

Live Like Elijah

By Don MacLafferty



Live Like Elijah

A Call to Live by Faith in God

Don MacLafferty

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Dedication

To the Creator

of the heavens and earth,

the living God, who still calls,

provides for, and sends His people.

This is Your story in Elijah

and in us now.



Why I Wrote the Book

The God of Elijah made promises He kept. He confronted the sins of those He loved. He provided bountifully out of nothing. He brought rain to parched ground and fire in answer to prayer. He cared for the discouraged. He challenged with a whisper. He redeemed and sent the hopeless and the fearful. He has not changed. We have.

I have lived too much of my life with little faith in a small god. I prayed with little expectation that God heard and answered prayers. When I did hear Him speak, I quickly explained why it could not have been Him. When He asked something of me beyond my logic, something that confronted my comfort, I would act as if I did not hear, or try to compensate for my disobedience by giving what He did not ask of me.

I have believed in God and wanted to serve Him from my earliest memories as a child. My parents taught me well that God was Someone to love who loved me first. They taught me that God was Someone to obey and that obeying Him is the way of light and true happiness. For this I am eternally grateful!

As I grew into my teen years and owned my own faith, I treasured my daily time with God in His Word and in prayer. However, over time I subconsciously placed God in a tidy box with my small expectations of what He could and would do in my life, my family, and my world.

Patiently, the living God of heaven and earth has pursued me and called me with urgency to know Him more. He has shattered and continues to shatter my tidy box of small expectations of who He is and what He will do today.

This living, loving, Creator God impressed me to write this book to call young and old to discover that the God of Elijah still lives today! This God is calling us to re-discover Him and to live for Him fearlessly and faithfully now. This is the time!

CHAPTER ONE

Stand Here First

“Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, ‘As the Lord, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word’” (I Kings 17:1).

Elijah boldly charged into the royal court of Ahab, a warrior king bent on destroying the worship of the Creator God. He had no invitation from the king and no summons from the royal family. Why did he come?

Elijah was a man on a mission. He was sent by God. He had a message to deliver.

This messenger walked past security as if it were not there. He feared nothing. Splendor, wealth, position, fame, and flattery could not entice him.

He bravely approached the startled monarch and delivered his message without a bow, the customary greetings, or any gifts. His voice sounded like a trumpet call: “As the Lord, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.” The ten-second message faithfully delivered, he left.

He exited as abruptly as he had entered. The whole court was in shock. Mouths agape, royal servants watched dumbfounded as the prophet simply walked away. The king was not

accustomed to being addressed in that manner. By the time the king recovered his damaged composure, the messenger was nowhere to be seen.

Who was this Elijah? Was he born into the “right” family? Did he carry a last name that would demand respect? What do we know of him?

Scripture paints a sparse picture of this man.

“He was a hairy man with a leather girdle bound about his loins” (2 Kings 1:8).

His name was “Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead...” (I Kings 17:1).

His name meant “The Lord is my God.”

He wore a mantle, or cloak, over his shoulders. See I Kings 19:19.

That’s it. We know his name, where he came from, that he was hairy, and what he wore. That list does not seem like a recipe for a remarkable man.

Gilead was a mountainous region east of the Jordan River. Its name means “Heap of Witness.” Gilead is no Jerusalem, Bethlehem, or Jericho. Though mentioned other places in Scripture, it is not a place with much name recognition.

So what made Elijah stand out? The Scriptures say it all: “As the Lord, the God of Israel lives,

before whom I stand..." (I Kings 17:1). Elijah knew where he stood. He always stood in the presence of God.

Elijah lived in awe of God. He spent time with God. He knew the majesty of the Eternal One, His might and power, His love and grace, and His wisdom and care. Because he spent time in the presence of God, he did not cower in the presence of man.

Do you live in awe of God? Do you spend enough time alone with Him in His Word, the Scriptures, and in prayer that you are amazed by His character and His power?

Discover this God for yourself in the following Bible passages. Read through these texts carefully to see who this living God is throughout time: Psalm 23, 27:1, 32:7-8, 40:1-5, 46:1, 103, 104, 139

When we really come to know God for who He is, we stand in awe of Him. The more we discover about Him, the more there is to know. His character is flawless, His love incomparable, His timing impeccable, His care matchless. How can we grow in knowing and experiencing this God of the universe?



In 2012, I looked over the early-morning bustle of Jakarta, Indonesia, from the rooftop of the hotel where I was speaking at a convention. From the nearby mosque, the imam's call to

worship soared out across the neighborhood. I listened and awaited those whom I had invited to join me.

Some time later, several dozen delegates from multiple countries met with me to pray. I read Scripture, and then we all scattered across the roof to pray. I bowed my head, closed my eyes, and began praying comfortably to the God I knew.

After a few minutes, the sound of quiet weeping startled me. I opened my eyes and saw the believers from a distant country with little religious freedom praying. What I witnessed I will never forget.

There, kneeling in the gravel on the roof, Scriptures resting on a ledge beside her, hands grasping for the sky, was a woman deep in prayer. As she wept, she appeared to be asking something of God. There was an intensity, an intimacy in her prayers. I had no doubt that she knew she was communicating directly to God Himself...and that He heard her.

I thought about how I prayed casual, comfortable prayers. I knew that the believer I had just witnessed in prayer had a relationship with God far beyond what I had ever experienced. *How can I have what she has with God?* I wondered.

That night in my hotel room, I asked God how I could have a much deeper relationship with Him. I was thirsty for much more! But I had no clue where to begin.

As I prayed, God impressed me to read Isaiah 50:4: "The Lord God has given Me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens me morning by morning, He awakens my ear to listen as a disciple."

God impressed me that He would awaken me every morning if I would invite Him each night to do so. But I was skeptical. Would God really awaken me to spend time with Him? What if I overslept and missed my morning speaking appointment? My mind was plagued with doubts and uncertainties.

I read Isaiah 50:4 again and again. I believed this was God's Word. I believed that what He did in the past, He is able to do again today, so why was it so hard to surrender my alarm clock and trust God to wake me up?

I realized that saying I believe God's Word and acting on it are two very different things. Scripture says, "The demons also believe, and shudder" (James 2:19). When I say I believe in God, but do not act on His Word, my belief is no different than a demon's. Very sobering!

I reached over to the nightstand and flicked off the alarm on my clock. The lights out, I lay on my back, wondering if God would do for me what His Word said He could do. I chose to believe...and fell asleep.

A few hours later I awoke. *Why am I awake?* I sleepily asked myself. I looked at the clock and

groaned. It was barely past midnight. Then I remembered. I had asked God to awaken me as early or as late as He wanted, so I could have more time with Him in His Word and in prayer.

I climbed out of bed and knelt in prayer. It was a bit awkward praying outside of my “normal” time to pray. I understood that I was not in charge of this time, so I was not sure what I should say to God. I prayed a few minutes and jumped back in bed for some much-needed sleep.

Very early in the morning, I was awakened from a deep sleep. I groggily looked at the clock. It was hours earlier than I usually woke up. I was just getting ready to sleep some more, when God whispered to my heart, “Didn’t you ask Me to get you up?”

I prayed for God to send the Holy Spirit to teach me as I read Scripture. I read and read and read. Occasionally, I checked my time, for I was used to always being rushed in my time alone with God. As I prayed about what I read, I waited on God to see what the Holy Spirit would say to my mind and my heart about what I read.

I made a shocking discovery! When I had unrushed time alone with God in His Word and in prayer, I found that God had much more to say than I thought! So began the adventure of asking God each night to be in charge of awakening me, according to how much time He wanted to teach me.

Nearly a decade has flown by since I began asking God to awaken me each morning. Morning by morning, He has awakened me, whether I am Cambodia, Brazil, Canada or a host of places in between. I am amazed that He awakens me to have unrushed time with Him in His Word and in prayer, regardless if I am four, ten, or even sixteen hours ahead of my time zone!

God has awakened me each morning without an alarm clock for over eight years. In those times, God calls me into His presence to be in His Word and to live in awe of His majesty, power, and unfathomable love. We must stand first in the awesome presence of God. Only then are we not over-awed by anything or anybody else.

Every morning meet God FIRST.

CHAPTER TWO

Live God's Word

*"The word of the Lord came to him, saying..."
(1 Kings 17:2).*

Elijah strode out of Ahab's court, having faithfully delivered the message God gave him to share. Now what? He had no doubt that Ahab would be looking for him, but not to congratulate him! People did not confront a king casually. There was an expected cost: imprisonment, torture, and often death. Where should he run?

The Scriptures say, "The word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan'...So he went" (1 Kings 17:2,3,5).

God spoke His Word to Elijah.

Elijah listened.

God said, "Go."

"So he went."

Those three words are profound. We would not have faulted Elijah for asking a few trusted friends for advice on this matter. We would have understood if Elijah would have run to a fortress or to a far kingdom that might have been delighted to protect an enemy of the king of Israel.

But Elijah did none of these things. God spoke His Word to him, so he went! Because Elijah stood in God's presence, he lived in awe of the Living God. When God spoke, he obeyed.

How easy it is to mask disobedience by voicing our need for more clarity before we obey! Often, we are impressed with the will of God, but then we say that we need to pray on it before we move forward. Praying is good, but when we know a message is the Word of the Lord to us, we must act.



It was 3:00 a.m., November 22, 2016, when God called me to wake up. It was not an audible voice, but rather the still, small voice of God to my mind and heart. I knew it was Him. Every morning, He fulfills Isaiah 50:4 by awakening me to meet with Him.

I jumped out of bed, threw on warm clothes, grabbed my Bible and a flashlight, and headed out into the starlit night into the woods and rocks near the mountain. I placed my Bible on a stump before me, knelt, and prayed. Nothing happened.

I knew God had called me out to pray. For months, my wife April and I had been asking God to guide us about how we best should serve him. At the time, I was fully employed in ministry in Clovis, California, and at the same time, directed a global nonprofit to equip parents to mentor their children as disciples of Jesus. Both our local and global ministries were growing, and we did not know what to do to continue to grow with both.

So I asked God under the very stars He created, “Why did you wake me up and call me out to pray? What is on Your heart?”

There was no answer. The air was still and cool, the stars bright, the night dark. I waited in confusion. *Maybe I should just go back to bed. I am hearing nothing.* I thought to myself.

But I could not give up. When you know God is calling, you must press on until you know you have heard what He wants to tell you. I thanked God for His blessings and praised Him for who He is. I confessed my sins and asked God to cut out anything out of my heart, my life, that was displeasing to Him. I asked for faith to hear whatever He wanted to tell me.

I had peace as I waited on God. “Anchor what You tell me in prayer with what You first tell me in Your written Word!” I pleaded with God. “Give me a passage of Scripture that I can stand on later when I am tempted to back down from what You call me to do.”

Silence. Waiting. Then the still, small voice of God led me to go to Ecclesiastes 3. I reached for my Bible in the darkness, unzipped it from its cover, and opened it, so that I could search for that chapter with the help of my flashlight. When I shone my flashlight on my Bible to begin searching, I was shocked! My Bible was open to a place that it never opens to — Ecclesiastes 3!

Ecclesiastes 3 is about God’s perfect timing. God has perfect timing in all things. Everything

is beautiful in His time.

“Why did you lead me to this chapter?” I asked God.

“Because it’s time,” He spoke to my heart.

“Time for what?” I asked, a bit confused.

“Time for you and April to put your feet in the Jordan all the way.” (*Please read Joshua 3:10-17 for the story of Israel crossing the Jordan.*)

In the next few minutes, God told me it was time to resign from paid ministry. God said it was time we served Him as full-time volunteers, so that we could be free to go anywhere, anytime, at any cost, at His call!

“How will I provide for our family?” I asked God incredulously. I asked God if I should first find sponsors around the world who would promise to provide a workable annual salary, so we could care for our family expenses.

God said, “No. If you do that, you may take the glory for raising your own salary, and they also may take glory for funding you.”

Now my heart was pounding. God was telling me to walk away from my security and salary but also telling me not to secure my financial needs. *How was this going to work?* I wondered.

“Take this step by faith in Me. Only when you step out in faith and cut yourself off from all

your security will you see how I will provide for you." God challenged me. "I have urgency on My heart for you to do this!"

I wish I could tell you that I immediately said, "Yes, Lord! It's a deal!" But I didn't. I asked God again if I heard Him right. He affirmed that I did. I asked Him again if He really wanted me to do such an unbelievable thing. He said, "Yes."

Believe and act or doubt and disobey? A rugged choice. God gave me strength to believe and act.

I trudged home in the pale dawn of a new day, scrambling in my mind for a way to tell my dear wife about what had just taken place. Doubts assailed me. The fear of criticism by family, friends, and colleagues wrestled with my faith in God and His Word.

I walked in the door of our home and cautiously into our bedroom. My wife was just getting up from sleep. Yawning and giving me a smile, she asked, "Did God give us an answer?"

"Yes!" I replied. "But we had better pray first."

I tenderly told her, "You are under no pressure to agree with what I am about to tell you. God spoke. God is able to speak to you just as much as He can speak to me. Let's pray for God to guide us together."

We knelt down and joined hands in prayer. We surrendered what we wanted to God. We

thanked Him for His care for us over all the years. We asked for Him to lead us together in unity.

As we stood up, April said, "So what did God say to you?"

I told her the story of God waking me up at 3:00 a.m., praying under the stars, being led by God to Ecclesiastes 3, and about my Bible falling open to that chapter in the darkness. I told her God was calling us to leave paid ministry, so that we could serve Him as full-time volunteers and be free to go wherever He called us and share the messages He had given us through His written Word.

With tears in her eyes and the peace of God shining on her face, April looked up at me. "This is what God has spoken. This is what we will do!"

I was in shock. I was ready for anything but this. God had gone before me and prepared my wife's heart.

I knew if we just talked about God's call that morning, doubts would crowd our minds. If we talked with others, we would endanger the speed of our obedience.

We knelt again and simply thanked God for being the God who still speaks. We asked for strength to obey swiftly.

We ate a quick breakfast and walked out the

door. That morning, I turned in my resignation at the office headquarters to take effect in thirty-nine days. For thirty-nine days, we finished the work God had given us locally and prepared for the adventure awaiting us in 2017.

How would God provide? we wondered.

Live life by the written Word of God.

CHAPTER THREE

Trust God's Care

"So he went and did according to the word of the Lord, for he went and lived by the brook Cherith..." 1 Kings 17:5

Elijah swiftly walked through the beautiful, well-watered countryside of Israel, crossed the Jordan, and made his way to a small stream called Cherith. He must have wondered why this was to be the place where God would take care of him. God had promised him, "It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there" (1 Kings 17:3).

The banks of this little stream became home for Elijah for some time. He must have sat there the first evening and just savored the peace, as he listened to the gurgling of the stream running over the stones. As it became time for the evening meal, he must have searched the skies for the promised ravens.

Ravens would not have been an expected source of God's providence. Ravens are scavengers, eating mostly meat from carcasses of dead animals. They feed on what is often rotten and covered with flies.

What kind of supper could a raven possibly bring for me? Elijah must have chuckled to himself. God's Word never fails. Scripture says, "The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he

would drink from the brook” (1 Kings 17:6).

The drought he had prophesied to Ahab came to pass. As the months passed by without even a drop of rain, the stream furnished the fugitive prophet with much-needed water. He watched with concern as the stream shrank in size from a babbling brook to a tiny rivulet.

The ravens fed him consistently, but one day, what used to be the brook Cherith was no more. Scripture says, “It happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land” (1 Kings 17:7).

What do you do when you go where God tells you to go, and the way He promised to take care of you vanishes? Elijah must have been tempted to come up with his own plan. After all, God did not say what to do if the stream dried up. Elijah might have considered placing rocks in the dry sands of the creek bed to represent his options. He could have traced his finger to each rock and thought about the likelihood of each option having more water to offer than where he sat.

He might have...but what we do know is that he did not leave the place where God sent him. He trusted that God would show him what to do next in His perfect timing.

And sure enough, God did! When the brook dried up, when there was a desperate need for something to happen quick, “Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, ‘Arise, go to

Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there; behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you'” (1 Kings 17:9).

Just in time! God spoke. Elijah was told just what to do and who would care for him. Only one problem existed: Zarephath, the place God told him to go, was full of Baal worship. Why would God send him to a place known for worshipping a false god? And why would a widow in a foreign land wish to care for him, a fugitive prophet of a God her people did not worship?

But again, Elijah obeyed! Immediately after God told him to go, Scripture testifies, “So he arose and went to Zarephath...” (1 Kings 17:10). He met a widow gathering sticks. When he asked her for bread, she said, “As the Lord your God lives, I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die” (1 Kings 17:12).

How is she going to be of any help? Elijah may have mused to himself before remembering, But God said she would provide for me.

Elijah, by faith in God’s Word, asked the widow to give him a piece of bread and prophesied, “Do not fear; go, do as you have said, but make me a little bread cake from it first and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son. For thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until

the day that the Lord sends rain on the face of the earth'" (1 Kings 17:13,14).

Faith in God's care is like tossing a pebble in a pond. From the place a small rock hits the surface of the water, ripples can cross an entire pond. Elijah's faith impacted the widow's faith.

Speaking of the widow, Scripture states, "So she went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she and he and her household ate for many days. The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke through Elijah" (1 Kings 17:15,16).



April and I had our faith put to the test after we left our paid ministry. We told God, "Send us anywhere you want us to go!"

His answer surprised us: "Lacombe, Alberta, Canada!"

We sent in all our paperwork to the Canadian government, so that we could move to the place where God was calling. After months of waiting for the proper permits to move, we faced a dilemma. Our daughter Jessica needed to start school in a couple of weeks, but we were told that we would have to wait four or five more months.

Yet, God said, "I have urgency for you to move to Canada! Call for revival there before the school year begins."

In prayer, I shared why that was not possible at that time. God challenged us, "Go put your feet in the Jordan! Go to the border by faith!"

Our friends kindly advised us that we should not leave our home and travel 1,000 miles north to cross the border into Canada without having a permit in hand. "If you were told it would take four to five more months to get your permit, then that is what it will be." But God said, "Go!"

So we packed up everything we could into a moving truck and gave the rest away. I drove the truck, and April drove our van behind me. Jessica bounced between us to give us much-appreciated company.

We headed north by faith, sure that God would work a miracle before we came to the US/Canada border. We encouraged each other, "Even though the Canadian officials said it would take four to five more months, God can do anything! He will send us our permits in the next few days before we reach the border!"

So we drove through great forests, dry wastelands, and along roads where we saw no one for long stretches. Each day, we eagerly checked our email to see if God had worked a miracle. There was nothing.

Finally, the big day arrived! We drove right up to within a mile of the border and stopped and checked our email with great hope and expectation for a miracle.

Guess what? There was nothing!

“What do we do now Lord?” we asked in prayer.

“Put your feet in the Jordan. Go cross the border.” He spoke to our hearts.

We drove up to the border feeling like fools, parked, and stepped into the crisp, clean office. The official looked over our documentation. “You have no permit from Canada to move here. Where is your permit?” he asked with concern.

“We don’t have a permit yet. We were told it would take four to five more months.” I bravely answered.

“Follow me!” The border control officer said. We followed him outside to the truck. “How far have you come? I hope you still have a home to return to! It is impossible for me to do anything to help you move into Canada without your permit.” He shook his head and walked away. That was all!

We looked blankly at each other. It wasn’t supposed to work like this. We were supposed to put our feet in the Jordan, and God was supposed to part the waters. I silently prayed, *God, help! Help us get across this border. We are here by faith in Your command!*

The officer immediately spun around and walked back to us, as if he had heard my silent prayer

to heaven. "What were you hoping I would do today for your family?" He asked incredulously.

"I don't know if you believe in God or not, but God has called our family to move to Canada to help families mentor their children to be disciples of Jesus."

He stared at us, his face impassive. "Follow me!" He ordered.

For one hour, this officer who said it was impossible to get us across the border worked to find a solution. Two hours went by, and he asked one more officer and then another to help him. Three border officers worked tirelessly to find a way we could enter Canada—after stating it was completely impossible in our situation.

After five hours, the officer called from the desk, "MacLafferty family!" We came up to the desk. *Thump, thump, thump*, we heard as he quickly stamped each of our passports. "Welcome to Canada!"

We were overjoyed! "Sir, I don't know if you believe in God, but do you mind if I thank God right here for how He used you to be a part of His miracle?" I asked with a great smile. He looked warily to the left and then to the right, lowered his voice, and said, "Follow me!"

He led us out to our truck and turned to us. I looked him in the eye and said, "God just did a mighty miracle through you today!" I could not read his expression.

Haltingly, he shared, "What you don't know is that I used to believe in God! I have become discouraged lately with God and church and gave up on both. Today I choose to believe in God again. I will go home after my shift and tell my wife what God did today that I know was impossible. We will believe in God again and make our home a place to worship Him."

In awe of this living God, we all bowed our heads for prayer. We waved goodbye to the officer and drove into Canada with less than a hundred dollars to spend. We had no home and no job, but God was calling, and we trusted in His care.

Trust God as you follow His call.

CHAPTER FOUR

Give the Call

“Elijah came near to all the people and said, ‘How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him...’” (1 Kings 18:21).

Many days passed by in Zarephath. God provided for Elijah through the generosity of the widow. Weeks passed into months, and months stretched into years. Then, when it was least expected, God called.

“Now it happened after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, ‘Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth’” (1 Kings 18:1).

Now, King Ahab was the last person Elijah wanted to see. Obadiah, Ahab’s servant, testified, “There is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent to search for you; and when they said, ‘He is not here,’ he made the kingdom or nation swear that they could not find you” (1 Kings 18:10).

Elijah was a hunted man, the most wanted criminal for the nation of Israel. Ahab hated Elijah as the one who had defied him. He saw Elijah as the one who was responsible for the drought which had brought suffering and death across his kingdom.

God called Elijah to go and see Ahab, the man

who wanted him dead! Elijah immediately obeyed. "So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria" (1 Kings 18:2). Elijah met Obadiah on the way, and Elijah sent him to bring Ahab to him.

What was Elijah thinking? Elijah was penniless. He owned only what he wore. The nation hated him. He was a fugitive. And Elijah summoned the king to meet him. Why?

Again, we are reminded of the truth that Elijah stood first in the court of the King of Kings before he stood before earthly kings. Elijah was not in awe of human power or position. God Himself had sent him to meet Ahab, so he faced the king fearlessly!

His face contorted with rage upon seeing his archenemy Elijah, Ahab spewed out this question: "Is this you, you troubler of Israel?" (1 Kings 18:17). The king expected Elijah to cower in fear. Elijah did not flinch.

He said, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and you have followed the Baals" (1 Kings 18:18). Elijah did not back down. He faced sin with the righteousness of God.

Boldly, the fugitive prophet took the director's chair and commanded the king, "Now then send and gather to me all Israel at Mount Carmel, together with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table" (1 Kings 18:19).

Elijah spoke with the authority of God. He knew the One who had called him. He stood in awe of the Living God. He did not merely speak the message God gave him; he lived it! And Ahab obeyed. "So Ahab sent a message among all the sons of Israel, and then brought the prophets together at Mount Carmel" (1 Kings 18:20).

Elijah stood on Mount Carmel and watched as his fellow countrymen surged towards the mountaintop from all parts of Israel. Like an army of ants pouring out of a disturbed anthill, they came, angry to see the prophet whom they blamed for the drought. They surged around him like a sea of hostility, but he stood his ground defiantly.

This could be a moment he could apologize for his message and maybe save his life. This was an opportunity to soften his approach and win some friends. But this was not to be.

"Elijah came near to all the people and said, 'How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.' But the people did not answer him a word" (1 Kings 18:21).

Elijah called the people to decide whom they will follow. He gave the options: God or Baal. He left no room for the middle, the in-between, the undecided, or "no man's land."



April and I arrived in Lacombe, Alberta on a

Thursday night. God provided two rooms in the home of a friend for a few days. The next morning, God called me to study His written Word and to pray. I asked God what was on His heart for my first day in our new town. God told me to go to a large church in town, introduce myself as new in the area, and tell them that He had given me urgency to call the people of this church and community to a revival with Him.

I responded with all the reasons why that would not be received well by the leaders of the church. *God, they will think, "Who is this stranger calling us to a revival?" They will be offended by my suggestion that they have a great spiritual need. God, shouldn't I make friends with them first before suggesting revival?*

"I have urgency for you to call this church to revival. Go this morning!" God challenged me.

After breakfast, I drove over to the church and walked through the doors. I asked to see the pastor. He came forward, along with his team. I introduced myself and stated that I had just moved into town the night before, and that morning, God had called me to come to their church with an offer.

The pastor and his team looked at me quizzically. I inwardly cringed. Before I could give in to my doubts and retreat out the door, I blurted out, "God is impressing me to come and call your church to a revival with Him."

Cautiously, the pastor asked, "When would this be?" This was a Friday morning. I shared how God had urgency for this revival before all the students in this town returned to school. I said, "This revival should begin this coming Sunday."

"Sunday? This Sunday?" The team looked at me, speechless. "In this size of church, we plan for such things. We need many, many months to prepare for a revival and to communicate this with the whole congregation."

The pastor held up his hand. "I would not want us to miss something that God may be planning. Let's go on our knees right now and ask God what we should do." I joined the pastor and his team in prayer. Standing in a circle after prayer, each one shared how it was God's timing for revival and how desperately it was needed but also showed concern about who would come on such late notice.

"We cannot offer you much. Our evenings are full. We can offer you a room at 6:00 a.m. every morning starting this Sunday for a full week. But we must warn you that you will likely be very disappointed with how few come. Most days, you will be doing well to have three or four people. We are very busy in this community!"

"I'll take the room at 6:00 a.m. this Sunday!" I cheerfully replied. I walked out of the church, wondering if anyone would meet me.

Sunday morning at 6:00 a.m., over thirty people met me to seek a revival with God! They came

from the farms, their homes, and their businesses. Some had to skip breakfast to come. They came with hunger to have something more with God.

Every day, God brought more of His people. We read the Word of God, praised Him, confessed our sins to Him, and repented. People forgave each other, made things right, and returned to God and God alone. By the last meeting, there were over a hundred at the early morning hour. God has a time for every call to be given. When God sends you, give the call!

*Fearlessly call your family and community
to follow God.*

CHAPTER FIVE

Repair Broken Altars

“And he repaired the altar of the Lord which had been torn down” (1 Kings 18:30).

Elijah set the rules of the contest high: The priests of Baal would call on their god; he would call on the name of the Lord, and the one who answered by fire would be acknowledged as God. The people agreed. The priests of Baal must have looked nervous.

These ministers of Baal worship prepared their sacrifice and called out all morning long for Baal to hear their prayers. There was no answer. They cried out all afternoon, even cutting themselves to get his attention, but there was no response.

Elijah watched the priests of Baal with interest, and so did the people. The priests stood before an impressive altar that was well maintained. The worship of Baal had pomp, excitement, grandeur, and popular support...but no living God. The people took note.

Elijah looked at the desolate altar of God, broken down, its stones scattered. Broken-down altars appear to speak of defeat and the death of a god. Broken-down altars seem to tell of weak gods of the past, not the living God of now.

“Then Elijah said to all the people, ‘Come near to me.’ So all the people came near to him.

And he repaired the altar of the Lord which had been torn down” (1 Kings 18:30). He built the altar with twelve stones, one for each tribe in Israel, “in the name of the Lord” (1 Kings 18:31).

The altar Elijah built was simple, a stark contrast to the impressive stone structures common in Baal worship. He did not build to impress the crowd pressing around him. He built simply to worship God.

We have “broken altars” today. Many of our homes are places to eat, sleep, shower, and entertain ourselves, but not to worship God. Sometimes our technology has become our altar, our place to be in awe. At times, our homes have “scattered stones” when it comes to worshipping the living God.



Thousands of miles away from our home, where desert sands blow across the roads instead of snow, a couple waited to talk with me after I spoke on God’s call to our homes. They were a well-dressed, professional couple that looked like success in every way.

Yet as I walked up to them, there was a sadness in their eyes that spoke of deep trouble. They had the trappings of success, the admiration of their community, but their marriage was falling apart. They had become too busy for each other, their children, and God. They wanted to know if God could repair years of damage.

We knelt and prayed. They humbled themselves before God and rededicated their lives to Him. They asked God to give them love and forgiveness for each other, pleading with Him to make their home a place to worship God together.

God heard their prayers and blessed what had been broken. God poured out His Spirit on them to give them love for each other. They determined that their home should be a place to worship God every day.

As they began the practice of gathering their family to worship God in their home, their children resisted. "Do we have to come?" they whined. Family time had been full of verbal fighting in the past. The children could not imagine that being together for anything could be enjoyable, much less fun!

The couple patiently called their children day after day to come and read a short story from the Scriptures and to pray together as a family. They asked God to help them make their worship time as a family something special. God heard their prayers!

Awkward family worship moments slowly transformed by God's grace into tolerably interesting moments...and over the months, became times of precious love and strength together, as God poured out His peace on them. The altar to the true God, though not made with stones, was repaired in their home! Today, their home is a place of peace, rest and love.

Far to the south, a busy couple in love with each other and with God wrestled with how to worship God as a family. Their university-age children's schedule made it impossible to be together at the same time. As the couple prayed together, God impressed them with an idea to rebuild their "family altar": Every day, through a group text, this family shares what they have discovered about God in His Word.

Repairing broken altars will look different in every home. No matter how scattered the stones may be, no matter how fragmented the family, God holds the key to call each family to worship Him.

Make your home a place to worship God.

CHAPTER SIX

Cry for Fire

“Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that You, O Lord, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again” (1 Kings 18:37).

The people pressed close around Elijah, eyeing the once broken-down, stone altar now repaired and ready. They watched as he dug a trench around the altar and prepared the wood and the sacrifice. They stared with disbelief as Elijah ordered that four pitchers of water be poured out upon the sacrifice, the wood, and the altar. He ordered four more pitchers of water to be poured out again...and once again!

The once-dry wood was now drenched with precious water. The water streamed down the sides of the altar and completely filled the trench. It was a very unlikely spot to kindle a single spark, much less a fire.

With this, Elijah set the stage for what he knew God would do. He went out of his way to make sure the people would know that it was impossible for him to start the fire. He deliberately set the tone by his preparations to focus the people on what God, and God alone, could do.

The priests of Baal failed. Everyone knew it. The question on every other mind but Elijah's was, Could the Lord God do any better?

“At the time of the offering of the evening

sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, 'O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that You, O Lord, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again'" (1 Kings 18:36, 37).

Elijah risked all to cry out to the Lord God to answer his prayer for fire. He knew what his fate would be at the hands of the faithless crowd if God were silent at the conclusion of his prayer. He prayed for God to do what he knew was God's will to do!

Elijah stood in the presence of God. In solitude, he prayed and waited on God, taking unrushed time to know the will of the One who called him. In public, he prayed, operated, and lived his life in the confidence of who the Living God was, is, and will always be!

The second that Elijah finished his prayer, God answered! "Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench" (1 Kings 18:38).

God sent fire. Fire fell. Everything on the altar, the stone altar itself, and the water was utterly and completely consumed. Nothing was left behind!

This answer from the Lord God of heaven brought about a clear response from the crowd.

They thought nothing of Elijah in that moment. They thought only of One. "When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, 'The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God'" (1 Kings 18:39).

It is time for the fire of God to fall again! Not the fire that burns up wood, stone, and water, but the fire from heaven that consumes our pride, lust, self-righteousness, and disbelief. We need the fire from heaven that will burn up our bitterness towards those who have wronged us and our pride that keeps us from making things right with God and with man.

Years after Elijah called for fire, another man came who reminded the crowd by the Jordan River of the prophet on Carmel. The man dressed in "a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist" (Matthew 3:4). He cried out, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Matthew 3:2).

His name was John the Baptist. He prophesied, "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:11,12).

Immediately after John proclaimed the coming of the One, Jesus walked onto the scene.

“Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John to be baptized by him” (Matthew 3:13). With God, timing is everything.

Jesus, the Carpenter, was baptized by John. “After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:16,17).

John said this One coming after him would “baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matthew 3:11). Jesus was baptized Himself with the Holy Spirit. The One who was to baptize others with the Holy Spirit would first be baptized by water and the Spirit Himself. “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness...And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district” (Luke 4:1, 14).

This same Jesus, after dying on the cross and being resurrected from the grave, prophesied before He returned to heaven, “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:5). Ten days later on the day of Pentecost, all the believers were gathered together in one place. “And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there

appeared to them tongues as of fire...and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:2-4).

Believers who were shy, afraid, sidelined, and marginalized, due to all manner of past sins and dark histories, were filled with the Holy Spirit. They had prayed, humbled themselves, and repented, and now they were filled to overflowing with the Gift Jesus had promised. They boldly spoke in the languages of the many pilgrims who had gathered on the streets for the Pass-over. The crowd testified, "We hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God" (Acts 4:11).

Peter, the one who had publicly declared he knew nothing of Jesus, the One he had followed for three years, took his stand with the disciples. Peter, the disciple who had been silent when the crowds cried, "Crucify Him!" now publicly lifted up his voice and boldly declared, "'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams'" (Acts 2:17).

This Peter, who was once full of himself and his own agenda, was now filled with the Holy Spirit. He risked his life to say whatever the Holy Spirit gave him to say. When the crowd was moved in their hearts and cried out, "'Brethren, what shall we do?' Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will re-

ceive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself' " (Acts 2:37-39).

It is time for the fire to fall again!



A woman shyly approached April and me at the end of a revival in a small church across the prairies of Alberta, Canada. "Would you come and call for a revival in my church?" she asked. "We desperately need a revival!"

"Have the pastor of your church call me, and if God calls us to come to your church, we will come." I assured her. Months went by. Nothing. We prayed for her church.

One day, the pastor called and invited me to come and talk to his leaders. I drove through the snow, praying as I traveled. I walked into the church and shivered. I walked down a dark hallway and finally found a side room with a small circle of discouraged leaders, waiting to talk.

After a short prayer, I was invited to share. I told what we had seen God do in other churches and schools. I talked of God's love and His grace. I joyfully shared about the power of God to call all to repentance, to forgiveness, and to live transformed lives. The group listened in absolute silence. Too much silence.

"Please tell me about your church," I invited.

"Well..." began one, "a revival week would never work here!" Other voices chimed in: "We are way too busy here to come out more than a night or two!" "We are completely fragmented by culture and the countries from which we came. We do not come together for anything." Finally, another leader summed it up: "Revival won't happen here."

I sucked in my breath, said a prayer in my mind, and responded, "God can do anything. Nothing is impossible with God." The leaders looked at the floor, thanked me for coming, and walked me to the door.

But God moved on the hearts of one or two leaders there. They began to pray. They prayed and prayed. God listened. I received an invitation to come and call for revival, and God called April and me to go!

We requested that they would prayerfully gather as many as possible prior to the revival to pray and be trained to be small group leaders. They agreed. We came on the appointed night and walked into the spacious church, hoping for thirty or forty prayer partners.

One person was working feverishly to set up for the meeting. Finally, eight or nine people showed up. Many of them were late. They said it really wasn't the best night to come. We prayed with them, equipped them, and left the church very concerned.

God impressed us to come and pray and train the people again. The church promised to find more people. On the appointed night, we arrived with much hope and expectation. Announcements had been made from the front of church during the worship service. Less showed up than the first time! But we got on our knees and prayed and claimed God's promises.

One of the leaders warned, "For many years, we have never had success in gathering this church together for more than a day or two at a time. After the weekend, you will be lucky if you have three or four people attend this revival."

One little boy I will call Dex was sitting next to his mother in our circle of prayer. He waved his hand to get my attention. "Can I be a small group leader?" he blurted out. He was young, very young, yet he had more passion for revival than all the adults put together.

"Yes, you can!" I assured him. "Team up with your mom. You can work together!" His grin was bigger than the moon. His mother's eyes were bright and shiny with tears. God whispered to my heart, "A little child will lead them."

The night of revival came! Dex and his mom sat in the front with a circle of chairs, while I called for revival. They led their little group in the Word and in prayer. The Holy Spirit was present.

"Less will come tomorrow night!" promised one attendee, as he sighed and walked out that night.

Every day, a few of us prayed for every member in that church, whether they came to church anymore or not. We asked God to touch the hearts of each person with the love and power of the Holy Spirit. We asked God to do what only He could do.

More came the next night. People that usually stayed apart came together cautiously and sat beside each other in small groups. Conversations were surface-only and difficult between people who looked different from each other and who were used to sitting only with their own people. But they came...and God moved.

“Tomorrow begins the work week. Beginning tomorrow, there will only be three or four,” a few stalwart leaders dejectedly predicted. But believers continued to pray for the Holy Spirit to call His people through the work week.

Every night, the people came, not two or three, but many. Young and old came. People came from work in their work clothes. People came who had not come to church in a long time.

As the Holy Spirit moved on hearts, people started walking across the room. They reached out to people they had never talked with and sat down to eat a meal together before the meetings. People who were bitter towards each other confessed and asked for forgiveness. People with hard hearts had their hearts broken open to receive the love of God, some for the first time.

The fire from heaven fell. It was not fire burning up stones, but fire from God lighting up the darkness, to bring warmth in the cold, and to gather those who were scattered to be a family of God once again!

Call for fire!

*Ask God daily for the Holy Spirit to
completely transform your life
and those you meet.*

CHAPTER SEVEN

Hear the Rain

“Now Elijah said to Ahab, ‘Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of the roar of a heavy shower’” (1 Kings 18:41).

Elijah prayed. The fire fell. The people said, “The Lord—He is God!” But the land was still as dry as desert dust.

Elijah may have scuffed his sandal in the cracked dirt, thinking. Perhaps, he looked around him a moment. The signs of three years of drought and death were everywhere: dead brush crackling in the mountain breeze, dried-up trees giving no shade, and scattered bones of all the creatures left behind after the streams ran dry. He may have remembered when the Word of the Lord came to him in Zarephath: “Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth” (1 Kings 18:1). It was time for the promised rain.

Elijah walked up to King Ahab. The prophet knew that walking by faith did not stop with calling for fire. Boldly, standing on God’s Word, Elijah commanded Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of the roar of a heavy shower” (1 Kings 18:41).

Picture Ahab, raised eyebrows, face tilted to the sky, searching for any sign of rain. There was none. Cupping his ear, he heard only the restless winds over the rocks. He might have mused, *Why is Elijah telling me to eat and drink? There is nothing to celebrate. I don’t see or hear anything that even hints of rain.*

But Elijah stood his ground, obviously expecting the king to obey and celebrate the rain that had not yet fallen. The king, used to commanding obedience, obeyed. Soon, his party began.

“So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he crouched down on the earth and put his face between his knees” (1 Kings 18:42). He humbled himself before God. He prayed with expectancy for God to bring rain, just as God brought the fire immediately after one prayer of faith.

“He said to his servant, ‘Go up now, look toward the sea.’ So he went up and looked and said, ‘There is nothing.’ And he said, ‘Go back’ seven times” (1 Kings 18:43). He prayed with the same faith as he had when he prayed for fire. But there was nothing, not a cloud in the sky. It was a painful test of faith.

It is one thing to boldly exercise your faith in front of a crowd. That is scary and difficult. Elijah could have lost his life. But to pray in the secret place for what God already told you will come to pass and receive nothing in return is another danger. Elijah could have lost his faith.

But Elijah kept praying and sending his servant to look across the Mediterranean Sea for any signs of clouds on the way. Elijah did not give up. Why? Because he was asking God to do what He promised to do. God had promised to bring the rain, and Elijah was determined to pray until God fulfilled His promise to send the rain.

“It came about at the seventh time, that he said,

'Behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea.' And he said, 'Go up, say to Ahab, "Prepare your chariot and go down, so that the heavy shower does not stop you"' (1 Kings 18:44).

Elijah prayed until he saw God give the slightest evidence that He was answering his prayer for rain. The evidence was slim — a small cloud. But it was enough for a man who believed God would deliver what He had promised.

Elijah sent his servant immediately to warn the king: "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, so that the heavy shower does not stop you'" (1 Kings 18:44). Elijah again risked his reputation to command the king to stop in the middle of his meal, pack up his things, and get off the mountain before the rain came...before even one drop fell!

Elijah moved by faith. He lived by faith in the power of God to do the impossible. As he stepped out in belief, God honored him. "In a little while the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel" (1 Kings 18:45).

We must hear the sound of rain before it comes. "'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'that I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind...'" (Acts 2:17). "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you" (Acts 3:19).



In the middle of the week of revival at Dex's church, April and I called for fasting and prayer for the next morning at the church. We believed by faith that God was ready to do much, much more for His people.

The next day, we drove to the church with excitement. People were coming at night, when no one expected it, so we knew God could bring His people out in the middle of the day to fast and pray for more. We arrived right before noon and saw that we were the only car in the parking lot. "Well, maybe they parked in back to make more room," we said to ourselves.

We walked into the church, and it was as quiet as a tomb. No one was there. The clock struck noon. We got on our knees and prayed that God would do mighty things for His glory. The minutes ticked by. No one showed up.

Then the door creaked open. We looked up and saw no one coming in through the door! Was this some kind of cruel joke? Then we looked down, and here came Dex! "Hi Dex! What are you doing here today?" I asked, surprised. Dex looked up at me, very puzzled, "Why—I am fasting and praying today! Isn't that what I was supposed to do?" With surprise in my voice, I responded, "Yes! Yes it was!" I was flabbergasted. Here was this boy from the lower grades of elementary school coming to pray! Where was everyone else?

"Dex," I asked. "Who do you want to pray for? April

and I will pray with you." Without skipping a beat, Dex looked us right in the eye and said, "I have come to pray for my daddy that God will talk to his heart and bring him to be a part of this revival."

I cleared my throat. I knew his daddy did not want to come and had no plans to come. Every night, Dex and his mom led their small group together without him.

"Ok, Dex. You start!" I encouraged. Dex cried out to God to bring his daddy to be a part of the revival and to make their home a happy home. Dex prayed with expectancy, with hope, with faith that God could and would do anything.

As we prayed, we heard the door swoosh open and close. Someone tromped over to where we were praying and dropped to his knees. I opened one eye to see who had just joined us. Dex's daddy was there kneeling beside his son.

With eyes full of wonder, Dex looked up at his dad. "Daddy, we were just praying for you to come. God brought you here!" Dex's dad whispered to us later that he had no intention of coming to the prayer and fasting at noon that day or any day. But suddenly, God moved on his heart to come to the church and pray. After that, he came night after night.

Hear the rain!

*Act on God's promises in His Word,
even when there is nothing to see!*

CHAPTER EIGHT

Outrun the Chariot

“Then the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel.” 1 Kings 18:46

Elijah watched as the clouds darkened the sky, lightning flashed, and the rains came. He may have grinned as he watched King Ahab careen wildly in his chariot and horses down the rugged mountain. He may have noted that Ahab left him by himself to walk down the mountain in the rain. Of course, it was not the habit of royalty to offer a ride to the common people...even if one of them was the prophet of the living God.

But then Scripture states the unexpected.

“Then the hand of the Lord was on Elijah...” (1 Kings 18:46). What was “the hand of the Lord?” Psalm 139:7-10 gives the answer:

“Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, Even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand will lay hold of me.”

God’s Word equates the Spirit of God with the Hand of the Lord. The Holy Spirit makes things happen. The Spirit of God is Somebody, not something. The Spirit of God is the unseen Hand on God’s people, leading and guiding them.

Man does not tell the Spirit of God what to do; the Spirit of God tells man what to do.

The Spirit of God is in the driver's seat for the believer who follows God with full surrender.

When the Hand of the Lord came upon Elijah, he was empowered by the Spirit of God to do what he had not planned to do. He was strengthened to do what he had no power of himself to do. He did what he most likely never wanted to do.

He was empowered to run in a downpour, through the mud, in the darkness of the storm, in front of the chariot and horses carrying the man who hated him. Elijah did not argue the point. He did not tell God that maybe it would be a blessing to have Ahab drive off the mountain and be no more. He simply ran like he never ran before, not one kilometer, but over twenty-seven kilometers to guide the wicked king safely to his comfortable palace in Jezreel.

Down through time, the Spirit of the Lord has come upon His people to empower them to do what they could not do otherwise:

“So the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called together to follow him” (Judges 6:34).

The Spirit of the Lord gave Gideon, a frightened warrior, courage to sound the trumpet and mobilize an army to face impossible odds.

“Now the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, so that he passed through Gilead and Manasseh; then he passed through Mizpah of Gilead...” (Judges 11:29).

The Spirit of the Lord provided Jephthah with the courage to return to the place of his rejection, rise up, and become who God called him to be!

“Then in the midst of the assembly the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel...and he said... ‘Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God’s’” (2 Chronicles 20:14,15).

The Spirit of the Lord empowered Jahaziel to stand up and speak up, to be the voice of courage and faith in the face of crisis and expected defeat.

“The hand of the Lord was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones...So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army” (Ezekiel 37:1,10).

The Spirit of the Lord came upon Ezekiel and empowered him in a vision to call dry bones to live and be an army for God.

“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was

filled with the Holy Spirit. And she cried out with a loud voice and said, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!'" (Luke 1:41,42).

The Holy Spirit filled Elizabeth, and she had the wisdom of God to be the first to boldly declare the prophesied identity of Mary's unborn Baby.

The Spirit of God takes you as He finds you. He meets you where you are. He does in and through you what you are powerless to be and to do.



It was a bitter, cold winter night here in Canada. The pastor's voice on the phone sounded very weary. "We desperately need God to bring a revival here!" The hour was late. We prayed on our knees for guidance.

The Holy Spirit impressed me to be very bold. I said, "Gather together your leaders tomorrow night, (Friday), and let's come to God in prayer. Let's see if they would be willing to have a revival starting Saturday night."

"It's supposed to be near-blizzard conditions tomorrow night!" the pastor responded with concern. "Don't know if I can get anyone to come on such short notice and in such bad weather." "I am willing to drive across the prairie to pray with you and your leaders, if they will come!" I offered.

The next night, April and I drove through heavy snowfall and almost no visibility at times. A small group of leaders was huddled in the church trying to keep warm. We prayed and claimed God's promises to awaken His people, call them, and transform them. God moved on each of our hearts. It was agreed to start the revival in the worst of weather!

The Spirit of God warmed our hearts and led us safely through each snowy night, even when blinded by double semi trucks sliding past us. Often, we wondered, *Why does God want this revival now? Couldn't it have waited for the spring?* But repeatedly, the Holy Spirit spoke to our hearts with His urgency.

A dispute between two families divided the church neatly right down the middle. Some sided with one family, some with the other. There was a tension in the air every night, stemming from much bitterness and hurt. Everyone listened to God's call in the Word to come back to Him and to forgive each other. The two families at the core of the issue both waited for the other to make the first move to ask forgiveness.

One night there at the church, I shared the power of the Holy Spirit to give us heart surgery and to cut out our bitterness and anything else that held us back from each other and from God. I made an appeal for those who needed this heart surgery to humble themselves before God and to ask for that surgery for their hearts right then. I watched that night as the two families at odds with each other went their separate ways out of

the church like every other night. I sighed. "How long, Lord?" O how I wanted to see God bring healing for these families!

I walked April out into the snow and into our van. Just as I was opening her door, she remembered that she left some dishes in the kitchen of the church. "I'll go get them!" I said and jogged back into the church. As I came around the corner into the kitchen, I got the shock of my life! There before me were the two mothers of the two families at odds with each other. They were in a serious conversation. I tiptoed backwards out of the kitchen as fast as I could go.

"Where's the dishes?" April asked as I jumped back into the van. "Can't touch those dishes tonight! I think God is up to something in the kitchen right now!" I answered. I told her that the two women in the church who tried their best not ever to be around each other were now talking!

We prayed and prayed on the way home through the snow. We prayed that the Holy Spirit would do what neither woman had the power by themselves to do.

Before we reached home, we got a phone call from one of the mothers. We heard the rest of the story. The younger mother had been working in the kitchen after the revival and was very surprised to see the other coming directly to her to talk. Her heart warmed. *She must be coming to apologize to me!* she thought to herself. *Wow! God is doing the impossible!*

The older mother came up to the younger and gave her a big surprise. She proceeded to correct the younger woman. The young mom was in shock. No apologies? No "I am sorry"? Anger welled up within her. Bitterness from the years overwhelmed her. She fled out of the kitchen in tears.

But the Spirit of God was at work. "Didn't you ask Me for heart surgery?" He asked her. God challenged her to do what she did not want to do. The Spirit of God empowered her to do the impossible.

Quietly, tears falling, she looked high and low for what she needed: a towel, a basin, and warm water. She filled up the basin with warm water, grabbed a fresh towel, and shyly entered the kitchen with her heart pounding.

The older mother was still there. She whirled around, mouth agape as the young mom knelt down at her feet. She gently took off the older woman's boots and tenderly washed each foot and dried them with the towel. No one said a word. God was there, pressing close to His two precious daughters.

"I am so sorry for how I have hurt you! Will you please forgive me?" the younger woman asked.

The Spirit of God melted both hearts. They hugged each other, forgave each other, and prayed. The Holy Spirit cut out the bitterness that stood between them and healed in a moment what could have separated the mothers for a lifetime.

The young mother's husband found out about this later that night. The Spirit of God softened his heart. The next day, he gave the same gift to the older woman's husband. He washed the other man's feet, wiped them with a towel, and earnestly asked for forgiveness! Two strong-willed men became brothers that day!

The Spirit of the Lord is ready to do in you what you cannot ever do alone. He stands ready to change your heart, heal your bitterness, and free you to be who God has called you to be. The Holy Spirit will often surprise you to go where you would not go, to say what you would never dare say. And sometimes...He will help you outrun the chariot!

*Depend on the power of the Holy Spirit
in each moment.*

CHAPTER NINE

Hear the Whisper

“What are you doing here, Elijah?” (1 Kings 19:13).

Elijah ran ahead of Ahab’s chariot in the rain all the way to Jezreel, and then he may have likely collapsed in exhaustion by the main gate into the city. He could have pulled his mantle over his head and tried to shield himself from the storm.

Meanwhile, King Ahab padded his way into the palace and reported all the events of the day to his wife Jezebel. Jezebel was born and raised in one of the strongholds of Baal worship. She was a champion of Baal worship for Israel. She listened with a growing irritation of how Elijah had ordered her husband to gather Israel at Carmel and how he had initiated a contest between Baal and the Lord God. She was deeply concerned with the public display of the inability of the priests of Baal to create a credible “answer from Baal” by fire.

Jezebel cringed when hearing of Elijah rebuilding the broken-down altar to the Lord God. Anger filled her as Ahab detailed how the Lord God answered Elijah’s prayer with fire, but her hostility knew no bounds when she heard about the end of her prophets! The steady drumbeat of the much-awaited rain on the roof of the royal residence did nothing to abate her desire to be rid of Elijah for once and for all.

Picture the weary prophet, slumped against the city wall in the rain. A hand roughly shook him awake. He lifted his cloak to see who was awakening him: a royal messenger! His heart may have leaped with joy! Maybe he thought that the king and queen were inviting him to the palace to repent of their ways and to return to the Lord God. But it was not to be.

The Scriptures say, "Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, 'So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time'" (1 Kings 19:2). Shocked, he watched as the messenger ran away in the rain. The cold rain dripped off his head and nose. He was hungry, cold, and wet. Discouraged with the defiance of Jezebel and the spineless cowardice of Ahab, he pondered his dreary fate. Soon he would be dead, if the queen had anything to say about it.

Fear set into his heart. Doubts about the value of what had happened during the day crept into his mind. Maybe it was all for nothing. Maybe nothing ever would bring God's people back to Him. "And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life..." (1 Kings 19:3).

Elijah faced an angry king with no fear. He stood against the crowd and fearlessly challenged his countrymen to choose whom they would worship. As far as he knew, he was alone when he called for fire from heaven. As far as he could see, he alone cried out to God for the rain. Even after seeing the mighty Hand of God, Elijah ran.

Elijah ran past the outskirts of the city, past the towns and small villages. He ran far out into the wilderness. In utter despair, he cried out, "It is enough: now, O Lord, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers" (1 Kings 19:4). Twice God sent an angel to gently feed the discouraged, suicidal prophet.

"So he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength from that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God" (1 Kings 19:8). He climbed up the high mountain. Mount Carmel was far away in distance and in thought. God must have also seemed far, far away.

"Then he came there to a cave and lodged there; and behold, the Word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'" (1 Kings 19:9). It was the last question the runaway prophet wanted to hear.

Elijah answered by defending himself before God. He defended his zeal and listed the sins of his countrymen. Pitifully, he concluded by whimpering, "And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (1 Kings 19:10).

God did not argue with his discouraged follower. God called him, "Go forth and stand on the mountain before the Lord." 1 Kings 19:11. Elijah wearily obeyed. "And behold, the Lord was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks 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. After the earthquake a fire,

but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing" (1 Kings 19:13).

Elijah knew that still, small voice. He knew that the Lord God was calling him with a gentle whisper. "When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. And behold, a voice came to him and said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'" (1 Kings 19:13).

God knew that Elijah still had not answered a profound question. Why was he where he was, far away from the last place where God had called him? He had given God excuses, but not a real answer.

Up to this point, Elijah had only moved when God said to move. His way of daily life was to go the moment God told him to go and to stop wherever God told him to land. His life had been one continuous testimony to the faithfulness of God and His power for His people to live faithfully.

Elijah gave his same lame list of excuses. God listened patiently. God did not cut him off in exasperation. God listened to the man He claimed as a dearly loved son.

God showed the erring Elijah His grace. He could have told the tired-out follower that he had failed. He could have told him to retire. But God has room in His Kingdom for followers who run the wrong way, who give up, and who sit down when they should have taken their stand.

God whispered to Elijah that he had more for him to do! He sent Elijah to disciple and mentor a younger

man. And before Elijah left the mountain, God whispered once more, “Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him” (1 Kings 19:18).



Doug was running as fast as he could in the wrong direction. A few years before, he had searched his city from east to west for God and had found Him. He found the truth about the living God, but he had not lived this truth of God.

He made good money, drove a nice truck, had lots of drinking friends, had a beautiful home, wife and family — all in about that order. Over time, he became separated from his wife and estranged from his kids, and he descended into many habits and addictions that made him a helpless slave.

One day, the Lord God whispered to his heart. God called Doug to consider the destructive way he was living and to return to Him with all His heart. God promised to give Doug a new heart and to be his strength to turn away from all that kept him imprisoned.

Doug felt discouraged and afraid of losing everything, yet hopeful. He chose to listen to that still, small voice of God.

He surrendered all he was and all he had to the Lord God. He backed up his truck to his house, grabbed some garbage bags, and threw out anything that compromised his relationship with God. He threw out DVDs, CDs, magazines—anything that pulled him away from the living God.

He cleared out his whole house. There was only one place left...and Doug did not want to enter it. It was his garage. The Spirit of God challenged Doug to give his whole life to God, not some of it. Not most of it. All of it.

Doug stepped into the garage and was confronted with a beautiful refrigerator packed with all the alcohol he and his buddies loved to drink. Moved by the power of the Holy Spirit, Doug wheeled it out to his truck, and with no one but God to help him, he hoisted it onto the back of his truck.

Fearing that he would take one last drink, he sped out from his home and to the city dump. He threw out the bags of trash and then pushed the refrigerator full of alcohol out of the truck. He watched it tumble down into the dump and drove away a free man.

God frees His people so they can worship Him, have loving relationships, and have the joy of serving Him. God gave Doug a love for His written Word and prayer. Then God gave him love for his wife and children and gentleness and patience to see God restore his marriage and family. For over a year now, Doug and his wife have had the joy of serving God together and sharing Him around the world.

Hear the whisper.

*Allow God to challenge your position
and redirect your life.*

CHAPTER TEN

Call Your Elisha

“And Elijah passed over to him and threw his mantle on him” (1 Kings 19:19).

Elijah strode back to Israel, humbled and yet strengthened to know the love and grace of the Lord God. Yes, he had run the wrong way at the very moment when God was ready to bring all Israel to a revival with Him. But Elijah knew God still cared for him as always. He was empowered to continue to work as a messenger of the living God.

As he trudged across the hills and valleys of Israel, he may have smiled at the hint of green coming into the fields. The rains were breathing new life into the land. Small streams could be seen, gathering strength day by day.

“So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, while he was plowing with twelve pairs of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth. And Elijah passed over to him and threw his mantle on him” (1 Kings 19:19).

Elijah’s mantle was more than a dusty, threadbare garment smelling of countless campfires. It was the symbol of the authority and calling of God in Elijah’s life. Elijah saw Elisha and knew what he must do. He must call Elisha to follow him.

Elijah threw his mantle over the shoulders of young Elisha and kept on walking, as if nothing

had happened out of the ordinary. Yet the meaning of the mantle was not lost on Elisha. He knew it was God's call to follow Elijah. "He left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, 'Please let me kiss my father and my mother, then I will follow you'" (1 Kings 18:20).

Elijah tested the young man. He gave Elisha a chance to back out of the call. He cried out to Elisha, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" (1 Kings 18:20). But Elisha was ready to go and be who God was calling him to be, and "he followed Elijah and ministered to him" (1 Kings 19:21).

Elijah had to humble himself to toss his mantle on younger shoulders. He had to submit to God's plan to raise up a young leader who would soon replace him. Elijah had to surrender to the truth that he was expendable and that God's work would go on well without him.



As I prayed out in the fields early one morning, God brought His prophecy in Acts 2:17 to my mind: "'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.'" To prophesy is to share the Word of God, by the power of God, to the people whom God sends you to share it.

"God, what do you want me to do about helping your sons and daughters to prophesy?" I asked. God impressed me to start equipping children

and youth to speak the written Word of God through practical preaching. I began with equipping two teenagers to prayerfully search the Word and speak the Word, and then God led me to do the same with children as well as other youth.

I required the child or teen to come with one or more parent(s), and we prayed together and planned the message God had given us from His written Word. The child or youth prepared the message with me during five sessions. The parents coached the child in between sessions, and then I team-preached with the young person.

I met with resistance in one church. Some did not like children and youth preaching and teaching the Word of God. Some left and did not come back.

I remember Darla, a young, shy teenager in love with God and terrified of being up front. She was about thirteen at the time. I had noticed that she was watching across the room when I was preparing her big brother to preach with me in a few weeks.

I walked across the room. "Darla, you seem very interested in what your older brother is preparing to do. Do you want to learn how to preach God's Word?" I asked.

Terrified, she blurted, "I could never do that!"

"Darla, do you spend time with God in the Word each day and in prayer?" I asked gently.

Softly, she answered, "Oh yes. Most days I do."

"Then," I said, "God has given you something to share! Would you please pray this coming week about preaching the Word of God with me?" She agreed.

After praying for a week for Darla, I asked her, "What is your answer after praying for a week? Will you preach with me?"

"God wants me to do it!" she quietly answered. "Great!" I said cheerfully, "Let's prepare to preach together in one week."

"One week!" she shrieked. "I thought maybe we could prepare for me to preach in six months or a year!"

"Now is the time!" I encouraged her.

Five times I met with this girl and her parents. She and I prayed for a message from the Lord. We studied the Word. We prepared to team-preach the Word.

When we stood up before the church, Darla was absolutely terrified. She was pale and nervous, her hands clutching the podium with all her might. We preached the Word together. Every time this extremely shy girl spoke, the audience literally leaned towards her, wanting to catch everything that this unlikely speaker had to say about God.

We reached the conclusion, and it was Darla's

turn to speak again. She took a deep breath and looked out to the sea of faces that seemed to be swimming across her terrified vision.

“Do you know why I am preaching the Word of God today?” she asked the audience. “It is not to please my parents or the pastor. This is the last place I would ever want to be. I am preaching today because of my love for God and His love for me!” Tears started rolling down her cheeks. “I preach the Word because I love God and I want you to love Him and know Him, too. If God can help me preach the Word, and you know I am the shyest person in this whole church, then why can’t He help you do the same?”

The question soared out over the audience and settled uncomfortably in the hearts of young and old, bringing conviction into the hearts of many to no longer be silent. Darla simply sat down. There was nothing more to be said.

A quiet man nearing retirement ambled up to me after the service. He looked both ways to make sure no one was listening. “If God could speak through Darla today, do you think He might be able to speak through me?” he asked timidly. Two weeks later, he was preaching the Word.

One day, a grandmother, stooped with age, came up to me leaning heavily on her cane. “I need to talk with you about these children and youth preaching the Word!” she told me resolutely. I sighed and prepared for more criticism.

“Bend down here where I can tell you something in your ear!” she commanded me. I bent down to her. She cupped my ear with her arthritic hands and whispered, “You know what? These young people you have preaching...well, they preach better than you!”

I grinned, gave her a hug, and said, “Praise God! This is the best news you could have given me!”

Call your Elisha.

*Ask God whom He is calling to replace you.
Invite that person to join you!*

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Cross Your Jordan

“Elijah took his mantle and folded it together and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground” (2 Kings 2:8).

Elijah and the young Elisha hiked along the trails and highways of Israel for a number of years together. Elisha watched and learned, as Elijah called the people to the faith of the Lord God. Elijah continued to confront Ahab, and later, King Ahaziah as well with the truth of God.

One day, probably an ordinary-looking day, Elijah asked Elisha to stay behind while he traveled to Bethel. But Elisha was a faithful disciple of Elijah. He wanted to assist, learn, and grow from any and every moment possible with Elijah. Elisha responded, “As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you” (2 Kings 2:2). So they traveled together.

Now, in some way, Elisha had learned that God intended to take Elijah away on that very day. So Elisha was determined to savor every last moment with his mentor and friend.

At Bethel, Elijah asked Elisha to stay there while he went to Jericho. Again, Elisha said, “I will not leave you.” So they traveled to Jericho together. In Jericho, Elijah asked Elisha to stay there while God sent him to the Jordan. Elisha said, “I will not leave you” (2 Kings 2:6). So they walked to the Jordan.

Fifty young men of the sons of the prophets watched as Elijah and Elisha approached the rushing Jordan River. Elijah could have requested for the young men to get them a boat to cross the river. Elijah could have looked up and down the river for a narrower place to cross.

The Jordan was a barrier to where the Spirit of God was leading Elijah and Elisha. The river was getting in the way. Elijah wanted to cross the river God's way, not by his own power.

"Elijah took his mantle and folded it together and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground" (2 Kings 2:8).

The fifty young sons of the prophets watched with mouths agape, as Elijah struck the Jordan River with his mantle. He struck the waters by faith in the almighty power of God. He struck the waters with expectation that God would part them. And God did! Elijah walked across calmly. Elisha crossed the river in awe!

Elijah's mantle was just as much a symbol of God's power and authority as was Moses' staff. There was no magic or power in the mantle, but all power and authority in God. The message was undeniable: No river, no challenge that stands in the way of what God has called us to do is ever bigger than the God who called us to cross it! Rivers are for crossing...in God's way!



We had a river to cross when we moved to Canada. We came to Lacombe, Alberta with less than one hundred dollars in cash, and that was it. Our “river to cross” was that that we needed to find a place to rent to stay immediately.

“Let’s go look for a house to rent!” I said to my wife after a few days with kind friends. April looked at me with big question marks in her eyes, “What kind of house are we looking for in the less-than-a-hundred-dollar range?” she asked.

“Let’s pray that God will help us find the house He wants us to have, and then we will trust that He will bring us funds to rent it.” I offered. April, Jessica, and I began to look for a place to live. We knew we were only a few weeks away from the first snowfall, so finding a place was on top of our list of priorities!

We finally found a cute, little house that April liked. It was close to Jessica’s school, close to the grocery store, the bank, and the post office. “When the weather gets bad, I can easily get to everything I need, even if the roads are slippery.” April said. The owner told us the monthly rent and that he needed the same amount for a security deposit. We were stunned! We felt numb. It was a much smaller place than we had lived in for a very long time, but the price was more than we were used to paying.

We prayed, and God impressed us that we had

found the right place to live. But where were we to get that much money? We had no clue.

We kept praying, and God impressed us to step into the proverbial Jordan River and cross it! We called the owner, and he said, "If you are serious about renting, better get it quick." "Great!" I said, "I will be over tomorrow evening at 7:00 p.m. to sign the papers."

"And bring your rent and security deposit." the owner added helpfully. Quietly I said, "Yes, sir."

That night, we prayed and prayed. The next morning, we prayed and claimed God's promises to take care of all our needs. We claimed Philippians 4:19: "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

I went to an early-morning revival where I was speaking. It was 5:58 a.m., and I was opening my Bible on a small podium, while people gathered to pray. I was just getting ready to begin the meeting when a man came up to me, grabbed me by the collar, and pulled me out into the hallway. We had only been in Canada a few days. My mind raced to think of what horrible thing we could have done to anybody to cause someone to publicly yank me by my collar out of a prayer meeting. I was completely baffled.

The man lowered his voice, "This morning, I was walking through our dark house to come to this prayer meeting. When I passed the TV, God strongly impressed me to stop, shove my hand

above the TV, and to grab any cash I had there. That is where I keep my cash from my jobs. So, in the dark, I grabbed all the cash lying there and stuffed it into this envelope. God told me you needed it!" he said as he took the envelope out of his pocket and stuffed it into my jacket pocket. Then, giving me a firm push, he said, "Now, go back in there and call us to a revival. We need it around here!"

I got home and handed April the envelope. She opened it and began to count. Her eyes opened wide, "Wow! After returning a tithe on this to God, we have enough to pay the security deposit!"

"Awesome!" I replied. My dear, practical wife softly asked, "What about the other half of what we need in a few hours? We still need the first month's rent."

"I know!" I replied. "Let's thank God for giving us the security deposit. Let's ask Him to provide all we need."

Over the next few hours, we checked the post office box to see if God had sent us any money. Nothing. We checked our voicemail messages, email messages, and texts. There was nothing. "What are you going to do?" asked April. "It's time for you to go and sign the papers and pay the first month's rent."

"I am going to put my feet in the Jordan!" I replied.

My heart was thumping as I pulled up to the rental house to meet the owner. I fingered the envelope with half of what we needed. "God," I ventured, "You can multiply this cash just like you multiplied the five barley loaves and two fish. We need your help."

I rang the doorbell. The owner welcomed me in and asked abruptly, "Did you bring the money for the rent and the deposit?"

I couldn't lie. I replied, "Here is the money I brought."

We sat down at the kitchen table. I placed the envelope with the cash for the security deposit on the table and slowly pushed it across to the owner.

I watched that envelope like a hawk. I knew God had the power to double my money. *This is going to be quite a miracle!* I said to myself. The owner began to count the money from my envelope. I was excited to see how God was going to part the waters for the river crossing. When the owner had counted the number of hundred-dollar bills that would pay for a security deposit, he stopped. He looked in the envelope for the rest of the money. There was nothing more.

He stared me right in the eyes without smiling. He was waiting for my explanation or my excuse for bringing only half of what was needed. I didn't flinch, neither did I say a word. "Well," he asked, "This is all you brought?"

“Yes sir! It’s all I brought.” I answered.

“Hmmm.” He stared at the lonely stack of insufficient hundred-dollar bills. “I’ll tell you what. I will take this as the security deposit, and you can have the first month’s rent free. Let’s sign the rental agreement.”

I could not have signed faster! We crossed our river, and God parted the waters!

What river needs crossing in your life right now?
What stands in the way for you to do what God is calling you to do?

Cross your river.

*Walk through obstacles to your faith by the
authority of God’s Word.*

CHAPTER TWELVE

Let Elisha Go

“He also took up the mantle of Elijah...” (2 Kings 2:13).

Elijah crossed the river, and then asked a question that we often forget to ask the next generation: “Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you” (2 Kings 2:9).

Elijah did not ask because he had houses or lands or money in the bank. He asked because he knew what the Lord God owned. He knew God owned everything in the heavens and on the earth.

Elijah asked the question because he cared about giving his disciple, his student, everything he could possibly give him to ensure his success for God’s calling on his life. Elijah was ready to give — as he had received from God. He waited to hear what his young follower would say.

Elisha did not waste any time in answering. He did not need to think about it or pray on it for a day. He knew what he most longed for, and so he asked boldly for it. “Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me” (2 Kings 2:9). This was the cry of his heart. This is what he most longed to receive.

Elisha wanted to become the kind of man he saw in Elijah. He saw the Spirit of God on Elijah’s life, and he wanted double that blessing.

He wanted to be moved, led, and transformed by the Spirit of God.

Elijah answered, "'You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so.' As they were going along and talking, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven. Elisha saw it" (2 Kings 2:10-12). How his heart must have thrilled as he saw Elijah go up into the sky by a whirlwind.

He must have watched, straining his eyes to see, until he could see Elijah no more. He rent his clothes in anguish. His teacher, his friend, his mentor was no more. Who would lead him now? Who would lead Israel to God?

A few feet away, lying just as it had fallen from the sky, was Elijah's mantle. Elijah had let go of that which spoke of his authority and spiritual leadership. He had left it behind for the one who would take his place.

Elisha may have bent over to pick it up, only to straighten up, backing away from touching what Elijah had tossed on his shoulders when he called him years ago.

Who am I? he may have questioned himself, *to take up the mantle of Elijah?*

Elijah had promised that if Elisha saw him go, he would receive what he asked for — a double

portion of the spirit of Elijah.

Wait! Elisha may have said to himself, *I DID see Elijah go, so I HAVE RECEIVED a double portion of the spirit of Elijah!*

Elisha “took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and returned and stood by the bank of the Jordan” (2 Kings 2:13). As Elisha gripped the mantle, it would have still been wet from when Elijah had struck the river with it moments before.

He stood before the river Jordan with the Spirit of the Lord God upon him, and he knew exactly what he must do. The fifty sons of the prophets watched with great curiosity. What would Elisha do?

“He took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and struck the waters and said, ‘Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?’ And when he also had struck the waters, they were divided here and there; and Elisha crossed over” (2 Kings 2:14).

Elisha picked up Elijah’s mantle because he was unleashed by the Spirit of the Lord. Elisha took this mantle and struck the waters with it because he was free to be who the Lord God had called him to be. He struck the waters with a young, ferocious faith in the One who stands ready to part the waters for His people...as they boldly advance with an eye single to the glory of God.

With one voice, the sons of the prophets who had witnessed the power of God in Elisha

exclaimed, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha" (2 Kings 2:15).



Marcus is an Elisha in my life. I flew into his country and met him for the first time. He had a hunger to know God personally, to call his community of faith to revival, and to disciple the new generations.

He asked me lots of questions, many of which I had never thought about before. Sometimes I had to request some more time, so I could pray for wisdom. He asked me what I did in certain situations and why I did what I did.

Impressed by God that Marcus was an Elisha God was calling me to invest my life in, I asked him, "What can I do for you?"

He took some time to answer. Later, he called me from his country, "I have a big request to ask of you. I would like to come and stay at your home for four or five days and be a part of what you do and see how you live. May I come for a visit?" He said he wanted to grow as a disciple and a disciple-maker. April and I said, "Yes! Come and stay with us!"

We had never had someone request to come and stay with us for the purpose of joining us in what we were doing, to see how we lived day by day. We live pretty simple lives. We were concerned that my Elisha, Marcus, might come, visit, and leave disappointed.

Marcus came to our home. He ate with us at our table. He joined us for family worship. He joined April and me for our daily walks. He stayed by my side as I visited people and prayed with them and took students and their teacher out to serve the people of their city. He shadowed me as I mentored leaders.

He watched as I left the house early in the morning, flashlight and Bible in hand. "Where are you going?" he asked. "Going out to meet with God!" I answered.

"Can I come with you?" He asked. "Yes. Come." I assured him.

Marcus trudged out under the stars with me to pray. We praised God for His magnificence, thanked Him for how He was blessing each of us that week, confessed our sins, and prayed for and received by faith the fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit for a new day. We looked for Jesus in Scripture and waited on God for His marching orders for the day. Every morning, we started the day this same way.

Marcus told me as he left a week later that he did not get what he came looking for. He came looking for discipling techniques. He said he left with something life-changing...a lesson that God helped him learn that week that he will remember every day of his life.

Marcus wrote, "The lesson that was written in my heart from this week was this: Who you are in Christ is more important in discipling others

than your discipling skills.”

Marcus flew back home. He started meeting with God early each morning. He spent unrushed time daily in the Scriptures and in prayer. He asked for and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit day by day. He found a living experience with God!

People began to want what he had with God. One day, I realized I could not make an important training session in the Far East. My hosts for the event were very disappointed when I said I would send an Elisha, Marcus, in my place. I said he walked with God and came with all my support.

Marcus went in my place and was delighted to learn that his audience was a special group of immigrants from his own country! The Holy Spirit spoke through him with power, moving the hearts of the people by his testimony. The hosts of the event were thrilled and testified to the Hand of God in Marcus.

Unleash your Elisha!

Mentor your Elisha.

Mentor that person to go beyond you!



What If?

What if...you met with God BEFORE you met with others?

What if...you lived each day of your life by the Word of God?

What if...you trusted that what God called you to do, He would provide for you to accomplish?

What if...you dared to call family, friends, co-workers and strangers to follow God?

What if...you repaired your broken-down altar in your home?

What if...you called God each morning to fill you with the fire of the Holy Spirit?

What if...you heard by faith the promised rain - before it came?

What if...you ran the race of your life by the power of God, not your own?

What if...you listened every day for the still, small voice of God?

What if...you invited the Elisha God placed on your heart to join you?

What if...you stood by the obstacle confronting you and crossed it by the authority of God?

What if...after mentoring your Elisha, you let Elisha go?

We live in a world awash in hues of grey. Few risk coloring outside the lines. Fewer still make a stand for anything that might differentiate them from the crowd.

Live Like Elijah invites you to discover the life of Elijah, a man who knew God, knew his purpose, and lived each day with fearless faithfulness. He rested in the Providence of God.

Explore his life — and *live* it!



About the Author

Don MacLafferty lives in Lacombe, Alberta, Canada and is joyfully married to his wife April. They have three amazing children that add much adventure to their lives! Don loves mountains, hiking under the stars, world travel, and meeting God-arranged appointments.

For more information, go to indiscipleship.org