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**GRACE NOTES RADIO PROGRAM
SERIES: ELIJAH – A MAN FOR THE TIMES
TITLE: Why the Discouragement?
SONGS: PRAISE THE LORD
SONGS: I NEED YOU**

Discouragement – we’ve all felt it....even after a great success.

Today on Grace Notes, Barbara Sandbek will follow the prophet Elijah as he moves from his mountaintop experience, to the valley of depression. We’ll see what caused this seasoned man of God to succumb to the temptation to lose hope.

But first, let’s listen to Barbara as she sings a song with a message that we ALL can use when we face discouragement.

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***** **PRAISE THE LORD *** 4:05** *****

I love the truth of that song. Satan does flee when the praise begins. I’ve enjoyed studying Elijah. The thing that most intrigued me about Elijah’s story was that God saw fit to show us he was very human. He suffered from bouts of depression and self-doubt - even though he was totally dedicated to the Lord.

I know what that’s like.

**What brought Elijah to this dark place in his life?
Let’s pick up where we left off in the story and find out.**

Elijah’s persistent prayers brought the blessing of rain again. God empowered Elijah to outrun Ahab’s chariots all the way back to Jezreel.

King Ahab was no doubt thrilled about the rain. Everybody was cheering for Elijah now – or were they? Ahab had told Queen Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed her prophets.

Jezebel had ordered the wholesale slaughter of any people of God who opposed her, just like her father had done.

She was NOT HAPPY.

So she sent a messenger to Elijah to say...

“May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.”

What did Elijah do? Surely, he didn't have to fear one lone woman. He'd just defeated 450 prophets.

But the Bible says... Elijah was afraid and ran for his life.

The word 'afraid' is translated 'saw'. Elijah's eyes got him in trouble.

He took his eyes off the Lord for a moment and looked at the situation. I immediately thought of another time when this happened.

Matthew 14:22-32 records the story of the apostle Peter walking on the water. It says...

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he SAW the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me.” Immediately, Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” He said, “Why did you doubt.”

The whirlwind around Peter grabbed his attention and he sank.

How did Elijah get to this place of fear?

Elijah's discouragement began with MISPLACED CONFIDENCE.

He let his defenses down. It's easy to do that after a victory.

We start to rely on ourselves and take off our armor.

The devil knows human nature and he's right there to attack.

Ephesians 6:10-11 says...

Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Put on the FULL armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

Verses 12-18 continue by naming the spiritual armor we're to wear... truth, righteousness, peace, faith, Salvation, Sword of

the Spirit (God's Word) and prayer. They are pictured as covering all parts of the body except the back. We're not supposed to run!

Elijah's discouragement grew because of MISPLACED ARMOR.

Where did he run to? The desert - but this time God didn't tell him to go there. Isn't that where we go when we fear - the desert? Away from the Living Water that flows from our fellowship with God?

**Perhaps he should have followed the advice of Psalm 46:10:
"Be still and know that I am God."**

Elijah's discouragement was fueled by MISPLACED ENERGY.

**It is never God's intention for us to live in a valley.
Ephesians 2:6 says that, as Believers, God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the Heavenly Realms in Christ Jesus.
We should be looking down upon - and flying on eagles wings above the rough waters.**

I didn't see anywhere in Scripture where Elijah ever prayed for himself. Let's recount the nature of his prayers.

- **He prayed for God to stop the rain to show the people they needed the Lord.**
- **He prayed for the widow's son to be returned to life.**
- **He prayed for God to be glorified in the showdown scene and for the people to believe.**

And lastly, he prayed fervently for the rain to come again.

It might sound noble to say we don't pray much for ourselves, but is it possible we're dealing with a pride issue again? Doesn't asking mean we admit we're truly needful?

**I didn't grow up in a church where liturgies were recited, but a while back we gave a concert at one such church. After each Scripture verse the Pastor read, the congregation repeated the phrase
'Lord have mercy on me.'**

I remembered that my grandmother used to always say that. Now I'm not much for repetition, but this hit home!

We need God's mercy. We need to ask for help. We are a needy people.

Elijah's discouragement was ignited by MISSED PRAYER.

Elijah journeyed for a day to get to the desert. Tired as he was, he sat down under a broom tree and prayed that he might die saying...

"I have had enough, Lord. Take my life: I am no better than my ancestors".

Here's how I'd probably say it.

"I can't take anymore. Wasn't what I did enough? Why do I still have to deal with this? I want it to be over. Take me home with You where I don't have to struggle anymore. I don't have what it takes. I thought I'd be better than the others at this, but I'm not."

Have you been there? I sure have.

But really, I think he was just out and out tired – and wasn't thinking clearly. He'd fought hard, prayed hard, and ran hard – he was exhausted!

Did you catch his schedule?

He traveled from Zarephath to meet Ahab in Jezreel – about 90 miles. For the showdown, he went to Mt. Carmel, approximately 25 miles, climbed up the mountain, and spent the entire day dueling. He climbed back down the mountain to the Kishon Valley for the slaying of the prophets, then back up the mountain to pray for rain. He prayed exhaustively, then outran Ahab's chariots back to Jezreel (another 25 miles). After Jezebel's threat, he ran for a whole day to take refuge in Beersheba – that's 120 miles!

Wew...I'm tired just thinking about it. The man is wiped out!

I've heard it said that the best bridge between hope and despair is often a good night's sleep.

Psalm 127:2 says...

It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows, for so He giveth His beloved sleep.

Elijah's discouragement was fanned into flame by MISSED REST.

In John 4:6 it says...

Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, SAT DOWN by a well.

If Jesus needed to rest, so do we!

If we want to HALT discouragement we need to remember the acronym for the word 'HALT'

**Never get too Hungry,
too Angry,
too Lonely,
or too Tired.**

Elijah was probably also very hungry.

God knew what Elijah needed even when he didn't.

He sent an angel to feed him twice with a cake of bread baked over hot coals and a jar of water.

Then He put him to sleep!

God knows our needs and the sooner we realize we need him...the better!

***** I NEED YOU *** 2:43**

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Join us again next time – for a personal up close look at what Barbara learned from a discouraging experience in her life.