

When You're in a Dry Season, Apply These Faith-Lessons From Elijah

It was my turn to teach in an online writing class last night, and I had nothing to talk about. I actually thought the words, "I feel dried up." But then I realized I'm probably not alone in this.

I started asking other writers what they do in dry seasons. And everyone had answers because everyone has been there.

Then I started thinking about a manuscript I'd judged in a writing contest once. Written by Dana McNeely, it was titled *Rain*, and it was about the life of Elijah. If anybody knew what to do in a drought, it was Elijah. So I opened my Bible to look for direction in how to grow through a dry season.

Here are the lessons God poured down on me from 1 Kings 17-19.

- **Learn that only God has the power to give us what we want.** King Ahab and queen Jezebel worshiped Baal, known as "the lord of the rainclouds." They looked to a false god for rain. So God took away the rain until the people learned to turn to him. In this dry time, God is going to reveal your false gods.
- **Keep giving your all.** God led Elijah to ask a widow to feed him. She responded that she had only enough oil and wheat to make one last meal for her and her son. Then they would "eat it and die" (1 Kings 17:12c). Elijah told her, "The barrel of meal will not run out, nor will the jar of oil empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth" (1 Kings 17:14b), but that was on the condition she served him first. She did. She gave all she had out of faith, and God sustained her. He does not ask you for more than He promises to give.

- **Give God your dreams.** The widow's son died. She thought God was punishing her for her sins. Can you imagine the pain? The guilt? I can, because I was there when my first marriage died. Sometimes the worst happens. But it's not the end.
- **Cry out for help.** Elijah cried to the Lord for help. The Lord heard Elijah's cry. This is the first time the Bible records God raising the dead. It's OK to ask for help. Ask God. Ask others. You're not alone.
- **See God in a new, more personal way.** The widow had called Elijah "a man of God," but after she saw her son raised from the dead, she said, "Now, because of this, I know that you are a man of God" (1 Kings 17:24b). You don't really know God is your all until He is all you have.
- **Know God is working behind the scenes.** Throughout the story, Elijah refers to himself as the only prophet left. He thinks he's alone in serving God. But the story reveals that not only did Obadiah hide 100 prophets, but God also "preserved seven thousand men in Israel for myself" (1 Kings 19:18b). He's doing stuff you don't even know about.
- **Pray simple and earnest prayers.** Once God told Elijah to gather the people of Israel to reveal who was the true God, Elijah let Baal's prophets pray all day, dancing and cutting themselves. But he didn't have to do any of that. He only had to ask, and God answered.
- **Believe God will answer.** After God answers with fire from the sky, Elijah told Ahab to go eat and drink for he'd "heard the sound of heavy rain." This was before there was a rain cloud in the sky. As Ahab was eating and drinking, Elijah sent his servant to check the sky seven times. It wasn't until the seventh time that a small cloud appeared. You may feel dry right now, but the rain is coming.
- **Let God energize you.** As it started to rain, Elijah ran ahead of Ahab's chariot. This was divine energy.

Miraculous. Definitely not in Elijah's own power. God's touch will help you outrace those who come against you.

- **Understand that discouragement is normal.** I believe Elijah had hope for Jezebel. After the powerful way God revealed Himself, how could she keep worshipping Baal? Elijah probably thought God would answer all his prayers by softening the king and queen's hearts so they could lead the people back to the Lord. But it didn't happen the way he'd hoped. When Jezebel found out about her prophets being killed, she threatened Elijah's life. Not only was he afraid, but he felt like a failure. We all go through that at some extent. Consider it your chance to realign your expectations with God's plans.
- **Take care of yourself physically.** Elijah told God to let him die and went to sleep, but an angel woke him and told him to eat. He "went in the strength of that food" (1 Kings 19:8b). When you are too weak to take care of yourself spiritually or emotionally, start by taking care of yourself physically. Sleep. Eat. Go on a walk. Breathe fresh air. God wants that for you. Then you will have more to give back to Him.
- **When you mess up, don't waste your second chance.** God gave Jezebel a second chance. She didn't take it. When Elijah started going his own way, God asked, "Why are you here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:9b). Elijah gave the wrong answer. God revealed Himself, then asked again, "Why are you here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:13c). Elijah didn't waste this second chance. And neither should you.
- **Pass on the gift to others.** Elijah didn't only return to the work God had prepared for him, but he put his cloak over Elisha's shoulders. When Elijah was taken away in a whirlwind, Elisha saw it happen and received a "double portion" of his spirit. Make this dry ground you're currently standing on be the foundation on which you build, and let your ceiling be the floor for those who come after you.

If you're still discouraged, remember Jesus also spent time in the desert. He was tempted, He passed the test and He came back prepared to fulfill His purpose.

Though it's not a fun place to be, you're not in the desert by accident. May these ideas I shared not only help you grow through the dry season but also refresh you as they have done for me. {eoa}

Angela Ruth Strong is a Christian romance writer who writes not only about a man and woman falling in love but more importantly about women finding out how loved they already are. She's won the Cascade Award for her novels and also had a couple optioned for film. To help other aspiring authors, she started IDAhope Writers in her home state of Idaho. When not writing, she's adventuring with her husband and teenagers, teaching group fitness classes and working her day job at an airline. She believes in the power of story and would love to hear yours. Feel free to visit or write her at and join her Facebook fan page for fantastic fun.

For more on seasons of dryness, listen to the podcasts included here!