

Removing Strongholds: Anxiety and heaviness I Kings 19:1-18 FBC Canton

Sunday am Sept. 6, 2026

Introduction: When anxiety takes hold of our lives, a spirit of heaviness settles into our souls. Isaiah 61:1-3

Isaiah 61:1-4

NKJV

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.” And they shall rebuild the old ruins, They shall raise up the former desolations, And they shall repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations.

NYT article: 10.5k kids less than 12 in the USA. Smartphone use linked to obesity, poor sleep cycles, and depression.

The younger the age of smartphone use the increasing magnitude of the symptoms. The brain is being rewired like a slot machine rewires. Destroying the self-control part of our brains which results in feral behaviors and decreasing awareness of social cues and relationship harm.

You will find Elijah, the great prophet has it here in this passage.

David had it. Ps 119:28

28 My soul melts from heaviness, Strengthen me according to Your word.

Jesus knew this heaviness:

Ps 69:19-20

19 You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor; My adversaries are all before You. 20 Reproach has broken my heart, And I am full of heaviness;

Job: wished he had not been born.

Jonah: was angry enough to ask the Lord to take his life.

We might call it depression, but the Lord calls it a spirit of heaviness.

It is one of many of the sins that God wants to set us free from through sanctification!

The Three Tenses of "Salvation"

Past Tense:

Separation from the *Penalty* of Sin

You have been saved.

Justification

1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:5
Colossians 1:13, 14; Eph. 2:8, 9
Romans 5:1, 2; Colossians 2:13, 14

Present Tense:

Separation from the *Power* of Sin

You are being saved.

Sanctification

Philippians 1:6; 2:12, 13; 2 Cor. 5:17
2 Peter 3:17, 18; Romans 8:29
2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:16, 17

Future Tense:

Separation from the *Presence* of Sin

You will be saved.

Glorification

Matthew 10:22; James 1:12
Hebrews 10:39; Revelation 2:10
Philippians 3:20, 21; 1 John 3:2

The picture of Elijah's heaviness is a picture of a spiritual stronghold that believers can have:

What is a stronghold? II Corinthians 10:3-6

2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-6

For though we walk in the flesh,
we do not war according to the flesh.

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal
but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,
casting down arguments and every high thing that
exalts itself against the knowledge of God,
bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience
of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience
when your obedience is fulfilled.

Strongholds: seeking fulfillment of our God-given needs outside God's will.

God created
us with seven
needs:

Dignity
Authority
Blessing & Provision
Security
Purpose & Meaning
Freedom & Boundary
Intimate Love &
Companionship

A major source of strongholds
in our lives is a result of
seeking to meet one or more
of these needs apart from
God's will for us.

Strongholds have external and internal origins.

External:

Fallen world

Fallen enemy

Internal:

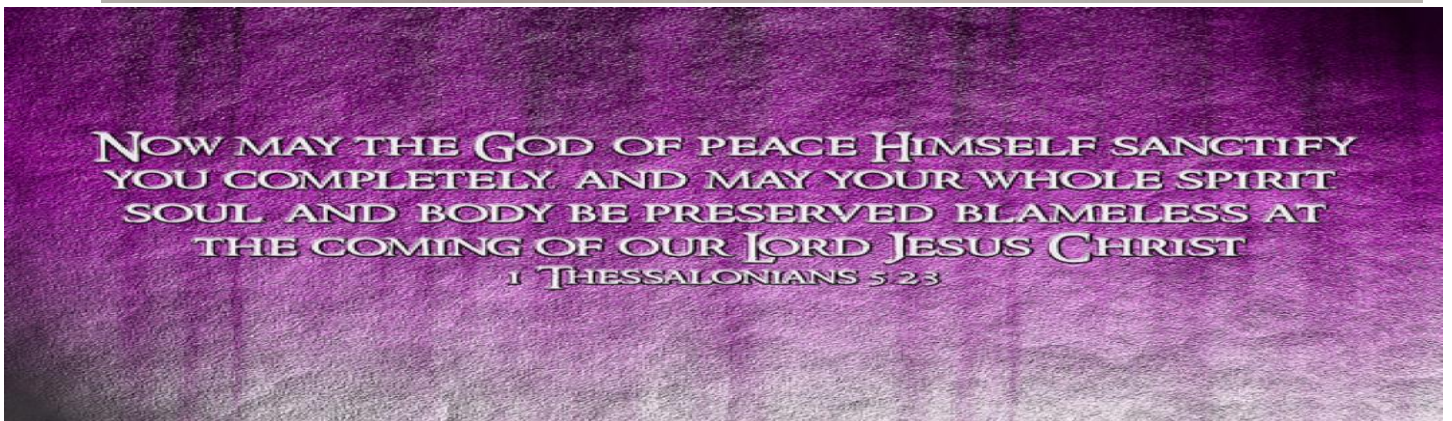
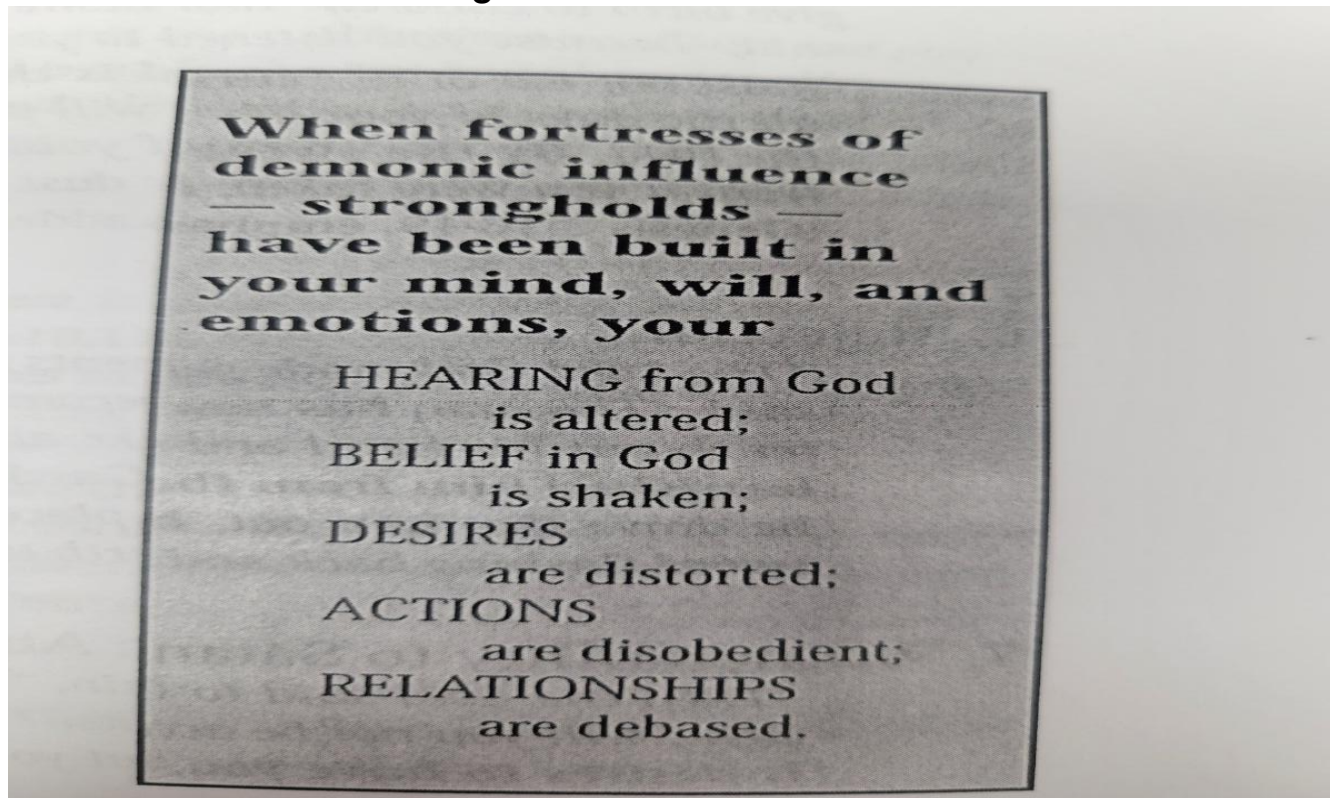
Fallen flesh

Family of origin

Reinforced patterns of living

Biological deficiency, and physiological deficiency.

How do we know we have strongholds?



We will see again today that Elijah has all 3 depleted, which leads to his heaviness and God will restore him in all 3.

I. Recognize the symptoms in Elijah. V. 1-5

a. In his spirit:

i. Spiritual fatigue. Ch. 18

1. 850 prophets of Baal and the groves.
2. 3.5-year drought coming to an end after extensive prayer.

i. MANY BELIEVERS NEVER UNDERSTAND THIS BECAUSE THEY NEVER ENGAGE IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE. THEY ARE CONTENT TO SIT IN THE STANDS AND CHEER FOR GREAT PLAYS, BUT NEVER PUT ON THE ARMOR.

b. In his soul:

i. Fear: False Expectations Appearing Real. V. 1-2

1. Jezebel and Ahab spiritual attack.
2. Ahab's male weakness arouses his demonically aligned wife.

ii. Self-defeated language. V. 4

1. It is enough! v. 4

- a. From the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.

2. Stuck in grief. V. 10, 14

- a. Same words.

iii. Loss of hope=end his life. v. 4

1. Take my life.
2. No vision for the future to be better.

iv. Self-pity/playing the victim.

1. I alone am left. V. 10, 14

v. Family of origin issues. V. 4

1. No better than my fathers.

c. In his body:

i. Fight or flight from problems. V. 3

1. Actions that are not of the Lord.
2. He fought in Ch. 18, now he is running.

ii. Isolation. V. 4

1. Day's journey.
2. Under a broom tree.

iii. Body rhythms off. V. 5

You could have heart palpitations, indigestion, cold sweats, bone tired, inability to achieve basic life steps, anger, bitterness, fear of failure.

1. Exhausted. Ch. 18

- a. Ran a marathon. Chapter 18

2. Hungry.

a. Not eating good food.

Body, Soul and spirit are depleted and the spirit of heaviness sets in.



You have 3 gauges on the dashboard of your life.

HEAVINESS

"To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified" (Isaiah 61:3, KJV). "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, O Lord my God. Give light to my eyes or I will sleep in death" (Psalm 13:1-3, CJB).

We know from Scripture that God desires you to have a childlike faith in Him that trusts wholeheartedly and absolutely in His love and mercies. The spirit of heaviness convinces you that your condition is **hopeless**: that no one cares; that even if circumstances improve, it's only temporary and you'll be miserable again. Your life is a **cycle of sorrow** and you can't seem to get off the downward spiral. Consider this, however: Often this spirit's agitation is secondary to another spirit, such as bitterness or independence.

Symptom:

Definition:

___ ___ Depression	Feelings of sorrow, despondence, dejection (Psalm 119:28)
___ ___ Despair	Overwhelming lack of hope (Jeremiah 45:3)
___ ___ Self-pity	Pattern of feeling sorry for yourself (Psalm 25:16-18)
___ ___ Loneliness	A sense of detachment or separation from others (Psalm 42:9,10)
___ ___ Unconfessed Sin	Avoiding admission to God of known iniquity (Psalm 32:3,4)
___ ___ Suicidal Thoughts	A strong desire to end your life; consumed with death (Psalm 55:2-5)

JEALOUSY

"If a spirit of jealousy comes over him, and he is jealous of his wife, and she

II. How do you defeat the Stronghold? V. 6-18

a. In your spirit:

i. Value spiritual mile-markers. V. 8

1. Mount of God is Mount Horeb=Jabal El Laws.
2. Burning Bush.
3. 10 commandments.
4. Camped for 2 years.

ii. Learn to love conviction. V. 9, 13, Genesis 3

1. 2x called by name.
2. What are you doing here?
 - a. God knew where Elijah was, and what he was doing there.
 - b. God knew how great this burden was on Elijah.

iii. Never neglect devotions. V. 12

1. More powerful than creation.
 - a. Shaking of the creation nothing in comparison to....
2. Still small voice=take captive every thought. II Corinthians 10:1-6

iv. Purpose is never over. V. 15-18, I John 3:20

**EVEN IF OUR HEARTS
CONDEMN US, GOD IS
GREATER THAN OUR
HEARTS, AND HE KNOWS
ALL THINGS.
- 1 JOHN 3:20**

1. Go and return to the war: Armor on. V.15-18, Ephesians 6:10-24

a. Anoint.

- i. King of Syria.
- ii. Jehu.
- iii. Elisha.

1. They will bring God's judgment.

b. Need Jesus people. 7000 faithful

b. In your soul: Tests

i. 40 days of potential.

1. Journey has always been too great for us.

a. We can't, but we can do all things through Christ. V. 7

c. In your body:

i. Consume the divine.

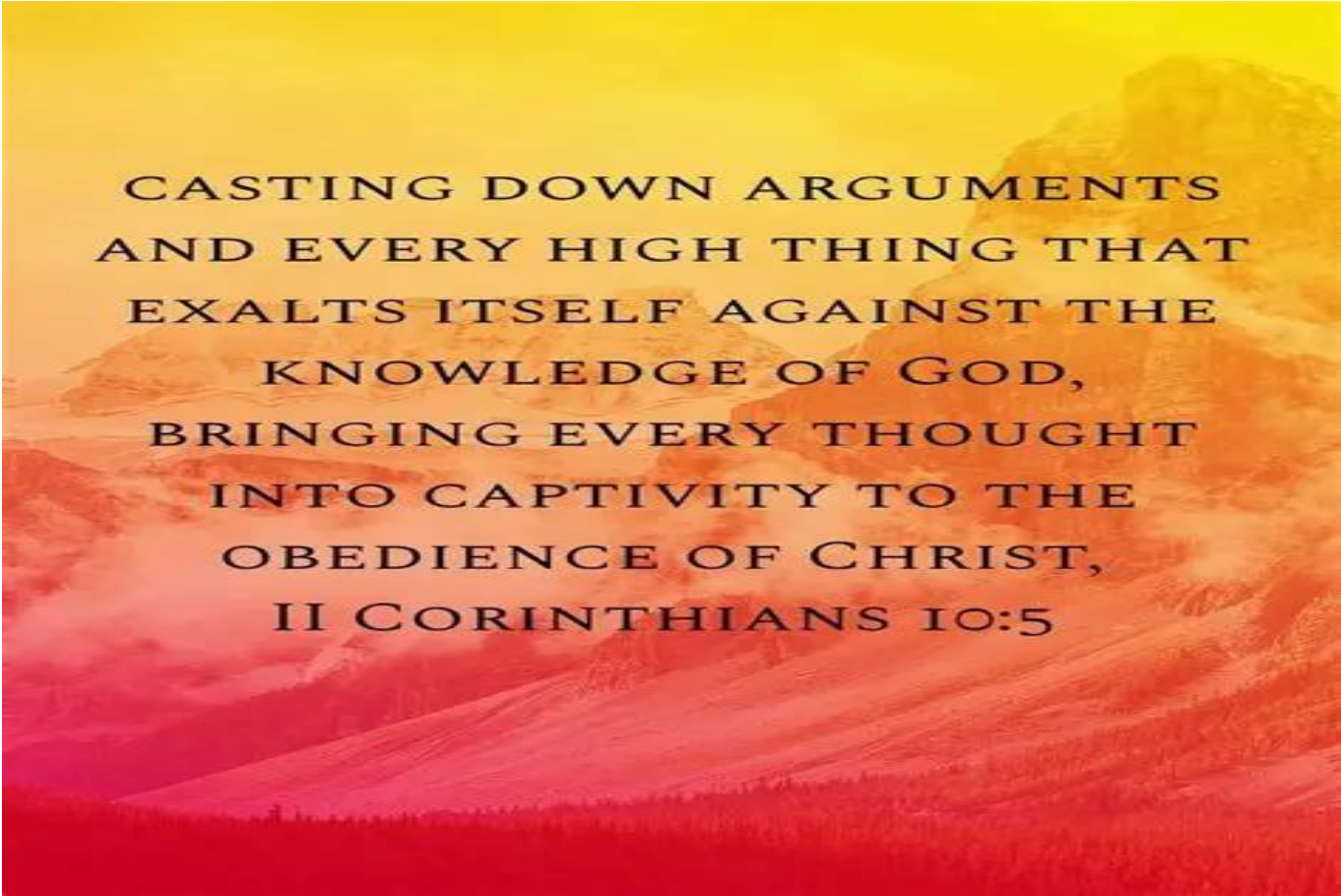
1. Food and water 2x

a. Proper nutrition.

b. Elimination of junk, drugs.

ii. Rest; repeat for renewal. V. 6

Conclusion: Praying every thought captive. II Corinthians 10:5



CASTING DOWN ARGUMENTS
AND EVERY HIGH THING THAT
EXALTS ITSELF AGAINST THE
KNOWLEDGE OF GOD,
BRINGING EVERY THOUGHT
INTO CAPTIVITY TO THE
OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST,
II CORINTHIANS 10:5

Matthew Henry

Commentary on 1 Kings 19

Chapter 19

We left Elijah at the entrance of Jezreel, still appearing publicly, and all the people's eyes upon him. In this chapter we have him again absconding, and driven into obscurity, at a time when he could ill be spared; but we are to look upon it as a punishment to Israel for the insincerity and inconstancy of their reformation. When people will not learn it is just with God to remove their teachers into corners. Now observe,

- I. How he was driven into banishment by the malice of Jezebel his sworn enemy ([v. 1-3](#)).
- II. How he was met, in his banishment, by the favour of God, his covenant-friend.
 - 1. How God fed him ([v. 4-8](#)).
 - 2. How he conversed with him, and manifested himself to him ([v. 9](#), [11-13](#)), heard his complaint ([v. 10-14](#)), directed him what to do ([v. 15-17](#)), and encouraged him ([v. 18](#)).
- III. How his hands were strengthened, at his return out of banishment, by the joining of Elisha with him ([v. 19-21](#)).

David Guzik

Study Guide for 1 Kings 19

GOD ENCOURAGES DISCOURAGED ELIJAH

A. Elijah flees to the wilderness.

1. ([1 Kings 19:1-3](#)) Jezebel's threat.

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. 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." And when he saw [that](#), he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which [belongs](#) to Judah, and left his servant there.

- a. **[Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done](#)**: The report came as a great shock to this champion of Baal and Astarte worship in Israel. She thought so much of these priests that she supported them from the royal treasury, and now they were dead at the hand of Elijah.
- b. **[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](#)**: Jezebel heard about [all that Elijah had done](#), encompassing the great confrontation at Mount Carmel. Yet her response was [not](#) to say, "The

silence of Baal and the fire from Yahweh proves that I am wrong and Yahweh is God.” Instead, she responded with a vow to kill within 24 hours the man who exposed the lie of Baal worship and displayed the glory of Yahweh.

i. “He probably thought that the miracle at Carmel would have been the means of effecting the conversion of the whole court and of the country, but, finding himself mistaken, he is greatly discouraged.” (Clarke)

c. **When he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba:** We cannot say for certain if this was led of God or not. It is clear that God wanted to protect Elijah, but we cannot say if God wanted to protect him at Jezreel or protect him by getting him out of Jezreel. Nevertheless, Elijah went about 80 miles south to Beersheba.

i. “Probably Elijah had played into Jezebel’s hand. Had she really wanted Elijah dead, she surely would have seized him without warning and slain him. What she desired was that Elijah and his God be discredited before the new converts what had aided Elijah by executing the prophets of Baal.” (Patterson and Austel)

ii. “Elijah failed in the very point at which he was strongest, and that is where most men fail. In Scripture, it is the wisest man who proves himself to be the greatest fool; just as the meekest man, Moses, spoke hasty and bitter words. Abraham failed in his faith, and Job in his patience; so, he who was the most courageous of all men, fled from an angry woman.” (Spurgeon)

2. (1 Kings 19:4) Elijah’s depression.

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!”

a. **He himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness:** Beyond the distant city of Beersheba, Elijah secluded himself even more.

b. **And he prayed that he might die:** This mighty man of prayer — mighty enough to make the rain and the dew stop for three and a half years, and then mighty enough to make it start again at his prayer — now **he prayed that he might die.**

i. Thankfully, this was a prayer not answered for Elijah. In fact, Elijah was one of the few men in the Bible to never die! We can imagine that as he was caught up into heaven, he smiled and thought of this prayer — and the blessed no that answered his prayer. To receive a no answer from God can be better than receiving a yes answer.

c. **It is enough:** We sense that Elijah meant, “I can’t do this anymore, LORD.” The work was stressful, exhausting, and seemed to accomplish nothing. The great work on Mount Carmel did not result in a lasting national revival or return to the LORD.

i. Perhaps Elijah had especially hoped that the events on Mount Carmel would turn around Ahab and Jezebel and the leadership of Israel in general. If so, Elijah forgot that people reject God despite the evidence, not because of the evidence.

ii. "Elijah said, 'It is enough,' yet it was not enough even for his own enjoyment, for the Lord had more blessings in store for him... It was so with Elijah, for he was to have that wonderful revelation of God on Mount Horeb. He had more to enjoy, and the later life of Elijah appears to have been one of calm communion with his God; he seems never to have had another fainting fit, but to the end his sun shone brightly without a cloud. So it was not enough; how could he know that it was? It is God alone who knows when we have done enough, and enjoyed enough; but we do not know." (Spurgeon)

d. **Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers:** When Elijah examined the apparent failure of his work, he instinctively set the blame on his own unworthiness. It was because he was a sinner as the rest of his ancestors that the work seemed to fail.

B. God's ministry to the despairing Elijah.

1. (1 Kings 19:5-8) God ministers to the physical needs of Elijah.

Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat." Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you." So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

a. **As he lay and slept under a broom tree:** This was the mercy of God extended to Elijah. Physically speaking, he needed rest and replenishment. God gave him rest **under a broom tree**, and provided miraculous food for the replenishment.

i. God first ministered to Elijah's physical needs. This is not always His order, but physical needs are important. Sometimes the most spiritual thing a person can do is get enough rest and replenishment.

ii. "And how many are there at this day that sit under Elias's juniper, willing and wishing to lay down that heavy burden imposed upon them by the Almighty!" (Trapp)

b. **So he ate and drank, and lay down again:** Elijah received this rest and replenishment repeatedly from the LORD. One quick nap and one quick meal wasn't enough.

i. "Before entering into that communion with him which was for the correction of his false attitude of fear, He commanded him to eat, thus ministering to his physical weakness." (Morgan)

ii. “The spirit needs to be fed, and the body needs feeding also. Do not forget these matters; it may seem to some people that I ought not to mention such small things as food and rest, but these may be the very first elements in really helping a poor depressed servant of God.” (Spurgeon)

iii. “It was very gracious for God to deal thus with his servant. We might have expected rebuke or remonstrance, chiding or chastisement; but we would hardly have expected such loving, gentle treatment as this.” (Meyer)

c. **Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you**: God set Elijah on a 200-mile, 40-day trip to Mount **Horeb**, also known as Mount Sinai. This shows that God did not demand an *immediate* recovery from Elijah. He allowed the prophet time to recover from his spiritual depression.

i. “Elijah’s forty-day journey is not without significance. Indeed, a straight trip from Beersheba would require little more than a quarter of that time. Therefore the period is designedly symbolic. As the children of Israel had a notable spiritual failure and so were to wander forty years in the wilderness, so a defeated Elijah was to spend forty days in the desert.” (Patterson and Austel)

2. (1 Kings 19:9-10) God allows Elijah to vent his frustrations.

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, Elijah?” So he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”

a. **He went into a cave**: Literally, the Hebrew is definite describing *the cave*. “*The cave* may well have been the specific ‘cleft of the rock’ where God appeared to Moses (av, [Exodus 33:22](#)) rather than the ‘cave-region’ generally.” (Wiseman)

i. “Perhaps no spot on earth is more associated with the manifested presence of God than that sacred mount.” (Meyer)

b. **What are you doing here, Elijah**: God knew the answer to this question, but it was good for Elijah to speak to the LORD freely and to unburden his heart.

i. “God has ways of teaching all of us in our bones and in our flesh, but he specially knows how to do this with those upon whom he puts any honor in his service. You must not marvel, if God should be pleased to bless you to the conversion of souls, that he should also make you sometimes smart.” (Spurgeon)

- c. **I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts**: Elijah protested to God, “I have faithfully served You and now look at the danger I am in.” To Elijah — and many servants of God since — it seemed unfair that a faithful servant of God should be made to suffer.
- d. **I alone am left**: This was not *accurate*, but it reflected how Elijah felt. Even back at the confrontation at Mount Carmel, Elijah said *I alone am left a prophet of the LORD* ([1 Kings 18:22](#)). Discouraging times make God’s servants feel more isolated and alone than they are.
- d. **I alone am left; and they seek to take my life**: Strangely, the reasons Elijah provided were actually important reasons for him to remain alive. If he really was the last prophet or believer alive, should not he seek to live as long as possible? If the enemies of God like Jezebel wanted him dead, should he not seek to defeat her wicked will? Elijah, here, powerfully showed the *unreasonable nature* of unbelief and fear.

3. ([1 Kings 19:11-12](#)) God reveals Himself to Elijah.

Then He said, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

- a. **Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD**: God knew what the depressed and discouraged Elijah needed. He needed a *personal encounter with God*. There was nothing fundamentally wrong with Elijah’s *theology*, but at the time there was something lacking in his experience.
- b. **Behold, the LORD passed by**: God brought His presence before Elijah, but first, to show *where He was not*. The LORD was **not in the wind**; He was **not in the earthquake**; He was **not in the fire**. Like many others, Elijah probably only looked for God in dramatic manifestations. Certainly, God sometimes appears in such ways, but He often appears in less dramatic surroundings.

i. “This same lesson has to be learned over and over by us all: let us repeat it, ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.’ It is to be lamented that the most of professors obstinately cling to the fatal error of looking for displays of power of one kind or another. I hear that a certain church is seeking for a very clever man: she thinks that God is in the wind... That still small voice will be hushed and silent, while the boastings of your wisdom resound like a howling wind or a thunder unaccompanied by rain.” (Spurgeon)

- c. **After the fire a still small voice**: This final phenomenon was a marked contrast to the previous manifestations. God actually met Elijah in the quiet whisper of a voice, instead of the earth-shaking phenomenon that had gone before.

i. Wiseman called the **still small voice** a *gentle whisper*.

ii. “And now the thunder ceased, and the lightning was gone, and the earth was still, and the wind was hushed, and there was a dead calm, and out of the midst of the still air there came what the Hebrew calls ‘a voice of gentle silence,’ as if silence had become audible. There is nothing more terrible than an awful stillness after a dread uproar.” (Spurgeon)

iii. Elijah perhaps thought that the dramatic display of power at Mount Carmel would turn the nation around. Or perhaps he thought that the radical display of God’s judgment against the priests of Baal following the vindication at Mount Carmel would change the hearts of the nation. Neither of these worked. This example is important for Christian ministers today, especially preachers. It shows that *displays of power* and *preaching God’s anger* don’t necessarily change hearts. Instead, the **still small voice** of God speaking to the human heart is actually more powerful than outward displays of power or displays of God’s judgment.

iv. “Because the success of Carmel melted like the morning mist, he thought that his career had been a failure all along, and that he had brought no one to reverence Jehovah; but he was reading with the eyes of unbelief, and his imagination was leading him rather than the facts of the case. Here are seven thousand people scattered up and down the country to whom God has blessed Elijah’s testimony. If he had not blessed his big things as he had desired, yet his little things had prospered greatly. It was Elijah’s daily conduct rather than his miracles which had impressed these seven thousand and led them to hold fast their integrity.” (Spurgeon)

4. (1 Kings 19:13-15) After this ministry, God gives Elijah work to do.

So it was, when Elijah heard *it*, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice *came* to him, and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” And he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.” Then the LORD said to him: “Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael *as* king over Syria.

- a. **He wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave:** Immediately, Elijah sensed that God was present in the *still small voice* in a way that He was not in the previous, more dramatic phenomena. Because he sensed the special presence of God, Elijah immediately humbled himself when he **wrapped his face in his mantle**.

i. “Through horror and dread of God’s presence, being sensible that he was neither worthy nor able to endure the sight of God with open face.” (Poole)

ii. “He first wrapped his mantle about his face — he became subdued and awe-stricken — full of reverence. Oh! it is a great thing when a sinner is willing to wrap his face when he is confounded, and say, ‘I cannot defend my course; I am guilty.’ We know that if at our judgment-seat a man pleads guilty, he is punished; but at the judgment-seat of the gospel whoever pleads guilty is forgiven. Wrap your face.” (Spurgeon)

b. **What are you doing here, Elijah:** God asked Elijah the same question — and received the same response — as in [1 Kings 19:9-10](#). There was something helpful for Elijah in this question-and-answer process.

c. **Go, return on your way... anoint Hazael as king over Syria:** God gave Elijah *something to do*. He needed a task to focus on so he could avoid excessive introspection. He needed to stop looking at himself and his own (admittedly difficult) circumstances. He needed to get on with what God wanted him to do.

i. “Then the Lord did what perhaps was best of all for Elijah, *he gave him some more work to do*. He sent him off about his Master’s business again; and I warrant you that, when Elijah went back over that road, it was with a very different step from that which brought him down to Beersheba. He had come along terrified and distressed; but now he goes back with the majesty that belongs to the Tishbite, he is afraid of no Jezebel now.” (Spurgeon)

5. ([1 Kings 19:16-18](#)) Further assurance to Elijah.

“Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

a. **You shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel:** God had more work for Elijah to do. He would also demonstrate God’s choice of **Jehu** to be the king to succeed the corrupt Ahab and his wife Jezebel.

b. **Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place:** God gave something else to the discouraged and depressed prophet, beyond work to do. He also gave him *a friend* and a *successor*.

i. Elijah needed a *friend*; the core of his complaint before God was that he was alone. God let him know that there was a man ready to learn from the great prophet and be his disciple and companion.

ii. Elijah also needed *hope*, and since Elisha would be raised up as a successor to Elijah’s prophetic office, Elijah then knew that his work would continue even after his death.

c. **It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill:** This was another source of encouragement to

Elijah. With this promise he knew that ultimately justice would be done, and God would not allow the institutionalized persecution and promotion of idolatry to go unpunished.

d. **Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal**:

This was a final encouragement to Elijah. He repeatedly bemoaned that he was alone among the true followers of God ([1 Kings 18:22](#), [19:10](#), and [19:14](#)). This both assured Elijah that he was not alone and that his work as a prophet had indeed been fruitful.

i. This showed Elijah that his *quiet ministry* over the years actually bore more fruit than the *spectacular ministry* at Mount Carmel. “Yet, all the while that vile idolatry was spreading in Israel, the worship of the true God was being retained by seven thousand faithful souls, though Elijah did not know that there was even one beside himself. How were they won to Jehovah? Certainly not by Elijah’s impressive demonstration on the top of Carmel, for they were loyal to the Lord before that... The still small voice had been doing for Israel what Elijah could not do” (Spurgeon).

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown Commentary on 1 Kings 19

The First Book of the Kings
Commentary by ROBERT JAMIESON
CHAPTER 19

[1Ki 19:1-3](#). ELIJAH FLEES TO BEER-SHEBA.

3. he arose, and went for his life--He entered Jezreel full of hope. But a message from the incensed and hard-hearted queen, vowing speedy vengeance for her slaughtered priests, dispelled all his bright visions of the future. It is probable, however, that in the present temper of the people, even she would not have dared to lay violent hands on the Lord's servant, and purposely threatened him because she could do no more. The threat produced the intended effect, for his faith suddenly failed him. He fled out of the kingdom into the southernmost part of the territories in Judah; nor did he deem himself safe even there, but, dismissing his servant, he resolved to seek refuge among the mountain recesses of Sinai, and there longed for death ([Jam 5:17](#)). This sudden and extraordinary depression of mind arose from too great confidence inspired by the miracles wrought at Carmel, and by the disposition the people evinced there. Had he remained steadfast and immovable, the impression on the mind of Ahab and the people generally might have been followed by good results. But he had been exalted above measure ([2Cr 12:7-9](#)), and being left to himself, the great prophet, instead of showing the indomitable spirit of a martyr, fled from his post of duty.

[1Ki 19:4-18](#). HE IS COMFORTED BY AN ANGEL.

4-18. went a day's journey into the wilderness--on the way from Beer-sheba to Horeb--a wide expanse of sand hills, covered with the retem (not juniper, but broom shrubs), whose tall and spreading branches, with their white leaves, afford a very cheering and refreshing shade. His gracious God did not lose sight of His fugitive servant, but watched over him, and, miraculously ministering to his wants, enabled him, in a better but not wholly right frame of mind, by virtue of that supernatural supply, to complete his contemplated journey. In the solitude of Sinai, God appeared to instruct him. "What doest thou here, Elijah?" was a searching question addressed to one who had been called to so arduous and urgent a mission as his. By an awful exhibition of divine power, he was made aware of the divine speaker who addressed him; his attention was arrested, his petulance was silenced, his heart was touched, and he was bid without delay return to the land of Israel, and prosecute the Lord's work there. To convince him that an idolatrous nation will not be unpunished, He commissions him to anoint three persons who were destined in Providence to avenge God's controversy with the people of Israel. Anointing is used synonymously with appointment ([Jdg 9:8](#)), and is applied to all named, although Jehu alone had the consecrated oil poured over his head. They were all three destined to be eminent instruments in achieving the destruction of idolaters, though in different ways. But of the three commissions, Elijah personally executed only one; namely, the call of Elisha to be his assistant and successor [[1Ki 19:19](#)], and by him the other two were accomplished ([2Ki 8:7-13](#) [9:1-10](#)). Having thus satisfied the fiery zeal of the erring but sincere and pious prophet, the Lord proceeded to correct the erroneous impression under which Elijah had been laboring, of his being the sole adherent of the true religion in the land; for God, who seeth in secret, and knew all that were His, knew that there were seven thousand persons who had not done homage (literally, "kissed the hand") to Baal.

16. Abel-meholah--that is, "the meadow of dancing," in the valley of the Jordan.

[1Ki 19:19-21](#). ELISHA FOLLOWS ELIJAH.

19. Elisha the son of Shaphat--Most probably he belonged to a family distinguished for piety, and for their opposition to the prevailing calf-worship.

ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen--indicating that he was a man of substance.

Elijah. . . cast his mantle upon him--This was an investiture with the prophetic office. It is in this way that the Brahmins, the Persian Sufis, and other priestly or sacred characters in the East are appointed--a mantle being, by some eminent priest, thrown across their shoulders. Elisha had probably been educated in the schools of the prophets.

20. what have I done to thee?--that is, Go, but keep in mind the solemn ceremony I have just performed on thee. It is not I, but God, who calls thee. Do not allow any earthly affection to detain you from obeying His call.

21. took a yoke of oxen--Having hastily prepared ([2Sa 24:22](#)) a farewell entertainment to his family and friends, he left his native place and attached himself to Elijah as his minister.

Chapter 19

So Ahab told his wife Jezebel the whole story of what had happened, what Elijah did, and how he killed all of her prophets with the sword. And Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, and she said, So let the gods do to me, and even more also, if I don't make your life like the life of those prophets by to morrow this time. And when he got the message from Jezebel, he got up, and he began to run for his life, and he came all the way to Beersheba, [which is about eighty miles, eighty-five miles south from this area,] and he left his servant there ([1Ki 19:1-3](#)).

Probably so bushed he couldn't go on any further.

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, he came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested that he might die; he said, It is enough; now, O LORD, [I've had it] take away my life, slay me, I'm through ([1Ki 19:4](#)).

Now this is, you know, out of a distraught condition. You're all upset. And it's interesting how that when we are so upset, we oftentimes say things we don't really mean. You know, you get real upset and you just say things you don't really mean. Afterwards you're even sorry that you said them many times. But I was just upset so I just you know didn't really engage my brain. I just let my mouth run and I said these things. But I really didn't mean them. You know a lot of times we say things that we don't really mean. We ought to be really more careful with our speech. You know, you say to your child, "Get back in this house or I'll knock your head off." You really don't mean that.

The prophet is saying, "Lord, slay me, I've had it. I'm through. Just kill me, Lord. I don't want to go any further." If he wanted to die, he didn't have to run. He could have stayed right back there in Jezreel and Jezebel would have taken care of it very gladly. So the very fact that he was running showed that he wanted to survive. That was the whole purpose of the flight is to get away from the threat of Jezebel to kill him.

And so he went to sleep and when he woke up, the angel was there, [had prepared a meal for him,] and said, Come on and eat ([1Ki 19:5](#)).

Because you're going to go a long way on this food. So he had angel's food and it lasted for forty days. Good stuff. Very nutritious. He went forty days on the strength of that meat.

And he came to Horeb the mountain of God ([1Ki 19:8](#)).

Down in the Sinai, way down. Man, he's really fleeing from her. Down in the barren wilderness, Mount Sinai or Mount Horeb, both names given to this mount, the mountain where Moses met God and received the Lord.

And he came to a cave, and he stayed there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him [there in the cave], and said unto him, What are you doing here, Elijah? ([1Ki 19:9](#))

Now Elijah didn't really understand the question. The question was, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" And Elijah answered why he was there, not what he was doing there, but why he was there.

He said, I've been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because Israel has really turned against God, they have forsaken His covenant, they have broken down His altars, they have slain His prophets; and I'm the only one left; and they're even looking for me to kill me ([1Ki 19:10](#)).

How bad can things get? The nation Israel in total apostasy. They have forsaken the Lord, broken down His altars, killed His prophets. Only one prophet left and they're looking for him. Now that is Elijah's overstatement of the case because he is so upset and discouraged.

And that's one thing about discouragement and despair, it causes you to overstate the case so it actually looks worse than it really is. You know, we get so discouraged and so despondent, we don't want anyone to cheer us up. I just want sympathy at this point. This is so bad. No one's ever had it this bad, you know, and we always are overstating then the case, as Elijah was actually overstating the case of the problems in Israel. They've killed all of Your prophets and I, only I am left, and they're looking for me to kill me. "God, You don't have a single one left in Israel." That isn't quite right, Elijah, but you're upset and I understand, you know. You get so down that you just can't see any glimmer of hope, any light.

The Lord said, Elijah, come on out here and stand here on the mount. [So Elijah came out the entrance of the cave and he stood there] and there came this fierce wind whipping through there, tearing rocks loose, [rolling down the hillside]; but God wasn't in the wind: Then there came this earthquake, [just shook the whole place]; God wasn't in the earthquake: then there came a fire just raging through, God wasn't in the fire: then there came a still small voice ([1Ki 19:11-12](#)).

You know, quite often we miss the voice of God because we are anticipating God to speak in such, you know, great thunderous tones or in such a mystic way. I say, "Well, the Lord spoke to me."

"Oh, how did He speak?" My, the voice of God must really rumble like thunder or something, you know. And we think that when God is leading us that there must be something almost like a trance experience where I become, you know, almost in this trance and I hear a little sign saying, "Beep, beep, beep, beep, turn right. Beep, beep, beep, beep, go forward," you know. "Beep, beep, stop." And that some kind of a mystic thing where I'm walking around in a trance. God is leading me. I'm being led by the Spirit. Not so. In fact, when God is leading your life He does it in such natural ways

that generally, you're not even aware that God is leading you because it just seems such a natural thing.

Years ago I was driving up to Ventura to have services in a church up there where I grew up. And they had invited me back to speak on a Sunday evening. So I decided to go up on Saturday, take a leisure drive, stay with my aunt in Santa Barbara Saturday night and then drive back to Ventura on Sunday and speak there on Sunday evening. And so I had started up to Ventura and I was in Hollywood and I came to Sunset Boulevard and it just flashed to me, I had a convertible, flashed on me, What a beautiful day. Why not just flip the top down, drive down Sunset Boulevard to Pacific Coast and go up past Malibu. I love that drive up the coast through Malibu and Point Mugu and on in that way. Such a beautiful day, you know, I thought. Just put the top down and take a drive up the coast.

So I started winding down Sunset Boulevard, winds all the way through until it finally drops you there in Santa Monica at the Pacific Coast Highway. And as I was coming down, the skies were so blue, so clear and it was just such a beautiful day, spring day. And there was a couple who were hitchhiking. And oh, well, I'm all by myself, might as well pick them up and so I picked them up and I started asking them questions. Found out they were from Montana.

I said, "Well, what are you doing here in California?"

They said, "Oh, we're looking for work."

I said, "What kind of work do you do?"

"I'm a farmer." And he said, "I haven't been able to find anything in Los Angeles."

I said, "Where are you going?"

They said, "Well, we're going to San Francisco."

I said, "There are no farms in San Francisco." I said, "It's the same as Los Angeles, it's just a big city."

I said, "Now between here and San Francisco there's a lot of farm country. In fact," I said, "I'm going through Ventura." I said, "There's a lot of farms around Ventura. There's a lot of ranches and all." And I said, "If you want to really get farm work, you better stop in one of these communities between here and San Francisco, Salinas or somewhere, you're never going to get a job on a farm up there."

Poor kids, they didn't know anything about California. They just heard that it was sunny and all and they were tired of the snow in Montana and just newly married and decided to move to California and get a job. Then I started witnessing to them about the Lord. And when we got to Ventura, they

decided that they would stay and look for work there. And I drove them by the church where I would be the next evening, invited them to come and meet me at the church the next evening. And we had prayer with them, they both accepted Christ. And so I bid them farewell and went on up to Santa Barbara to stay with my aunt and never really expected to see them again.

When I got to Santa Barbara my aunt was making enchiladas and she was the greatest enchilada maker in the world. And the phone rang and it was my mother. And there were problems at our home in Santa Ana. I had an alcoholic uncle that I kicked out and he came back while I was gone and my mother was quite desperate. She couldn't take him. It was my dad's brother and she said, "It's either him or me."

And so I had to drive right on back to Santa Ana that night and deal with my uncle and get him out of there for my mother's sake. So my whole trip to Santa Barbara was sort of in vain anyhow, I thought. But then I drove up the next night to Ventura, spoke at the church. We gave an invitation for those at the end who would like to receive Christ to come forward. And this couple who I never expected to see again came forward.

And so there were several people that came forward that evening and I went down and prayed with many of them. And I went up to this young couple and I told them how great it was to see them and how thrilled I was that they were there. And they were just beaming all over, telling me just how glorious it was that they had accepted the Lord and how happy they were.

And they said, "This man who came to pray with us, I knew him, his name was Mr. Jenkins. I grew up in Ventura and I knew him quite well. And he was a foreman at the Del Mar Liminary Ranch." And so he came forward, prayed with them, and they shared what the situation was.

So he said, "Hey, I got an opening out in the ranch right now." And he hired them and they had a job and housing and everything else. And God just put the whole thing together.

Then I got to thinking, it must have been the Lord that put into my mind, "Why don't you flip the top down and go up the coast?" You know it seemed like so me because I love the ocean and all. It seemed like such a natural thought that I really wasn't aware at that moment in Hollywood that it was actually the Spirit of God speaking to me and directing me to this couple that were really searching for the Lord, as much as anything else, because they were wide open to receive the witness and all. And yet I realized, "Hey, God was directing me, because though I love the coast, being that well along on my way in the inland route, I don't like Sunset Boulevard and all the signals going up to the coast." And yet suddenly I realized it was the Lord. Now it wasn't something mystical and there wasn't thunder and lightning and great winds and earthquakes or anything else. It was just a very natural way. And what the Scripture is saying is that God usually speaks to us in very natural ways.

Don't expect God to speak in some earthquake, or in fact, it's awfully hard to hear God many times when our earth is shaking around us. It's awfully hard to hear God in the midst of the tempest and the storms of life. It's hard to hear God when it seems like everything around us is being consumed. Many times we need to get our hearts very quiet before God. We need to get away from the tempest. We need to get away from the shaking and the things around us to get alone to where I can really hear that still, small voice of God within as He guides me, as He assures me of His love, as He assures me of His purpose. And I get the strength and the help from God when He speaks to me. And it's that still, small voice within. So natural that it seems like it comes maybe even from your own heart or your own mind. But in reality, it is God speaking to you. It's always an exciting experience when I come to the realization that that thought didn't come out of my own subconsciousness, that thought came to me from God. God planted that thought in my mind, that still, small voice. It was God speaking to me. And it's beautiful. It's a glorious experience to hear the still, small voice.

The Lord said, repeated the same question, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" And Elijah still didn't understand the question. He answered the Lord the same way.

I've been very jealous for You: for Israel has forsaken the covenant, they've broken down your altars, they've slain your prophets; I, only I am left; and they're looking for me to take my life ([1Ki 19:14](#)).

Now the question was, "What are you doing here?" Not "Why are you here?" So the Lord got then to specifics with this upset prophet because in reality, he was doing nothing. He was hiding. Doing nothing. He had put himself out of service. He was out of commission. He wasn't. There was no one to witness to down there. There was no work for God to be done in that barren wilderness. So he was doing nothing. God doesn't like for us to do nothing. And so the Lord re-commissioned him.

He said, Now look, get out of here, and get on up to Damascus: and when you get there, anoint Hazael to be the king over Syria: And then get down and anoint Jehu to be the king over Samaria: and then anoint Elisha to take your place and all ([1Ki 19:15-16](#)).

God put him back to work. God got him away from this place of hiding in a cave, of doing nothing and commissioned him back into service for the Lord. Even as God wants to get you off your duff and get you back doing something that's worthwhile for Him.

And then the Lord sort of puts a little thing on the end. "Elijah, you were exaggerating."

For I have seven thousand men in Israel, whose knees have not bowed to Baal, whose lips have not kissed his image ([1Ki 19:18](#)).

"I, only I am left." No, no, you're not alone. "I've got seven thousand." God knew them. God had been observing.

So he departed from there, and he found Elisha, and Elisha was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, [actually there were ten before him and he had the twelve beside him]: and as Elijah passed by, he took his mantle and he threw it on him. And Elisha left his oxen there, and came running after Elijah, and he said, Wait a minute, I pray you, let me go back and kiss my father and mother goodbye, and I will follow you. And he said, Go on back to your oxen: what have I done to you? But he returned back and he took a yoke of oxen, and he killed them, and he boiled their flesh, and he gave it to the people, and he ate. And he arose, and went after Elijah, and became the servant of Elijah ([1Ki 19:19-21](#)).

AI Was Supposed To Help Us Work - Now We're Asking It How To Live



BY PNW STAFF AUGUST 26, 2026

For years, Americans have been told that the artificial intelligence revolution would transform the workplace. AI would write reports, analyze spreadsheets, generate computer code, automate customer service and potentially eliminate millions of jobs.

All of that may still happen. But something quieter--and potentially far more consequential--is already taking place.

AI isn't merely entering our workplaces. It is entering our private lives.

New research from the AI Observatory examined more than 23,000 anonymized conversations with major AI chatbots and found that nearly half--48 percent--were not related to work. People were talking to artificial intelligence about health, relationships and other deeply personal subjects.

That should get our attention.

The biggest AI revolution may ultimately have less to do with whether a machine replaces your accountant and more to do with whether it replaces your counselor, confidant, pastor--or eventually, your conscience.

From Tool To Adviser

There is an enormous difference between asking artificial intelligence, "Can you summarize this report?" and asking it, "Should I divorce my husband?"

One is assistance. The other is counsel.

Yet the transition between the two can happen almost imperceptibly.

Someone begins using AI to compose emails. Then he asks for career advice. Soon he is discussing an argument with his wife, worries about his children, questions about his health, or doubts about his faith.

The attraction isn't difficult to understand.

AI is available at 2 a.m. It doesn't appear impatient. It doesn't become offended. It can respond sympathetically and immediately, and there is none of the embarrassment that might accompany admitting something painful to another human being.

But convenience can slowly become dependence.

The progression could look something like this:

AI as tool -> AI as adviser -> AI as confidant -> AI as counselor -> AI as authority.

And that final step should especially concern Christians.

We Are Creating A "Thought History"

There is another dimension to this transformation that deserves much more attention: privacy.

For years, people have worried about their search histories. Google searches can reveal interests, medical concerns, political questions and purchasing intentions.

Social media reveals something different: what we want other people to see about us.

But conversations with AI can potentially reveal something much deeper--how we actually think.

Imagine several years of conversations with a highly personalized AI assistant.

It could potentially know about your marriage problems, financial fears, medical worries, political opinions, religious doubts, sexual temptations, family conflicts, ambitions and insecurities.

It might know what makes you angry.

It might know what frightens you.

It might even know which arguments are most likely to persuade you.

We are moving from the age of the search history toward the age of the thought history.

That could become one of the richest collections of personal information ever created.

The danger is not necessarily that someone is sitting somewhere reading everyone's conversations. The larger concern is that society is rapidly normalizing the creation of extraordinarily detailed digital portraits of human beings without fully considering what such information could eventually mean.

The Ultimate Persuasion Machine?

That leads to an even more unsettling possibility.

Traditional advertising attempts to categorize people. You are male or female, young or old, conservative or liberal, wealthy or struggling. Advertisers then determine which messages might appeal to someone like you.

Social media made that process considerably more sophisticated by tracking what people click, watch and share.

But personalized AI could potentially go much further.

After thousands of conversations, an AI system could theoretically understand not simply what you believe, but why you believe it.

Does fear persuade you? Statistics? Emotional stories? Religious arguments? Financial concerns? Appeals involving your children?

The machine that knows you best could eventually become the machine best equipped to persuade you.

That possibility becomes particularly concerning when AI systems are controlled by corporations that determine their rules, training methods and acceptable boundaries.

AI doesn't descend from heaven possessing perfect neutrality.

Someone builds it. Someone trains it. Someone establishes its parameters. Someone decides what it should refuse to say and what perspectives it should emphasize.

That matters tremendously when people begin asking machines moral questions.

Christians Cannot Outsource Discernment

For Christians, there is an important distinction between using AI to obtain information and allowing AI to determine truth.

Asking, "What are the major interpretations of this biblical passage?" can be useful.

Asking, "What should I believe?" is something very different.

AI can summarize theological arguments, locate historical information, compare translations and explain difficult concepts. Those can be valuable tools.

But artificial intelligence cannot replace Scripture, prayer, the Holy Spirit, mature Christian counsel or the fellowship of believers.

Proverbs repeatedly emphasizes the importance of godly wisdom and counsel. The New Testament tells Christians to test what they hear and exercise discernment.

The danger is that AI makes bypassing those processes incredibly easy.

Why approach a pastor about a difficult moral issue when a chatbot will answer instantly?

Why discuss a troubled marriage with mature Christian friends when AI will listen without embarrassment?

Why wrestle through Scripture when a machine can provide an immediate conclusion?

Over time, convenience can quietly transfer authority.

Christians who would never consciously say, "I want Silicon Valley deciding my theology," could nevertheless find themselves consulting AI every day about relationships, morality, sexuality, parenting, politics and Scripture.

Eventually the question changes from "What information can AI give me?" to "What does AI think I should do?"

That is a very different relationship.

A Tool Must Remain A Tool

Artificial intelligence is not inherently evil. Like countless technologies before it, it can be used productively or destructively.

The warning is about something more subtle.

We are creating machines capable of speaking with remarkable confidence, empathy and apparent wisdom. At the same time, millions of people are increasingly willing to tell those machines things they may not tell another human being.

The AI revolution therefore isn't simply about automation.

It is about authority.

Who will advise us? Who will interpret our problems? Who will help define right and wrong? And who--or what--will we increasingly trust when making life's most important decisions?

Christians should use powerful new tools without becoming dependent upon them.

Because there is an enormous difference between having artificial intelligence in your pocket and allowing artificial intelligence to become your conscience.