

# CONNECTED

## WEEK THREE: ME, MY SELFIE, AND I

### CONNECT

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Our culture is experiencing a crisis, with depression and suicide on the rise. How can we help people deal with pain and loneliness when everyone seems fine? This week we'll look at the epidemic of depression and suicide and how being disconnected plays a part in that.

- What is the largest crowd you've ever been in? What was it for?
- Do crowds make you feel uneasy? If so, do you know where those feelings come from? Please share more about that if you're willing.

### DISCOVER

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#### Read 1 Kings 18:16-40, 19:1-10

<sup>16</sup> So Obadiah went to tell Ahab that Elijah had come, and Ahab went out to meet Elijah.<sup>17</sup> When Ahab saw him, he exclaimed, "So, is it really you, you troublemaker of Israel?"

<sup>18</sup> "I have made no trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "You and your family are the troublemakers, for you have refused to obey the commands of the Lord and have worshiped the images of Baal instead. <sup>19</sup> Now summon all Israel to join me at Mount Carmel, along with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah who are supported by Jezebel."

<sup>20</sup> So Ahab summoned all the people of Israel and the prophets to Mount Carmel. <sup>21</sup> Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, "How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!" But the people were completely silent.

<sup>22</sup> Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only prophet of the Lord who is left, but Baal has 450 prophets. <sup>23</sup> Now bring two bulls. The prophets of Baal may choose whichever one they wish and cut it into pieces and lay it on the wood of their altar, but without setting fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood on the altar, but not set fire to it. <sup>24</sup> Then call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by setting fire to the wood is the true God!" And all the people agreed.

<sup>25</sup> Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "You go first, for there are many of you. Choose one of the bulls, and prepare it and call on the name of your god. But do not set fire to the wood."

<sup>26</sup> So they prepared one of the bulls and placed it on the altar. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning until noontime, shouting, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no reply of any kind. Then they danced, hobbling around the altar they had made.

<sup>27</sup> About noontime Elijah began mocking them. "You'll have to shout louder," he scoffed, "for surely he is a god! Perhaps he is daydreaming, or is relieving himself. Or maybe he is away on a trip, or is asleep and needs to be wakened!"

<sup>28</sup> So they shouted louder, and following their normal custom, they cut themselves with knives and swords until the blood gushed out. <sup>29</sup> They raved all afternoon until the time of the evening sacrifice, but still there was no sound, no reply, no response.

<sup>30</sup> Then Elijah called to the people, "Come over here!" They all crowded around him as he repaired the altar of the Lord that had been torn down. <sup>31</sup> He took twelve stones, one to represent each of the tribes of Israel, <sup>32</sup> and he used the stones to rebuild the altar in the name of the Lord. Then he dug a trench around the altar large enough to hold about three gallons. <sup>33</sup> He piled wood on the altar, cut the bull into pieces, and laid the pieces on the wood.

Then he said, "Fill four large jars with water, and pour the water over the offering and the wood."

<sup>34</sup> After they had done this, he said, "Do the same thing again!" And when they were finished, he said, "Now do it a third time!" So they did as he said, <sup>35</sup> and the water ran around the altar and even filled the trench.

<sup>36</sup> At the usual time for offering the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet walked up to the altar and prayed, "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant. Prove that I have done all this at your command. <sup>37</sup> O Lord, answer me! Answer me so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God and that you have brought them back to yourself."

<sup>38</sup> Immediately the fire of the Lord flashed down from heaven and burned up the young bull, the wood, the stones, and the dust. It even licked up all the water in the trench! <sup>39</sup> And when all the people saw it, they fell face down on the ground and cried out, "The Lord—he is God! Yes, the Lord is God!"

<sup>40</sup> Then Elijah commanded, "Seize all the prophets of Baal. Don't let a single one escape!" So the people seized them all, and Elijah took them down to the Kishon Valley and killed them there.

### **Read 1 Kings 19:1-10**

<sup>1</sup>When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything Elijah had done, including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal. <sup>2</sup>So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: "May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed them."

<sup>3</sup>Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. <sup>4</sup>Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died."

<sup>5</sup>Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. But as he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, "Get up and eat!" <sup>6</sup>He looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again.

<sup>7</sup>Then the angel of the Lord came again and touched him and said, "Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you."

<sup>8</sup>So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai, the mountain of God. <sup>9</sup>There he came to a cave, where he spent the night.

But the Lord said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"



<sup>10</sup>Elijah replied, "I have zealously served the Lord God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too."

- What are some ways Elijah demonstrated his faith and boldness as God's prophet (1 Kings 18)?
- Why would Elijah's faith and boldness seem to disappear so easily (1 Kings 19)?
- How did God care for Elijah as he fled Ahab? Why might God have spoken to Elijah so harshly in the cave?
- How did Elijah respond to God's question? Why might Elijah have responded the way he did?

## **GROW**

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- Have you had a time of great success, followed by a time of loneliness or depression? What happened? Please share any steps you took to grow past that time.
- Why might difficult times (Mentally, physically, spiritually) follow times of success?
- Why do you think fatigue and depression are so closely connected? Elijah got so tired he wanted to die! What do you do to recharge?
- There are several causes of depression, but when we see signs, what are some ways we can help those battling it?

## **NEXT STEPS**

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- Depression and suicide, or suicidal thoughts, are often connected. What steps do we need to take to make sure we are truly a safe place to talk about these battles?
- PVC offers care classes that you may need- Go to <http://www.palmvalley.org/churchevents/> and sign up!