

CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Big Idea

Pastor Curt – Part 1

This week we begin a new summer series called **Cloud of Witnesses** with this key Bible passage: Hebrews 12:1 - Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. This series will give us lessons we can learn from Bible characters to help us get past hindrances, through entanglements, and live out our life purpose with perseverance.

The first Bible character is Elijah and his life directly applies to our “new normal” of Covid-19 which has caused isolation, loneliness, sadness, fear, and depression. Depression is defined as a mood disorder characterized by anhedonia (inability to experience pleasure), extreme sadness, poor concentration, sleep problems, loss of appetite, and feelings of guilt, helplessness, and hopelessness. **Elijah experienced four common contributors to depression: he wore himself out, shut people out, focused on the negative, and forgot the faithfulness of God.** Does that sound familiar? **God had the antidote to depression for Elijah: eat and rest, believe truth instead of lies, listen to His voice, and do what God has given you to do.** This message is especially important to leaders who have had success in the past but now are experiencing frustrations, roadblocks, and even hopelessness. Whether you are a leader of a church, a company, a team, a group, or a family, you can experience an energized life again. Learn how to apply these principles to your life to go from depression to become fully charged with joy and hopefulness.

Discussion Questions

- Immediately following a great victory, Elijah became depressed. 1 Kings 19:3-5 illustrates four common contributors to depression. Elijah wore himself out, shut people out, focused on the negative, and forgot the faithfulness of God. Of these four, which one is your most common challenge?
- Elijah honestly believed he was the only faithful one left. God replaced this lie with the truth: there were actually 7000 others who still were faithful to God. Can you name a lie that you believe to be true? What is God’s truth?
- God encouraged Elijah to eat and rest, to believe truth instead of lies, to listen to His voice, and to get back to doing what prophets do. At this season in your life, which of these areas resonate with you most? Why?
- Share with your friends what you are experiencing and describe how it feels (they probably understand more than you think).

Prayer Focus

Father, please strengthen my faith and give me spiritual and practical wisdom as I walk through this season. I trust that, as You have done in the past, You will carry me through this uncertain time. Help me rest in the peace that only You provide.

Next Steps

Identify the things that might be weighing you down and then be intentional with your time. Get some rest and spend time listening to the voice of God as you read His Word and reaffirm your faith by rebuking any lies from the enemy that threatens the peace and purpose you have in Jesus.

Leader Tip

Share Scriptures and perhaps your story with your group that have helped you overcome depression or fear.