Two weeks ago, we talked about Elijah and the incredible courage he had toward accomplishing God's will. We saw him prophesy, take responsibility, wait, perform miracles, wait some more, appear before his greatest enemy and overwhelmingly conquer in a challenge to prove God is in fact, God over all. The next thing we knew, Elijah was running for his life - afraid and feeling alone. It turns out that all his heroics got him were more threats on his life. What happens to that courageous prophet of God now? He still must fight but in a different way, for in this next stage of his life God is going to teach him submission.

Submission does not sound like a characteristic that belongs with courage, but as we will see, courage will burn you without submission and submission will burden you without courage. This is a core lesson in the life of Elijah.

As Christians, we want the courage to do God's will in any way He leads us, and submission and humility are needed to have courage. But submission to what, how, why and when?

Submission follows courage in Elijah's life so he can truly learn humility, for his courage was "off the charts" heroic. The things he did and the stand he took to confront the king and the prophets of Baal were Samson-like in their strength, Moses-like in their leadership and David-like in their intensity. Elijah single-handedly stood and fought to save the nation of Israel. The danger of such extraordinary accomplishment is that we can begin to believe we are its source. (Please see Part I of this program.)

Courage can bring ego. Submission can bring cowering, viewed as weakness or having no backbone. We need to be properly courageous and properly submissive.

### A quick recap of the story we started in Part I:

**Courage Lesson 13: *Courage is not perfect and sometimes falls prey to fear***

**1 Kings 19:1-3:** While this part of Elijah's experience was a lesson in courage, it also served as a lesson in submission. By God's strength and through Elijah's hand, God had shown His sovereignty. The drought was over and the prophets of Baal were dead. Now he had to run for his life. WHY? Here is where we begin our submission lessons.

**Submission Lesson 1: *Submission's Power may be an unseen necessity when we have an emotional and pressing need for an answer to the question "Why."***

Elijah had to wonder why he was now running for his life again instead of simply rejoicing in the overruling power of God.

What does "submission's power" mean? Submission wields incredible power, but a different kind than we are used to. This is what we will see as we unfold the life of Elijah.

After Elijah did all of this work for God, he would not have expected he would be running for his life. He expected Israel would come back to God after such demonstrations of God's power and sovereignty.

Integrity (doing the right thing even when no one is looking) and submission are closely related. Having integrity means submitting to righteousness and something bigger than yourself.

**Submission Lesson 2: *Submission's Power may become apparent when our self-doubt overrides our spiritual confidence.***

At this stage we can say, "Something is out of order and needs to be fixed."

**What happened to Elijah to draw this second lesson out? 1 Kings 19:4-8:** Elijah was emotionally broken but still obedient. When we do not know the answer and are feeling broken, are we still obedient to take the sustenance supplied to us and continue?

(Source: Biblical commentary by Matthew Poole) *Unto Horeb: he wandered hither and thither for forty days, till at last he came to Horeb, which in the direct road was not above three or four days' journey.*

It took Elijah 40 days to get to a place that should have taken three or four days. He was fasting, praying and wandering during this time. Our self-doubt can at times cause us to wander, and God will often allow that wandering to complete its course and purpose - our purification and preparation to receive God's direction. Elijah was going to receive God's



direction at Mt. Horeb and needed to be ready to do so, but it would take him 40 days to get to that point. Who else fasted and prayed for 40 days? Both Jesus and Moses. In an interesting parallel, Moses was at Mt. Horeb during his preparation time where he received the Law.

Side note: The three individuals who fasted and prayed for 40 days all appeared in the vision on the Mount of Transfiguration. [Matthew 17:1-13](#)

**Submission Lesson 3: Submission's power can begin to guide us when we are ready to fully express our need for an answer to our "Why" which so confounds us.**

Elijah was confused at this point. He did not understand why those incredible miracles God performed did not work. In his mind, he was a total failure. He would have been wrestling with this during his wandering.

**After 40 days of hashing this over, he arrives at Mt. Horeb: [1 Kings 19:9-12](#): Just as with Moses, God was passing by, but His presence was not in the calamitous power Elijah witnessed - those things preceded Him - His presence was in (according to the Hebrew) *the sound of gentle stillness*.**

**Submission Lesson 4: Submission's power is evidenced when once we have spoken our need we can hear the quietness of God's answer and His direction for our future.**

Sometimes we do not look for the quietness of God's answer. We want the bells and whistles, the earth shaking and fireworks - all of the "big stuff" to show us God's answer. Submission is when we finally come to a point of pouring our hearts out to God with what is bothering us. Then we can be open to begin to hear the quietness of His answer.

We have to listen carefully. Often quietness is where we can begin to get the direction for our future. That is when Elijah could start putting things into perspective.

Elijah realizes God is not in the wind, fire or earthquake.

**What does Elijah do next? [1 Kings 19:13-16](#): He is given specific directions for a new mission. Previously his mission was to proclaim doom, destruction and drought. He brought down the prophets of Baal. Now his mission was one of anointing - setting people apart for a godly purpose.**

God revealed not only a new direction in Israel, but in Aram (Syria) as well. Elijah's efforts were not in vain as he had thought - they were a stepping stone in God's plan! The story was not over like he had thought - it was just the beginning.

This is an incredible lesson in submission! He was so depressed he could not listen. God had to allow 40 days of preparedness before bringing him to a different place. This is a very inspirational moment. Elijah began to get his feet under him again, seeing a direction to walk as he submitted to the will of God.

**Submission Lesson 5: Submission's power gains strength when we realize that the personal perceptions we focused upon did not reflect the bigness of God's reality.**

Sometimes we think we know the answers based on our life's experiences but then find out we do not. We find there is something bigger, better, stronger and contrary to what we thought was or what should be.

**[1 Kings 19:17-19](#): On top of the new direction, there is a newly revealed reality of thousands of people who were God's people! They were there all along, but Elijah did not know about them.**

After a series of battles in [1 Kings 20](#) in which King Ahab was victorious by the hand of God, (battles won by God not for the sake of Ahab but for the sake of God's own name) Ahab's true character again comes out as he makes compromises with God's enemies. His pride and arrogance came through.

**When these things are revealed, the glory of his victories is sullied and Ahab responds: [1 Kings 20:43](#): Sometimes compromise is the epitome of integrity, but there are many times where compromise is the *opposite* of integrity. We should not be compromising our principles.**

**Submission Lesson 6: Submission's power will as we employ it, produces a dramatic contrast with those who ignore it.**



We see this power in Elijah's life: 1 Kings 21:1-16: The utter lack of respect for the rights of others, for the land and for righteousness is resounding! This was one of the warnings given when Israel demanded a king to rule them in lieu of the judges set up by God. Authority in the hands of imperfect men is often abused.

This man by all accounts did nothing wrong but got caught up in the whims of an idolatrous king. This is a lesson in contrast with the power of submission. This was a wielding of power to frame and kill an innocent man to get a vegetable garden.

The power of submission seeks to do God's will instead of seeking after our own wants.

Elijah had to understand that the great courage he had displayed earlier in his life served a purpose. It was an "introductory statement" by God to be followed by many others. The stark contrast between Elijah's life and that of Ahab and Jezebel are obvious. We need to remember that God's timing is always different than ours. Be submissive and wait for it. This is what Elijah was taught to do. He was then shown he was not alone and found out God had big plans for him.

**Submission Lesson 7: Submission's power once engaged provokes and sustains courage.**

Submission and courage are inseparable once we clearly understand them.

1 Kings 21:17-29: Elijah was called upon to do something courageous - go to his enemy again and confront him on the murder of an innocent man. Years of submission and trust have brought Elijah to similar ground as during the drought. (See Part I.)

He is now courageous, clear and constant in delivering God's messages.

This is a great example of how submission can be a tool to find deep courage. God is the God of our lives. He temporarily allows Satan to be the god of this world. We can choose for either Satan to be the god of our lives or for God to be sovereign. If we choose God, then submission to His will brings courage to fulfill that will.

Has anything changed from the encounter with Ahab years before? Nope! Ahab has seen the hand of God many times and still refuses to submit, and Elijah - who has fully submitted to God's hand - is again in control! Nothing was changed! Ahab was given multiple opportunities to repent of his evil but continued to stay with the darkness he had chosen, largely because of his wife. Elijah finishes the prophecy with graphic detail and Ahab finally begins to open his eyes.

Three years passed (1 Kings 22) and Ahab was again going to war. Once again, he disregarded the advice of one of God's prophets and his "repentance" seemed to wear off. Even though he disguised himself in battle, he was killed.

Submission brings great accountability. If we are accountable to God, our submission can be tracked by Him. Without that accountability, we will always fail because humankind needs something bigger to guide it. We see today we are completely lost when it comes to the ability to guide ourselves. We need godly principles in our lives. The accountability of submission is an important component.

God gave Ahab the blessing of time to come back to Him, but he did not. God fulfilled Elijah's words. Now Ahab's son would live to see the power of God through Elijah as his father did.

**Submission Lesson 8: Submission's power once personally absorbed not only sustains courage it becomes a conduit for the power of God to flow through in a mighty way.**

Elijah is completely absorbed in submission to the will of God and no longer depressed or worried. He knows the direction to go is wherever God instructs. He had grown since that time he sat under the juniper tree asking for death. He had seen God's hand in his life and that of the nation of Israel and understood he had a role to play.

2 Kings 1:1-4: Like father like son! (This reminds us to give our children examples of godly submission rather than egotism.) Ahab's son gets sick and asks for the counsel of Baalzebub, a god already proven by Elijah to be false. How short our memories are when we are full of ego.

**A thorough ingraining of submission to God's will brings swift and complete action:**

2 Kings 1:5-8: The kingly contrast to submission is arrogance - having no need to acknowledge



true power and hiding behind their own perceived power. As long as an idolatrous attitude prevails, godly submission has no room to grow. **The king's next steps are a predictable disaster:** 2 Kings 1:9-16: The longer you go without the growth of godly submission, the greater the cost to all around you. The king sent these men to their deaths.

**Submission Lesson 9: Submission's power and courage attract fierce loyalty.**

As Elijah is being readied to be taken away, Elisha as the successor is in need of testing. He needs to walk in the path of Elijah. In the life of Elijah, we see many symbols of prophetic events that would happen. *We suggest* one example of this is illustrated in their three stopping places after Gilgal. Each represents another step for Elisha to learn about the mission of Elijah. They began in Gilgal which means, "I have rolled away the reproach." (Joshua 5:9). This is what Elijah was first called to do - he was sent to take away the reproach, the disapproval of God that was upon Israel because of their guilt from idolatry. He instructed the people to act differently.

2 Kings 2:1-6: Bethel means "House of God," named for the place where Jacob's ladder stood. Elijah had rolled away Israel's reproach and brought them back to the place where they could worship God. <sup>3</sup>*Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today? And he said, Yes, I know; be still.* <sup>4</sup>*And Elijah said to him, Elisha, please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho. But he said, As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you. So, they came to Jericho.* In other words, "I will not be parted from you, Elijah, as you represent submission and courage in doing the will of God. I want to support that!"

Jericho means "moon." The moon in Scripture is a symbol of the Law Covenant which was the only way to truly worship God in those days. Elijah's mission continued with showing Israel the method by which they could worship the Lord, the Law Covenant.

It was not too long ago when Elijah thought he was all alone. Now we see *the sons of the prophets*, godly men, in each of these cities. God was right - there were 7,000 who had not bowed a knee to Baal. Elijah is meeting some of them, which would have been faith strengthening. There was a time he would not have believed this to be true. In God's time and with God's way, submitting to the will of God and having patience with His timing showed Elijah that all things came together in a way that made sense.

Jordan means "descender" and can be seen to typify the downward course of humanity towards certain death to the Dead Sea. To "cross the Jordan" is a symbol of being delivered. Elisha had to see the deliverance at the end of Elijah's journey.

He had to see that Elijah had been sent to roll away the reproach of Israel, to bring them to a place where they could worship God. He brought them to a method by which they could worship God, the Law. Finally, he had to see that Elijah's work was done and his deliverance was right before them. It is interesting to look at the names of these places and consider their relationship to the steps of Elijah's life that Elisha would need to learn so he could be encouraged. Elisha was about to take on incredible responsibility.

**Submission Lesson 10: Submission's power and courage generate a true legacy!**

**Next, Elijah uses his mantle to part the Jordan River and the two of them cross:**

2 Kings 2:9-14: Elisha is thoroughly focused on being able to carry the mantle of responsibility that he was being directly given, he is asking for a double portion of that which a first-born son would inherit. Essentially he is saying, "I want to be your firstborn when it comes to fulfilling the will of God." The legacy of courage for and submission to God's will was now entirely in Elisha's hands. The transfer was made. Elisha was given the mantle of great power to use it in the same way Elijah did. Elisha knows he carries the legacy of this great powerful, submissive, courageous prophet of God.

Part III will look at the legacy of Elijah through various prophetic fulfillments. We will look further at the power of standing in the place Elijah stood.

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For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!***