

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- **Personal God**
"I believe God enables me to do things I could not or would not do otherwise."
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

One of the things I love about God and the Bible is that He definitely has a flair for the dramatic. In fact, God seems to specialize in creating the kinds of scenes that would seem unbelievable even with Hollywood's special effects! This week's passage, the encounter of Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, is one of those scenes. But as we study this account this week, we need to keep one reality in our mind. This is not just a story full of faraway places and long ago events. Remember that the words you are reading are completely true. They actually happened. And the same God who displayed His power through Elijah that day is more than able to display it through you and me today. God is still God. Sure, it may look different for you and me—but God's power is just as great as it ever was. So, what are you trusting Him to accomplish?

Because of Him,

Richard Gotthardt, Pastor of Spiritual Formation

Monday

As you begin this week, ask God to give you insight into His Word, into your life, and to be able to learn from the life of Elijah. Now read 1 Kings 16:29-17:6. As you get a sense of the context of the times that Elijah lived in, answer these questions:

What were some of the sins that Ahab committed against God? What made him worse than other kings that had gone before him? What do you think that it would have been like to live in Israel during this time?

God calls Elijah to confront Ahab and pronounce God's judgment on him and the nation. What do you think Elijah was feeling as he went to confront Ahab? What could have happened to him?

When has God asked you to confront or challenge the behavior of someone else? How did you know that it was what God wanted? How did you feel about going to them?

Are there currently any "difficult conversations" that you are avoiding? Why is that?

Tuesday

Today read 1 Kings 18:1-15. Ask God to reveal Himself and His character to you as you read. Keep in mind the backdrop to these verses. Where has Elijah been and what has been going on in the nation of Israel?

Let's focus on the person of Obadiah. What had he been doing that demonstrated his faithfulness to God? What do you think that this had cost him—personally, financially and emotionally?

As you read Obadiah's response to Elijah, what are you feeling towards Obadiah? What were Obadiah's choices at that point? What do you think you would have done?

One of the ways that we serve God is by serving others, particularly those who dedicate themselves to God's service vocationally. Are there ways that God could be asking you to serve others who are serving Jesus? Invite God to speak to you about this today.

Wednesday

Today we read the dramatic encounter between Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. Prayerfully read 1 Kings 18:16-46. If you were describing this account to someone who had never heard it before, how would you tell this story? What are the most dramatic elements of this drama to you?

Now place yourself in the position of Elijah. What are the odds he is facing as this confrontation begins? What could happen if God's power doesn't "come through"? What do you think he was feeling and thinking as this day progressed?

Take some time today to invite God to being to mind an "impossible" situation that you are currently facing. What are you feeling and thinking about this situation? On a scale of 1-10, how would you describe your current "hopefulness factor"?

Simply sit with this impossible situation before God today—that's all. Don't try to fix it or figure it out. Just sit in God's presence with the reality of your own inability to make it better.

Thursday

Read through this saga again— I Kings 18:16-46. Does anything stand out differently to you today? What do you notice today that you didn't yesterday?

Today let's focus on the impossible factors of this story. List as many reasons as you can think of why this situation should have gone very badly for Elijah. Take a few minutes with this. There are a number of factors here.

Now, with a pen, write a single word over that list of impossible factors. That word in big, bold letters is **GOD**. He is the one factor that overrides all of the otherwise impossible realities.

Now sit with your own situation—your impossible one. Make a list of all the reasons that it cannot work out or be resolved. Sit with that list a moment. Then do the same thing you did with the other list— write the word **GOD** across that list. You don't know what God might do in that situation, but you can know one thing— God is able. God is powerful enough to handle that impossible situation and to bring good from it. Spend some time praising God for His power today and placing your impossible situation before Him once again.

Friday

Read through the account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal one last time. This time specifically focus on the things God does. How does God display His power in this situation? See how many different ways you can see God put His greatness on display in these verses. What do these verses cause you to think about God?

Now think back on your own life experiences. One more list today. Write down some of the ways you have seen God display His power in your life. Think of how He brought you to know Him, of ways that He did what seemed impossible. Ask God to show you ways that He's been present and powerful towards you over the course of your life.

Now, sit with that list and simply praise God. Praise Him for His faithfulness, for His provision, for His love and for His power. You might want to let your thoughts form your own psalm of praise to God. Are there themes that you can see?

Once more sit with God with your current impossibilities. As you've reflected on God's power and you've remembered His strength towards you, what are you thinking about that situation? Spend time today in prayer, asking Him to be strong towards you and to reveal His power in your life. Praise Him for any other lessons that He's been teaching you this week.