

What Are You Doing Here?

1 Kings 19:9-18

⁹ 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?”

¹⁰ 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.”

¹¹ 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; ¹² and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

¹³ 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?”

¹⁴ 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.”

¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. ¹⁸ Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

—1 Kings 19:9–18

Read 1 Kings 19:9–18

Elijah was renowned in the Bible as a great prophet and commended for his prayer life. Yet, as we read in 1 Kings 19:1–4, he was not invulnerable to discouragement, fear, perplexity, condemnation, and faltering. These observations should encourage all of us, because through them we see God’s intervention, compassion, and care for Elijah at his lowest state. God is not looking for perfect people with perfect reactions and perfect performances. No! God is looking for people who will be honest with Him about their feelings, fears, apprehensions, and disappointments. God meets His children right where they are, whatever they are feeling, when they cry out to Him. God reveals the greatness of His compassionate nature to His discouraged children.

God uses people with fallible natures—just like ours—for His glory: *We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be God and not of us* (2 Corinthians 4:7). God wants to meet us right where we are and reveal the excellence of His power to us and through us. Have you felt discouraged, afraid, perplexed, condemned, or like a failure? Cheer up! God has placed His treasure in imperfect you! In this way, people will know it is not you, but God working through you. God wants to minister to you in order to make you into His workmanship perfected in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:10).

Use 1 Kings 19:9–18 to see God’s grace with Elijah’s discouragement and frailty. Even as God dealt graciously with the prophet in his despair, so God will work graciously with you.

1. According to 1 Kings 19:9:
 - a. Where did Elijah go?

b. Consider the different ramifications of God's questions by emphasizing the emboldened words:

1) *What are **you** doing here, Elijah?*

2) *What are you **doing** here, Elijah?*

3) *What are you doing **here**, Elijah?*

a. Where do you see the main emphasis of this question being applied in your life?

2. Use 1 Kings 19:10 to list Elijah's complaints and fears.

a. What does Elijah's answer convey to you about him?

3. From 1 Kings 19:11-12, describe the following:

a. God's directive to Elijah

b. The wind

c. The earthquake

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Elijah know not what he said when he told God that he had had enough of life, and asked to die. If God had taken him at his word, he would have died under a cloud; he would never have heard the still small voice; he would never have founded the schools of the prophets, or commissioned Elisha for his work; he would never have swept up to heaven in an equipage of flame.¹¹

— F. B. Meyer

- d. The fire
 - e. The voice of the Lord
4. How did Elijah respond to this encounter? 1 Kings 19:13a
- a. Why do you think God asked Elijah the same question a second time? 1 Kings 19:13b
5. What does Elijah's response to God suggest to you about the prophet? 1 Kings 19:14
6. Use the following verses to remark on God's directives to Elijah:
- a. Verse 15
 - b. Verse 16
 - c. Verse 17
7. From 1 Kings 19:18, what did God reveal about:
- a. Himself

- b. Reality
8. From your reading in 1 Kings 19:9–18, share any insights you have about:
- God's power
 - God's ways
 - God's voice
 - God's work
 - God's awareness
9. What is your greatest takeaway from 1 Kings 19:9–18?

**FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

Man's ways are noisy, blustering, rude; those of God are quiet, gentle, still. In the Sacraments, in slight afflictions, in conscience, God speaks to man in His still small voice; our duty is to listen to its warnings, and see that we obey it. If we will not follow the guidance of His voice, the storm, the earthquake, and the fire may frighten us, but they can never make us holy.¹³

—Bishop Harvey Goodwin

**FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

Bow down or kissed him: These common forms of submission in the ancient Near East (2 Kings 21:3; Isaiah 46:6; 60:14; Hosea 13:2) are often mentioned in the annals of victorious kings or in the ancient epics.¹²