

MENS LIFE BLOOMINGTON

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

Facing & Surrendering to Challenges the Biblical Way

Overview: One of the most powerful mountain top experiences in the Bible is the powerful story of Elijah and his contest with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. There are lessons on how we can cultivate our mind, body and spirit to overcome the challenges we face in life. Insight can be gained on how we can learn from Elijah's example to navigate these challenges with grace and faith as we surrender to God's divine will.

Introduction: A Perspective on Mind, Body & Spirit Along with Divine Will, by Craig Medlyn

1 Kings 18:21 | Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, 'How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!' But the people were completely silent.

1 Kings 18:27 | And at noontime, Elijah began to taunt them. 'Shout louder!' he said. 'Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or he is relieving himself. Or maybe he is away on a trip, or he is asleep and needs to be wakened!'

1 Kings 18:36 | 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.

1 Kings 18:38 | 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!" ()

1 Kings 18:41 | Then Elijah said to Ahab, 'Go get something to eat and drink, for I hear a mighty rainstorm coming!'

Segment Questions: (References are on back)

- Describe a time when you faced a difficult challenge or obstacle and succeeded in overcoming it? What perspectives, attitudes or principles helped sustained you?

Read the verses above from 1 Kings 18

- What about this story of Elijah resonates with you? Imagine that you were there on Mount Carmel that day. What range of emotions might you have had?
- To what degree do you feel Elijah is engaging his mind, body and spirit?
- How do you see Elijah being surrendered to the will of God?

Review the story context on the back.

- After this mountain top experience, Elijah crashed. In what ways is that surprising? Or how is it almost expected?

Review the 10 Axioms that the AI selected and the Elijah Tie-in

- Are there one or two of these axioms that you find powerfully connected to your life?
- How can you incorporate the example of Elijah into your own life?

The Prophet Elijah's Mountain Top Experience

In 1 Kings 18, the prophet Elijah challenged the prophets of the false god Baal to a contest on Mount Carmel to determine which deity was truly God. The prophets of Baal went first and spent hours calling out to their god, but no fire came. Elijah then prepared his sacrifice on the altar, and before calling out to God, he had the altar drenched in water three times. Elijah called out to God, and fire immediately descended from heaven, consuming the sacrifice and proving that the Lord is God. Elijah then had the false prophets executed, and rain finally came to end a long drought.

Following his victory, Elijah fled into the wilderness to escape Jezebel's wrath. While in the wilderness, Elijah became despondent and asked God to take his life. However, God sustained Elijah with food and drink and instructed him to travel to Mount Horeb. There, Elijah experienced another powerful encounter with God, who spoke to Elijah in a still, small voice. God reassured Elijah of His presence and plans for the future, and Elijah was strengthened to continue his prophetic ministry. Elijah anointed Elisha as his successor and was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind.

Elijah's mountain top experience on Mount Carmel and his encounter with God on Mount Horeb are powerful reminders of God's faithfulness and His desire to lead His people back to Him. Even in the midst of great challenges and difficulties, God is able to work miracles and to speak to His people in ways that are beyond our understanding. The story of Elijah continues to inspire and encourage believers today, reminding us of the importance of faithfulness and trust in God.

From Craig's List of 50 Axioms (*two weeks ago*), here are ten that are seen in this story. (*)

#23) **Seek out challenges:** Elijah was willing to confront the prophets of Baal and challenge them to a contest.

#14) **Don't compare yourself to others:** Elijah was confident in his faith and didn't compare himself to the false prophets.

#20) **Focus on process, not outcomes:** Elijah focused on the process of preparing the altar and calling out to God, rather than worrying about the outcome.

#4) **Define what success means to you:** For Elijah, success meant demonstrating that the Lord was the one true God.

#22) **Find a way to love everything that happens-give thanks to ALL things:** Elijah saw God's hand in all things, even during his time of trial in the wilderness.

#36) **Prepare for life's inevitable setbacks:** Elijah faced persecution and threats from Jezebel, but he was able to endure and continue his ministry.

#40) **Associate with people that make you better:** Elijah surrounded himself with other prophets who shared his faith and dedication.

#48) **The obstacle is the way:** Elijah's victory on Mount Carmel came through his willingness to face the obstacle of the false prophets.

#47) **Courage.** Temperance. Justice. Wisdom. (Always): Elijah exemplified all of these virtues in his prophetic ministry.

#50) **Stillness is the key:** Elijah's encounter with God on Mount Horeb came when he was in a state of stillness and contemplation.

(*) Proper accreditation must be given to OpenChatGPT that did this association.

Closing Prayer:

Our lives are filled with hills and valleys. Like Elijah, we enjoy the ecstasy of mountain top experiences. But we also come down to earth and face the reality of daily challenges like he did. May we see ways that we can learn from Elijah's experience to better face what comes our way. Help us Lord to surrender to your Divine Will. May we see things from your perspective. Amen.