## **KEEP YOUR FOCUS!!**

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MY MESSAGE TODAY IS TITLED: KEEP YOUR FOCUS!!

- MANY PEOPLE CONSIDER CHARLES SPURGEON, .....THE FAMOUS LONDON PASTOR OF THE LATE 1800S, ......TO BE THE GREATEST PREACHER SINCE THE APOSTLE PAUL.
- YET SPURGEON OPENLY ADMITTED THAT HE OFTEN STRUGGLED WITH DEPRESSION.
  - IT IS A MATTER OF RECORD THAT SPURGEON, .....ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION ......WAS SO OVERCOME WITH FEELINGS OF
  - WORTHLESSNESS, ....DEPRESSION AND DESPONDENCY .....THAT HE LEFT HIS PULPIT .......FOR TWO OR THREE MONTHS AT A TIME.
  - OFTEN HE SPENT DAYS RESTING ON THE COUCH BECAUSE HE WAS SO DEPRESSED, .....SO FEARFUL .....AND SO DESPONDENT.
  - IN HIS WRITINGS, .....HE MENTIONS MANY HELPFUL THINGS CONCERNING DEPRESSION.
  - **BUT ONE POINT IS ESPECIALLY RELEVANT.**
  - IN GIVING A LIST OF THE TIMES WHEN WE ARE MOST PRONE TO DEPRESSION, .....THIS IS WHERE HE BEGINS:
  - # FIRST AMONG THEM I MUST MENTION THE HOUR OF GREAT SUCCESS.
  - WHEN AT LAST A LONG-CHERISHED DESIRE IS FULFILLED, ....WHEN
    GOD HAS BEEN GLORIFIED GREATLY BY OUR MEANS,.... AND A GREAT
    TRIUMPH ACHIEVED, ....THEN WE ARE APT TO FAINT.
    - IT MIGHT BE IMAGINED THAT AMID SPECIAL FAVORS.... OUR SOUL WOULD SOAR TO HEIGHTS OF ECSTASY, ....AND REJOICE WITH JOY UNSPEAKABLE,.... BUT IT IS GENERALLY THE REVERSE.
    - THE LORD SELDOM EXPOSES HIS WARRIORS TO THE PERILS OF EXULTATION OVER VICTORY; .....>>>>

231 words

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HE KNOWS THATIFEW OF THEM, CAN ENDURE SUCH A TEST, AND THEREFORE DASHES THEIR CUP WITH BITTERNESS.

HE OFFERS ELIJAH AS PROOF OF THIS POINT.... AND CONCLUDES THAT IN SOME MEASURE, ....DEPRESSION AND DISCOURAGEMENT AFTER A GREAT VICTORY .....>>>>

ARE PART OF THE GRACIOUS DISCIPLINE OF GOD'S MERCY....

- IT IS IN THAT LIGHT THAT WE CAN STUDY THIS ANCIENT STORY ....FOR IT HAS MUCH TO TEACH US TODAY.
- THE BIBLE RECORDS THIS STORY .....FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL WHO SERVE THE LORD.
- WHAT HAPPENED TO SPURGEON, .....WHAT HAPPENED TO LINCOLN, ....WHAT HAPPENED TO ELIJAH ....WILL PROBABLY HAPPEN TO ALL OF US SOONER OR LATER.

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(I. HIS CONDITION EXAMINED)

THE STORY BEGINS THIS WAY:

- 1 KINGS 19:1-2......1 AND AHAB TOLD JEZEBEL ALL THAT ELIJAH HAD DONE, ....ALSO HOW HE HAD EXECUTED ALL THE PROPHETS WITH THE SWORD.
- 2 THEN JEZEBEL SENT A MESSENGER TO ELIJAH,... SAYING, "SO LET THE GODS DO TO ME, ....AND MORE ALSO, ...IF I DO NOT MAKE YOUR LIFE AS THE LIFE OF ONE OF THEM, BY TOMORROW ABOUT THIS TIME."
- YOU CAN JUST IMAGINE WHAT HAPPENED WITH JEZEBEL, ....AS SHE WAITED FOR THE RETURN OF HER HUSBAND AHAB.
  - **AHAB GAVE HER THE BAD NEWS.**
- "WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PROPHETS OF BAAL?"... "THEY'RE ALL DEAD." .....>>>>>

#2-(2)

- "WHAT HAPPENED ON TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN?".... "THE LORD GOD OF ELIJAH WON THE DAY, ....AND BAAL WAS DEFEATED." SHE SENDS A MESSENGER TO ELIJAH WITH SOME OMINOUS NEWS: 3 JEZEBEL SAYS TO ELIJAH THE SAME WAY YOU DID TO THE PROPHETS → HOW DOES ELIJAH RESPOND? **1 KINGS 19:3-4.....**3 AND WHEN HE SAW THAT, HE AROSE AND RAN FOR 95 HIS LIFE, AND WENT TO BEERSHEBA, ....WHICH BELONGS TO JUDAH, AND LEFT HIS SERVANT THERE. 4 BUT HE HIMSELF WENT A DAY'S JOURNEY INTO THE WILDERNESS, AND CAME AND SAT DOWN UNDER A BROOM TREE..... AND HE PRAYED THAT HE MIGHT DIE, .....AND SAID, ...."IT IS ENOUGH!.... NOW, LORD, TAKE MY LIFE, .....FOR I AM NO BETTER THAN MY FATHERS!" 3 Let's take a look at Elizah's conditu **♦** \*\*\*\*\*FIRST, HE WAS GRIPPED BY FEAR AND DOUBT.  $\chi(Q)$  WHY WAS HE AFRAID OF THIS WOMAN?
- - ELIJAH JUST SAW GOD DO A MIRACLE.
  - HE HELPED SLAUGHTER THE FALSE PROPHETS.
  - \*\*\*\*\*SECOND, HE REACTED IMPULSIVELY.
  - 9 THE TEXT SAYS THAT HE RAN FROM DEZREEL for his life.
  - ELIJAH IS SO SCARED THAT HE DECIDES TO RUN AS FAR FROM JEZEBEL AS HE CAN GET.
  - 🥳 \*\*\*\*THIRD, HE WANTED TO BE ALONE.
  - "WHEN HE CAME TO BEERSHEBA IN JUDAH, HE LEFT HIS SERVANT THERE" (V. 3).
  - THAT WAS A BIG MISTAKE.

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- THE ONE THING HE NEEDED MOST WAS SOMEBODY TO ENCOURAGE HIM.
- LEAVING HIS SERVANT IN BEERSHEBA, ......HE VENTURED INTO THE DESERT A DAY'S JOURNEY, .....SAT UNDER A BROOM TREE, ....AND PRAYED THAT HE MIGHT DIE.
- ELIJAH IS ON HIS WAY TO THE MOST REMOTE PLACE HE CAN FIND.
- WHEN YOU'RE GRIPPED BY FEAR AND DOUBT, ...YOU WANT TO RUN AWAY AND BE BY YOURSELF.
- \*\*\*\*\*FOURTH, ....HE ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE CONTROLLED BY DARK THOUGHTS.
- (v) EVER FELT THIS WAY? ..."LORD, I'VE HAD ENOUGH. ....LORD, THIS IS IT.
  - AT THIS MOMENT, ....ELIJAH IS FILLED WITH SELF-PITY.
  - **9 HE HAS TEMPORARILY LOST HIS FOCUS & FAITH IN GOD.**
  - HE IS GRIPPED BY FEAR AND DOUBT, .....HE IS RUNNING AWAY FROM HIS PROBLEMS.
  - ( HE WAS FILLED WITH DARK THOUGHTS.
  - THIS CAN HAPPEN TO ANY OF US.

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JOHN THE BAPTIST TEMPORARILY LOST HIS FOCUS WHILE IS PRISON.

AND HE SENT MESSENGERS TO JESUS WITH A QUESTION: ...."ARE YOU
THE ONE WHO WAS TO COME, OR SHOULD WE EXPECT SOMEONE
ELSE?" (MATTHEW 11:3)

NOW WHY DO I BRING UP JOHN THE BAPTIST?

BECAUSE WHEN JESUS WANTED TO PRAISE JOHN THE BAPTIST, ....HE COMPARED HIM TO ELIJAH. ..>>>>>>>

"HE IS THE ELIJAH WHO WAS TO COME" (MATTHEW 11:14).

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WHAT ELIJAH WAS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, ....JOHN THE BAPTIST **15 WAS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.** AND BOTH MEN STRUGGLED WITH DEPRESSION ...AND DOUBTS. IN PUBLIC..... JOHN THE BAPTIST IS BOLD AS A LION. 12 YET PUT HIM IN PRISON..... AND HE BEGINS TO LOSE HIS FAITH. NOW HERE'S ELIJAH,..... GREAT MAN OF GOD,..... SPIRALING DOWNWARD, ......COMPLETELY CONTROLLED BY DARK THOUGHTS, .....FILLED WITH SELF-PITY. (II. HIS CONDITION DIAGNOSED) LET'S SEE IF WE CAN UNDERSTND WHY THIS IS HAPPENING. IF YOU STUDY THE BIBLICAL RECORD, ....IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT riangledownTHREE THINGS HAPPENED TO ELIJAH ......TO BRING HIM TO THIS BREAKING POINT. THESE THREE THINGS ARE VERY UNDERSTANDABLE, ....THEY GO TOGETHER, .....AND THEY CAN HAPPEN TO ANY OF US AT ANY TIME. \*\*\*\*\*FIRST, .....ELIJAH WAS OVERSTRAINED MENTALLY. IT IS POSSIBLE TO BE UNDER SO MUCH PRESSURE ......FOR SUCH A LONG PERIOD OF TIME .....THAT THE SPRING OF LIFE IS WOUND SO Straw that broke the TIGHTLY...... THAT EVENTUALLY IT MUST BREAK. CONSIDER ELIJAH'S CAREER AS A PROPHET. → HE HAD HAD ONE CRISIS AFTER ANOTHER. **ELIJAH WAS OVERSTRAINED MENTALLY.** 1) HE HAD PUSHED HIMSELF .....UNTIL HE COULD PUSH NO LONGER. (IN ADDITION TO BEING OVERSTAINED MENTALLY)>>>>>>>>>>

\*\*\*\*\*SECOND, HE WAS EXHAUSTED PHYSICALLY.

- AT ONE POINT IN HIS MINISTRY, JESUS TOLD HIS DISCIPLES TO "COME APART AND REST FOR AWHILE" (MARK 6:31 KJV).
- THERE IS A TIME WHEN YOU NEED TO GET UP AND GO TO WORK,
  .....AND THERE IS A TIME WHEN YOU NEED TO LAY DOWN AND TAKE
  A NAP.
- SOMETIMES THE BEST THING WE CAN DO FOR THE LORD IS TO TAKE A VACATION. ....OR DO SOMETHING WE LIKE
  - THERE ARE TIMES WHEN GOD'S WORK DEMANDS STRENUOUS ACTION.
- AND THERE IS A TIME WHEN YOU NEED TO SIT IN THE RECLINER, ......CRANK IT BACK.....AND RELAX.
- SOLOMON REMINDED US IN ECCLESIASTES 3 ....THAT THERE IS A TIME FOR EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN. >>>>>>>>

"TO EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON."

GOD ORDAINS EVERY SEASON OF LIFE, ....INCLUDING THE TIMES OF HARD WORK .....AND THE TIMES WHEN WE MUST REST.

(1. OVERSTAINED MENTALLY...2. PHYSICALLY EXHAUSED...)>>>>>

THE HAD LOST HIS FOCUS ON GOD.

VERSE 3 SAYS THAT "ELIJAH WAS AFRAID AND RAN FOR HIS LIFE."

- **5 THAT WAS HIS FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM.**
- 4 HIS MIND IS OVERSTRESSED.
- **5** HIS BODY IS PHYSICALLY EXHAUSTED.
- AND NOW HIS EYES ARE OFF THE LORD .....AND THEY'RE ON HIS CIRCUMSTANCES.
- THAT'S WHAT CAN HAPPEN WHEN YOU ARE UNDER ENORMOUS MENTAL STRESS, .....AND WHEN YOU ARE PHYSICALLY EXHAUSTED.

207 Words #2- (6)

- ELIJAH HAS BEEN UNDER ENORMOUS PRESSURE FOR SO LONG

  14 ...THAT HE CAN'T THINK CLEARLY.
- 12 WHEN HE WAS ON THE MOUNTAIN, ....ALL HE COULD SEE WAS GOD.
  - 9 THE PROPHETS OF BAAL DIDN'T BOTHER HIM AT ALL.
- 4 THE CIRCUMSTANCES DIDN'T MATTER.
- BUT NOW IN HIS STATE OF EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION, ...HE LOSES HIS FOCUS ON THE LORD.
- HE RUNS FOR COVER, ......KEEPS ON RUNNING, .....AND DOESN'T STOP UNTIL HE ENDS UP IN A CAVE ...ON MOUNT SINAI .....HUNDREDS OF MILES AWAY.
- HE COWERS IN A CAVE, ......WISHING TO DIE, .....FEELING UTTERLY ALONE, ......LOST IN HIS OWN DESPAIR.
- 1 KINGS 19:9.....9 AND THERE HE WENT INTO A CAVE, AND SPENT THE NIGHT IN THAT PLACE; AND BEHOLD,... THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO HIM, ....AND HE SAID TO HIM, "WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, ELLIAH?"
  - - ELIJAH HAD ONLY ONE REAL PROBLEM, ....AND IT WAS NOT THE ADVERSARIES HE FACED.
      - IT WAS THAT HE HAD TAKEN HIS FOCUS OFF OF GOD....AND ONTO HIMSELF.
  - (1) IT SEEMS LIKE GOD IS AMAZED AT ELIJAH'S HIDING.
- IT IS AS IF GOD IS SAYING,..... "DOESN'T ELIJAH KNOW THAT I AM GREATER THAN ALL HIS ADVERSARIES? >>>>>>>>
- (Q)\DOESN'T ELIJAH KNOW THAT I WILL HELP HIM?"

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#2- (7)

WE KNOW THAT ELIJAH EVENTUALLY RECOVERED....DID MORE GREAT **WORKS FOR GOD....AND APPOINTED ELISHA TO SUCCEED HIMSELF.** / ELIJAH WAS HUMAN -- JUST LIKE US. AND WE FACE THE SAME DIFFICULTIES IN LIFE. BUT JUST LIKE ELIJAH, .....OUR REAL PROBLEM IS NOT THE PROBLEMS WE FACE. IT IS OUR FOCUS!!! WE CAN FOCUS ON OUR INABILITY .....AND LACK....>>>> OR WE CAN FOCUS ON GOD'S ABILITY ....AND ABUNDANT PROVISION. >>>>>>>> MAYBE YOU FIND YOURSELF HIDING IN A "CAVE" TODAY, .....AFRAID TO VENTURE FORTH .....AND FACE YOUR SITUATION. MAYBE YOU ARE AFRAID OF FAILURE OR REJECTION. OR MAYBE YOU ARE DISCOURAGED..... BECAUSE THINGS HAVEN'T WORKED OUT LIKE YOU THOUGHT THEY WOULD. This gets were instead of bethe 片(以) ARE YOU IN SUCH A CAVE?? THEN I ASK YOU .....AS GOD ASKED ELIJAH...>>> WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THE CAVE?! 5 GET OUT OF YOUR "CAVE!"  ${<\!\!\!<}$  God is on your side. THE GREATER ONE IS IN YOU. lpha the lord is your Helper. (1) HE HAS PROMISED TO NEVER LEAVE YOU .....OR FORSAKE YOU. YOU CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS YOU. your focus on this.

KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON GOD, .....GOD LOVES YOU. KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON GOD ....WHO IS GRE YOU WILL EVER FACE. KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON GOD ..... AND YOU WILL FULFILL GOD'S PURPOSÉ IN YOUR LIFE. KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON GOD ... ... FOR WHOM ALL THINGS ARE LET'S PRAY. are you stuck in a cave? Eur you buttling degress in & des pair? Quality Do you feel like giving it all up? Your answer is not a Promac or an extended "tappy thom!

Take your focus of your problem or problems.

In a gran problem or problems.

In a gran problem or problems. Your answer lies with keeping your focus on the Lord. Being open to Hi Being gielded to this Bein strugthered by Him Benj (9) guided by Hi.

SO HOW DO YOU DO IT?

**HOW DO YOU KEEP YOUR FOCUS?** 

WELL, THE BASICS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1.) KEEP YOU MIND FROM BECOMING OVERSTRAINED.

GO ON VACATION....DO SOMETHING YOU LIKE....REST.

KEEP YOUR MIND RESTED AND STRONG.

- 2.) STAY PHYSICALLY RESTED. ....KEEP YOUR BODY RESTED AND HEALTHY AS WELL. MAKE SURE YOU ARE EATING WELL...AND GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP.
- 3.) STAY IN GOD'S WORD......WHATEVER YOUR PROBLEM IS....GOD HAS A WORD FOR YOU......SPEND TIME IN HIS WORD....AND IT WILL BE COMFORT....AND WILL KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON HIM.
- 4.) FINALLY...PRAY. THIS IS THE BEST WAY TO KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON GOD...PRAY TO HIM...TALK TO HIM ABOUT YOUR SITUATION. ...LISTEN TO HIS DIRECTION FOR YOU.

STAYING RESTED AND HEALTHY ....BOTH PYSICALLY AND MENTALLY... WILL HELP YOU KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON GOD.

STAYING IN THE WORD.....AND PRAYER....WILL ALSO KEEP YOU FOCUSED ON GOD.

60 to (#2) below.

Your problem is not the problem you face.

His your power on this

Heep your pour pour on this

H2-10

wethank you for you would today a well want to know you better by hearing your Word Help not always keep our focus on You I wont the problems of the life. Help in to stay physically rested \_ to keep our mind from being overstrained \_ to stay in Your Word + in Prayer. We know that keeping our focus & hope in you is the key to conquery depression & despour. We praise You We low You We need You. We say this prayer in the precious mani of & Wh Say - Umer Jesus,