

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## SELF PITY

*And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? 1 Kings 19:9*

GOD's purpose shall be accomplished in the earth. HIS hand is not shortened (i.e.; hindered or bound) to save by many or by few. (see I Sam.14:6; Isa.50:2; 59:1) HE does not need anyone or anything to aid HIM in the completion or execution of HIS will. HE can neither be turned from HIS purpose nor can HIS timetable be delayed by anything that the creature may desire to do, fail to do, or imagine. The GOD of heaven and earth is not like the gods of the heathen which have eyes but see not and ears but hear not. "Our GOD is in the heavens: HE hath done whatsoever HE hath pleased." (Psalms 115:3) When GOD uses men to accomplish HIS intention HE does so out of choice and not necessity. It is a great privilege and honor to be called and equipped by HIM to carry out HIS purpose in the earth. (see Acts 5:41)

Elijah was just such a man upon whom the LORD bestowed great gifts and power. He is without rival in the Old Testament as a man who boldly confronted the enemies of GOD and demonstrated the power of GOD in numerous miracles. He wrote no books, yet he left a legacy as a man caught up in the glory of GOD. He is one of only two men in the scriptures who were honored by escaping death and being translated into the heavens in bodily form. He appeared with Moses and the LORD JESUS on the mount of transfiguration. (see Mat.17:2,3) He is the very one in whose spirit and power, John the Baptist came. (see Luke 1:17) Yet with all of these gifts committed into his hands he was yet a man with many weaknesses and insecurities. (see James 5:17) So much so that he fell into a sea of self-pity which was so severe that he considered death a better alternative than life.

It is a very common thing for men (and women) to engage in pity parties when things don't turn out like we want or great obstacles are placed in our path. Suicide is the ultimate end of self-pity. Most of us don't go to that extreme, yet we enter into a path that leads to that end each time we start feeling sorry for ourselves. None of us have been given the calling of Elijah yet each one of us are given a calling by the same GOD who empowered Elijah. We are each one prone to act as he did when things don't come to pass like we expect.

Perhaps we can learn to avoid this pitfall if we examine what caused his slide into self-pity.

Elijah began to listen to the rantings of men (or in his case a woman) and became fearful of their power.

Here was a man, who had stood toe to toe with 850 prophets of Baal and the groves, cowering in fear because the president of the woman's club threatened him. (see I Kings 19:2) How often have we seen men, who claim to believe the bible and sent to proclaim it, not preach the whole counsel of GOD for fear of what men will say or do as a result. We can begin a pity party when we listen to men (even ourselves) telling us what we ought to do or not do. We should

not be concerned whether or not men approve of that which GOD has sent us to do. HIS approval is all that matters.

Elijah forgot that the power in which he walked at Mt. Carmel was not of himself.

He became fearful when he tried to protect himself, thinking that he was the one whom Jezebel hated. The enemies of GOD often vent their anger against HIS people but the object of their hatred is GOD himself. Our success or failure is contingent upon HIS power and not our own. "O woe is me" is the language of those who abandon this truth. (see II Cor. 4:7)

Elijah abandoned the work he was sent to do and became idle. (see I Kings 19:4)

He laid down under a juniper tree and wanted to die. Quitting something is the easiest thing we can do. GOD's children are never characterized in the scriptures as quitters but rather as overcomers. (see Isa.40:31; Rev.3:21; 12:11) When we become idle we have time to reflect on our need for sympathy. Someone has rightly said "A dog in the hunt doesn't know he has fleas." *"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."* (Eccl 9:10)

Elijah lamented a lack of apparent success.

He said "I'm the only one left."(see v.14) How true it is that men judge "success" by those things that they can see. "Results" are the basis upon which many determine whether or not something is "of GOD". But GOD's rule of success is in the accomplishment of what HE sets out to do whether it is the opening of men's eyes or the closing of them. Noah was a "successful" preacher even though no one "joined" the church. The clowns of the circus of modern day religion seek to outdo one another with greater and more impressive "results". The same GOD who spoke with fire on Mt. Carmel spoke in a barely perceptible voice on Mt. Horeb. (see v.12)

Elijah focused on what he had done and lamented the fact that he was not appreciated.

Self-righteousness lurks around every corner of our life. We are so prone to set our sights on the great sacrifices we have made in our quest to do the LORD's will. We have a tendency to keep score and look with glowing satisfaction at those things we have accomplished. But at the same time, we are basking in our service we are often mournful that others have not done "as much" as we. Sometimes we resolve to do no more because others don't perform as we think they should. The LORD taught us that our prayers and our giving are to be done in secret because of our inclination to self-pity. (see Mat.6:3,6) What others do or don't do or whether our efforts are appreciated, should have no bearing on what we do. Because our service is unrecognized by men is of no consequence at all. *"Rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."* (Luke 10:20) *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of GOD."* (1 Cor 10:31)

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