

How to Handle Trouble

The goal of a spiritual mentoring relationship is for the mentee to learn to hear the voice of God and begin to move forward alone in pursuit of His will.

Who would you call in a spiritual emergency? Do you have an Elijah—someone whom God has placed in your life as a mentor and role model?

Although God provides us with Elijahs, in due time, we learn that we must not continue to lean on them. God gives us mentors for a reason; but He also gives those mentors for a season.

God's ultimate intention is for you to stand on your own. The day will come—if it hasn't already—for you to leave the safety and security of the nest and fly.

Consider the partnership of Elijah and Elisha. Three times Elijah made plans to leave; and three times Elisha replied, "'As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you'" (2 Kin. 2:2, 4, 6, NKJV).

Elisha admired and emulated Elijah. He didn't want his friend and mentor to leave. But there would come a time when Elijah would have to go (2 Kings 2:13-25).

When Elijah Departs

At some point, you will share Elisha's experience. Your "Elijah" will have to leave also.

It is painful but predictable, and it's God's plan. If you refuse to release him or her, you will forfeit your full kingdom potential.

When Elijah ascended to heaven in a chariot of fire, Elisha found himself alone. He returned to the Jordan River, which is

symbolic of death and separation (2 Kings 2:13).

“Crossing Jordan” means death to the old opportunities and responsibilities and birth to the new ones. Your Jordan experiences are those in which you must take the responsibility to walk out what your Elijahs—your mentors—have taught you.

When you are alone, the Jordan, once a very familiar place, now seems overwhelming and impossible to cross. Some wrongly conclude that troubles dissipate when one becomes a Christian. Not so. God does not remove trouble, but in the midst of it, He empowers us to overcome.

After all, without trials there would never be triumphs. There is no victory without war, and there is no war without an enemy.

Strangely, trouble is our friend. Trouble brings us to total dependency on Christ. Prepare to cross your Jordans, confront your giants and gain your victories.

The usual response to trouble is to say, “I can’t.” We fail to realize that our tests are tailor-made by the Father.

Paul told the church at Corinth, “God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

Wasn’t the God of Elijah the God of Elisha also? Even though it seemed overwhelming, Elisha was ready to cross the Jordan alone. And we must make that same journey, too.

It’s important when faced with trouble to keep our focus on Christ. When we focus on our trouble, all our strength goes to the problem rather than the solution. Then, not only are we afflicted by trouble but also we become distracted from our communion with Christ, who is the source of our strength.

Intimacy with Christ will give you the strength to stand. You are to stand in faith, walk by faith and live by the faith of the Son of God (Eph. 6:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 2:20).

In 2 Kings 2:15, we read that “a company of prophets from Jericho ... were watching [Elisha]” (NIV). Perhaps in your heart you long to trust God for the extraordinary, but people are watching, and you may wish someone else could do the work for you.

The thought may come to you as it probably did to Elisha, Where is my Elijah when I really need him? Amazingly, if you will press in and be true to the calling of God, regardless of your feelings of insecurity and inadequacy or your lack of faith, the Lord will prove Himself to you.

Rise Above Your Critics

In 2 Kings 2:23-25 we find Elisha being jeered at by 42 young people at Bethel. Bethel means “the house of God.” Yes, even Christian friends and family may mock your faith or your passion or the level of your commitment.

When I was a newly saved teenager, older Christians said to me, “Alice, after you’ve been saved awhile, you’ll settle down.” Today, after more than 37 years, I am more passionately in love with Christ than ever!

Shortly after I began writing my first book, *Beyond the Veil: Entering Into Intimacy With God Through Prayer*, a Christian leader told me that I was foolish to think I could write a book. That statement so intimidated me that I shelved the book for 10 months.

However, I couldn’t shake the fact that the Lord had spoken to me to write this book. In Christ I found the courage to begin again, and the book became a best seller.

Yes, even in the church you will find your critics. And it’s

possible that those who have walked with you for years may leave you if the commitment level becomes too difficult for them.

Are you at the end of your endurance? Have you been feeling the need to quit? Don't do it! Your extremity of need is God's opportunity.

Stand on God's promises. In His time He will disclose the truth and validate you. The fight is not yours; the battle is the Lord's! (See 2 Chronicles 20:15.)

Practice what the Elijahs in your life have taught you. Put on the mantle of prayer, stand confidently in Christ and stop looking back for your Elijah to do it for you. Jesus Christ is more than enough!

Read a companion devotional.

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