

What Elijah Can Teach Us About Hearing God's Voice

Elijah was a pretty incredible man. He was a prophet called by God to bring correction to King Ahab and his incredibly wicked wife Jezebel during a particularly rough period in ancient Israel. He saw many miracles in his life and was used mightily by the Lord to demonstrate the power of God to Israel.

But Elijah was also a man like us and there was a certain point when things got tough and he freaked out. At one particular point in Elijah's life, he had just called down fire from heaven and killed all the prophets of Baal. This had been a significant victory and an incredible display of God's power **but immediately afterward Elijah is terrified and running for his life.**

"And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done and 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." When he saw that she was serious, he arose and ran for his life ... " 1 Kings 19:1-3 (MEV)

It is often difficult to relate to an ancient story because they feel so distant from our current reality. But this response feels all too familiar. A major victory takes place and the right afterwards there is a dramatic failure. How many times have we seen people at the top of their game throw away everything senselessly? It happens so frequently that it has almost become expected. Elijah was having a crisis. Now that the major event was over, an event that could have led to his death, he doesn't know what to do anymore. **He is a man without a mission and for someone with Elijah's personality, that can**

lead to major depression.

Adrenaline is an interesting chemical in our bodies. Without it, we can barely function on a daily basis. It is responsible for producing amazing feats of strength and courage in average human beings. But, when your body has to detox from all that adrenaline, things can get a little crazy.

Elijah was crashing hard and he had no idea what to do anymore. Even though he had just seen God send fire from heaven, he had no clear direction on what to do and that created a crisis. Without hearing God's voice, he could only react to his circumstances and he did—by running in fear.

Fear is not a good leader. It makes you question everything. It is a reactionary response, not an intentional choice. Very few wise decisions are made out of fear. If we are to be world-changing followers of Jesus, we need a better leader in our lives than fear.

When I was 14, I read a book about a man named Keith Green. He was a Christian musician who challenged the status quo, spoke the truth and impacted millions of lives. I wanted to be just like him. So I began to pursue a career in music. Initially, I had some success that allowed me to travel all over the world as a musician and singer. But year after year, my career did not “take off” like I thought it would. I kept forging ahead believing things would change, but it didn't.

I started to feel like a failure. In my 30s, I hit a point of crisis in my life. All of a sudden, I didn't know how to reconcile my current situation with what I thought my life should look like.

“God, I thought you told me to become a great musician and singer and prophetic voice to my generation? I thought my destiny was to be the next Keith Green? What happened? Did I miss it somewhere?”

I knew who God was, but I was struggling to hear His voice for my present circumstances. I had become so attached to what I thought I had heard in the past that it had become an idol in my life.

Increasingly, I would suffer from severe seasons of depression. I didn't want to feel the way I felt, but I didn't know what to do anymore. The more I was on stage, the harder I would adrenaline crash afterwards. I felt like I was going crazy. In the midst of all of this, I felt like I could no longer hear God's voice. I didn't know what to do anymore because all my dreams had died and there did not seem to be any way forward. To be honest, I was scared to listen to God's voice because it would probably mean I had to lay down the dreams I had spent 20 years of my life chasing.

I had made the dream of being a world-changing musician an idol. But now that it was probably never going to become a reality, I was paralyzed.

I wish I could say that this experience is uncommon. It might not be the dream of being a musician, but all around us are people struggling to deal with the death of their dreams. Some of these people have even been successful but now that the moment has passed, they don't know what to do anymore. In the midst of the pain of lost dreams, we have forgotten how to hear the voice of God and allowed fear to find a resting place in our lives.

We need to learn how to hear His voice for our future. God is speaking but our fear has disabled our ability to hear him.

I remember sitting under a tree one day when I felt like I had come to end of myself. I didn't know what to do anymore and I was complaining to God about it. I had allowed fear to cloud any view of my future. God may have spoken to me all those years ago, but now I needed to hear his present voice. God may have used the dream of being a rock star to get me moving, but

now I needed a new word for a new season.

So I began to go on a journey to rediscover the voice of God in my life. I wanted to be able to hear Him in every situation, not just the “church related” ones. I wanted to hear him for my family, for my children, for my music, for my relationships, for all of my life. I began to ask the Lord to teach me how to be aware of His presence in the present. **I knew that He was a good leader, but I needed to learn again how to be led by the leader within.**

I met with some smart people and they began to help me form a grid through which I could actually discern what was going on. One particular friend, John Houghton, is a certified coach that I had been meeting with. We had been walking through this journey together and his advice had been instrumental in helping me decipher what was going on and what to do next. One day, as we were talking, he gave me a simple grid that immediately helped me silence the noise and hear God’s voice in any situation. It has become, for me, the noise cancellation tool that I needed to shut out the noise and hear the Lord’s voice for my life, my family and my future.

That grid was a series of questions to help me discern what was going on so that I could listen to the leader within.

1. First things first, stop the noise.

You can’t hear anything until you silence the noise in your life and listen. We live overstimulated lives and actually dialing down the noise to hear the voice of the leader within is vital.

2. Ask yourself, “What is actually going on?”

This requires you to be honest about the situation. Take a step back and get real with yourself. What is actually taking place right now? What are the key factors that I need to recognize in this moment? Sometimes having clarity about the

reality of the situation can diffuse the fear. Am I making more of this than there actually is?

3. What am I feeling?

My emotions tell me a story about what's going on inside. I can't ignore them, but I can't let them rule my decisions. What are my emotions telling me? Our emotions typically give us insight into what core values are being affected in our lives. The stronger the emotion, the more the core value has been impacted. As a friend told me one time, emotions can have a seat on the bus, but they can't be allowed to drive the bus.

4. What is true?

This goes beyond the "facts" about the situation. This is about deciphering the truth. What is true about myself right now? What is true about God? This is the moment that you ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten your mind and allow the truth to penetrate your spirit. Where am I believing lies? What is the truth that will set me free?

5. What do I do now?

Once I have a better picture of what is taking place, now I can begin to ask the Lord what to do about it. This is the point where we can actually hear the voice of God speaking to us. This is the decluttered zone. This is the place of clarity.

6. Re-engage in the present.

Now that I have heard from the leader within, now I can re-engage in the process. A lot of people never make it to this point. They might get clarity and understanding about the situation, but they fail to apply it after everything is said and done.

Remember what the book of Proverbs told us?

“If people can’t see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed” (Prov. 29:18, MSG).

This is a grid that helps me “attend to what He reveals”. This grid helps me silence the noise, hear His voice and get the perspective and clarity I need to deal with any obstacle I face. It’s not a fix-all, but it is a helpful tool to enable me to see and hear clearly.

Hopefully, it can help you do the same.

Is there anything you would add to this grid? Do you have a grid that helps you engage with the voice of the leader within?

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