

## “We Haven’t Come to Bat Yet”

The Lord gave me a ministry several years ago entitled, “The Antidote for Witchcraft.” In that ministry, “discouragement” is one of the first signs that witchcraft’s toxic poison has affected us. Today I want to explain what happens when this demonic spirit invades our lives.

I Kings Chapters 18 and 19 give us a unique look into an incident that occurred in the life of Elijah. I believe it shows us how the spirit of discouragement operates.

Seldom has a person experienced a greater moment than what Elijah did on Mount Carmel when he confronted the prophets of Baal. He was filled with boldness, faith, power and passion.

*Elijah was very sure of himself, as he taunted the prophets of Baal to “Shout louder, perhaps your god is in deep thought or maybe he is asleep.” The prophets of Baal slashed themselves with spears and swords yet no fire came down to consume the sacrifice. So Elijah fashioned an altar and instructed the people to pour four large pots filled with water over the altar and he commanded them to do it three times. Then he prayed, “Answer me O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”*

*I Kings Chapters 18:38 says, “Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. Then the people saw this and they fell prostrate and cried, “The Lord – He is God! The Lord – He is God!” Elijah then killed all the prophet’s of Baal. (I Kings 18:27-40)*

But look what happens in chapter 19, Jezebel vowed to kill Elijah for what he had done to her prophets (I Kings 19:2).

The Bible says in verse 3 that, *“Elijah was afraid and ran for his life.”*

In this chapter you will see that Elijah shifted from being courageous before God to blaming Him for his troubles. Basically, fear replaced faith, power was drained by pity, and anxiety replaced confidence. How quickly things changed! Sound familiar?

### **In I Kings 19 there are at least five things we should consider:**

**First**, discouragement harms our personality causing us to look at ourselves from a “woe is me,” mentality. Verse 4 says, *“While he himself went a day’s journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, Lord,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors (discouraged).”* Basically, we cannot consistently do what the Lord asks us to do if we are inconsistent in the way we think about ourselves.

**Second, discouragement causes us to shun our responsibilities.** Verse 9 says, *“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?”* The Lord has created us to be Mt. Carmel conquerors not cave dwellers. Always remember that faith gives us opportunity, fear gives us misery.

**Third, discouragement causes us to blame others for our troubles.** Verse 10 says, *“He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken 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.”* Blame shifting is purposed to take the focus off us and put it on others.

**Fourth, discouragement causes our facts to be blurred.** Verse 18 says, *“Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel – all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him.”* What a rude awakening for Elijah to realize that he was not the only prophet left but God had reserved 7,000. No doubt about it, “discouragement,” did a number on Elijah, and if we are not careful it will do a number on us as well! Basically discouragement makes us feel as though we are alone in our experience.

**Fifth, discouragement will cause us to operate in shame.** In verse 13 of chapter 19 it says, *“When Elijah heard it (the whisper), he pulled his cloak over his face (shame) and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.”* How many times has shame overwhelmed us because of our partnership with discouragement, and we have tried to hide ourselves from the Lord?

To be victorious over this hideous spirit we must allow the precious Blood of Jesus to cover us. We should know that when we begin to think inconsistently about ourselves, shun responsibilities, blame shift onto others, when facts about why we are doing what the Lord called us to do become blurred, or we feel shame, then the spirit of discouragement has certainly invaded our lives.

The true test of your character is recognizing what it takes to stop you. The truth is, we need the determination of a Little League baseball player a man ran across at a game one day. He asked the youngster the score of his game. “We’re behind eighteen to nothing,” was the answer. “Well” said the man, “I must say you don’t look discouraged.” “Discouraged?” the boy, asked. “Why should we be discouraged? We haven’t come to bat yet.”

Usually people who are discouraged are thinking mainly about one thing – themselves! After applying the Blood of Jesus, which is our antidote, we should resist trying to think about how tough things are. We ought to focus on what the Lord is saying about our situation and have positive persistence to triumph over our negative emotions.

**Poem:**

Two frogs fell into a can of cream  
or so I've heard it told.  
The sides of the can were shiny and steep,  
The cream was deep and cold.  
"Oh, what's the use?" said No. 1,  
"tis fate – no help's around –  
Goodbye, my friend! Goodbye, sad world!"  
And weeping still, he drowned.  
But No. 2 of sterner stuff,  
dog paddled in surprise,  
The while he wiped his creamy face  
and dried his creamy eyes.  
"I'll swim awhile, at least," he said  
-- or so it has been said --  
"It wouldn't really help the world  
if one more frog was dead."  
An hour or two he kicked and swam --  
not once he stopped to mutter,  
But kicked and swam, and swam and kicked,  
then hopped out, via butter.  
-- Author unknown

There is many a great person in the Bible that experienced very discouraging events in their lives. Abraham failed in an hour of emergency and in weakness let a King think his wife, Sarah, was his sister. There was Moses, whose impatience lost him the right to enter the Promised Land; and David, that "man after God's own heart," tarnished his name through adultery and murder. There was also Peter who denied the Lord prior to His crucifixion, and we know about Elijah who was upset and wanted to die.

However, all of these men, after tragic upsets, went on to win great victories. Has some upsetting defeat or discouragement come your way recently? It's up to you to decide how you will handle the defeats of life. No person will go through life without experiencing discouragement from time to time. When it happens to you, **don't give up!** Adopt the motto that Missionary E. Stanley Jones had, "When life kicks you, let it kick you forward!" The fact is anyone can start something, but only the strong at heart have the resolve to consistently press until they receive their victory.

I hear the Lord say that He is filling us up with that "strong heart" to accomplish our task, even in the face of extreme discouragement! We must come to a new level of trust and faith in the Lord and allow Him to apply His healing balm, which is His Precious Blood.

So we need to see our difficulties through the eyes of the Holy Spirit, who brings everything under control and reduces the intensity of our situations. Whether it's family problems, financial difficulties, emotional irregularities, spousal differences, work or business problems to name a few, nothing can overwhelm the Holy Spirit. We are Divinely and uniquely formed and our Heavenly Father cares for us. He has promised that He will never leave or forsake us. With that promise there is no way we can fail or be hindered by "Discouragement" ever again!

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**Declare and decree over yourself:**

- An over comer's anointing.
- Faith to see through the eyes of the Holy Spirit.
- The ability to think right thoughts about oneself.
- Being consistent to complete what the Lord requests.
- A clear vision of what the Lord wants you to do.
- A confidence to achieve.

**Please pray:**

Lord, in Jesus name, I am a victor not a victim! I will no longer give into those things that cause me to think negatively about my circumstances or myself. Father, I will turn to you rather than leaning on my own understanding, because it is when I lean on myself that I become vulnerable to discouragement. This day I ask you Lord, to cover me with the Precious Blood of Jesus, as this is the powerful antidote to discouragement. I also ask you to renew my mind and cause me to have Christ-like thoughts. In Jesus' Name I pray, amen.

\* Some of this material was taken from John C. Maxwell's book, "The Winning Attitude, Your Key To Success".

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