



Mentoring Hearts, Changing Lives

—AN ATHLETE STUDY OF 2ND TIMOTHY

WEEK 12



IN THE BAG

Can you imagine the feeling of a 28-3 lead halfway through the third quarter of the Super Bowl? Matt Ryan and the Atlanta Falcons must have been giddy with excitement at being crowned the world champs. The team was probably already discussing who, how and when, they'd dump Gatorade on their head coach, Dan Quinn.

With the game virtually "in the bag," the Atlanta Falcons were on the wrong side of a Super Bowl record. The New England Patriots set a record in Super Bowl 51 for the greatest comeback of all time—25 unanswered points starting with just over 2 minutes left to go in the third quarter and an OT touchdown for the win. ESPN's probability chart had a 99.8% chance for a Falcons victory with 2:12 left in the third quarter. If you're a Falcons fan, that 0.2% really sucks. This is a great reminder that it ain't over till it's over.

Disciples are meant to be sent out and not stay in the safety net of the mentor. As a disciple, you'll have victories. You'll put points on the board. Other days, you'll feel like the enemy is steamrolling you.

You'll face ups and downs. Nobody understands that better than Elijah. As we wrap up our study, we'll look at a hard lesson learned by one of Scripture's greatest mentors on the day *he* learned it ain't over till it's over.

1 Kings 19:11–14, 18

¹¹ And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks 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.

¹² And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. ¹³ And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁴ He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away."

¹⁸ Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Tommy Nelson is a well-known Bible teacher and preacher. At the height of his ministry, he fell into clinical depression. He wasn't sad, upset, or unhappy with life. Quite the contrary. Everything was great. That's when depression struck. Scan the QR code for his story.

Sometimes depression is the result of sin's consequences. Other times, it may be less spiritual and more medical. The symptoms can sometimes look the same. In either case, it's not something we should face alone.



DISCUSSION

Take a moment and encourage each other. Tell someone else a way you've seen them grow spiritually.

1. How did God reveal himself through physical demonstrations? (11b-12a)

- a.
- b.
- c.

2. Where did God reveal his presence? (12b)

3. How many people did Elijah think remained faithful to God versus how many actually remained faithful? (14, 18)

4. What can we learn about God from his...
...self-revelation of the wind, earthquake, fire,
and whisper? (11-12)

...words to Elijah? (12-13)

5. What's your number one takeaway from our study this semester?

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

We've all heard it said, "Leave it all on the field. Well, this is the last study. If you have anything you need to ask or say, don't wait. Talk to your Coach today!"



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STUDY NOTES WHAT A RELIEF!

In 1st Kings 18, the prophet, Elijah, went up against 450 prophets of the pagan god Baal. They had a competition of the gods. The prophets of Baal were to set up an altar for a burnt offering and Elijah would set up his. They weren't allowed to set it on fire, but the prophets of Baal would pray and Elijah would pray and the people would see which offering was set ablaze.

Elijah let the prophets of Baal go first. For hours they cried out. At noon, Elijah started taunting them that perhaps Baal was off relieving himself or had fallen asleep. Finally, Elijah had his altar and the wood drenched in water three times. He prayed. Fire fell from heaven and consumed everything. Then Elijah had all the prophets put to the sword for their wickedness.

This is just one of many miracles Elijah performed. You'd think he would have confidence and swagger. Shooters shoot, winners win, and it looked like Elijah couldn't miss.

However, at the start of chapter 19, the evil queen, Jezebel, threatened Elijah's life. She swore that she'd do to Elijah, what he did to the prophets of Baal. Elijah became afraid and ran. After a day fleeing he sat down and said, *"It is enough; now, O LORD, TAKE AWAY MY LIFE, FOR I AM NO BETTER THAN MY FATHERS."*

At rock bottom, God gave Elijah rest and food. God tenderly cared for his servant and when the time was right, brought him up from the bottom to the mountaintop.

MENTORING OUR HEART IS HOW GOD CHANGES OUR LIFE

God told Elijah, *"Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD."* What happened next defies our imagination. *And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks 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.*

Elijah had done *great* things for the Lord. God essentially said, if you thought those were great, watch this! Yet, there's a big difference between the Lord's *power* and the Lord's *presence*—*and after the fire the sound of a low whisper*. Elijah got the message. *When [he] heard [the whisper], he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.*

Although the first instance is not in our passage today, God asked Elijah for a second time, *"What are you doing here, Elijah?"* And for the second time Elijah gave the same answer, *"I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away."*

Sometimes when we're upset or depressed, we focus on our situation so much that we lose perspective. We forget God's closeness and his abiding presence in our lives. Not only that, even when we feel so alone, we're never truly alone.

God gave Elijah several instructions, but at the end of the list he wanted Elijah to know, *"Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."* Elijah thought he was the only faithful follower left. He couldn't have been more wrong.

GOD TEACHES US PATIENTLY

Throughout our study, we've developed several important themes. First and foremost is that the Gospel changes everything. It's not something we inherit from our family. You're not a Christian just because you're not anything else. And, living in the "Bible-belt" doesn't make you a Christian any more than going in a donut shop makes you a donut.

Second to receiving the Gospel personally, we've spent a lot of time addressing the need to have mentors in your life, especially as you navigate difficulty and uncertainty. You need people who've been there and done that. Like God with Elijah, or Paul with Timothy, they expressed care, concern, but most importantly perspective and wisdom. We all need that.

An important point on finding mentors is that a great mentor doesn't usually walk up to you and ask to disciple you. You will probably need to go ask them!

Finally, we hope this study has challenged you to disciple someone else. You're not too young. As long as you're a step or two ahead, you can show someone how to follow in your footsteps.

Discipleship is ministry and ministry is hard. Sometimes you want more for people than they want for themselves and it hurts. Different, but similar to Elijah, you're ready to throw in the towel. Don't give up! God's got you. Plus, you never know when a disciple like Elisha (or Timothy for Paul) is around the corner for you to disciple. You will face discouragement, but God will use it to encourage the next generation.