

without leaving the comforts of home! Subscription information in the back of this issue.

### *On the Home Front...*

Now...to our home front. This year was also an incredibly challenging year for us with our family and extended family.

Many of you on our email list already know about my pregnancy and miscarriage back in the spring. I found out about the pregnancy (talk about a wonderful surprise!) too late to undergo any treatments, which may have saved the baby.

Of all my miscarriages, this one was incredibly hard on me emotionally and physically. I miscarried right before leaving up North for our tour in the Northeast. That would have been NO problem, but I had to travel without my darling husband.

There are no words to explain how hard it was to go to sleep at night without him holding me through my tears. It had been 1 1/2 years since my last pregnancy. You can imagine the roller coaster ride...and then how I plunged into the valley of tears without my best friend there—the phone is simply not the same!

Not to mention, the opposition that our enemy placed our way on the trip. I can NOW say that we travel come rain, sleet, or snow...just NOT without my darling MAN there to drive AND to hold me at the end of a long day!

As we came back home, I have to tell you that my entire life is changed. We no longer travel unless Harold can be there. I simply feel that I cannot handle struggles without my entire family being together. We have been spending much, much more time just doing the things that minister to one another. If there is one thing that I have learned during this valley, it was that we can NEVER underestimate the preciousness of family going alongside us in the midst of our struggles.

### *Extended Family...*

This was not our only struggle this Spring, Harold's family has been very much on our heart as they have simultaneously walked through a very difficult time. Harold's grandmother passed away unexpectedly. I had never thought about just HOW hard it would be to lose our mothers until I walked with Mrs. Rushton through this valley.

This Mother's Day was incredibly difficult for Mr. and Mrs. Rushton...it was the first Mother's Day without both of their mothers. It was quite a testimony of the blessedness of being a godly mother. Truly there is an emptiness that cannot be replaced by anything else. I can only pray to be such a friend to my children.

This time has really turned our hearts toward our family during this very short season that we have with them. We were blessed to have Mr. and Mrs. Rushton visit with us during the entire week of Mother's Day. I believe that in the midst of this loss, along with my own loss, we were able to really break through to REAL ministry that is meant to

pour forth between mother and daughter-in-law.

We had a wonderful time shopping and just having coffee (sound like a traitor to *Time for Tea*??). Harold delighted his father by taking him sailing on the Tennessee River (Is danger hereditary??). The memories that we have are so precious. We have stored them away as lifetime treasures! I praise God for the opportunity to have all of the past wounds healed to the point of true friendship and mentoring.

Not only did the Rushtons have a tough loss of Mrs. McCurley, but they have also had a very difficult time in the aftermath having to fill her shoes in taking care of Papaw. In fact, the call of her death was a shock because we were expecting it to be him. (He was on his death-bed at the time.) He has now proved himself to be the "trooper" we thought him to be. He is off his feeding tube, healthy as an ox, and having a blast in the Veterans' Nursing Home (Can you imagine a better place for a man who loves History??).

In the meantime, Jenny (Harold's sister) has gone through an incredibly tough first year of marriage. Her husband was diagnosed with cancer, while she found her heart was needing major surgery. To complicate the matter, JOYFULLY, she found that she would be having her first baby by the end of her first year of marriage (Go honeymoons!).

We praise God that little Trent is now with us, especially after all of the close calls on the life of Jenny AND Trent that had the entire family on pins-and-needles for the whole last year! Jenny has now had her heart surgery...AND it looks as though the NEWEST news is ANOTHER BABY! (Yes! You CAN detect a VERY happy Auntie here!) We do still need prayer for Michael. His cancer is so far gone that each and every day with Jenny and Trent is a miracle straight from heaven. Pray also for the whole family, especially since there has been such a drama of trials this year.

### *Blessings!*

WHEW! Reading this just reminds me of a very bitter-sweet year. Much trial...much blessing. Much heart-ache...much growth. Truly, we find that life CAN be very, very full of change, adversity, and trial. BUT, praise God! He is with us each step of the way.

We praise Him that we have such a wonderful family of dear, dear fellow Christians to lift us before His throne when the tough times hit. I thank you all for your loving cards and emails. I also thank those of you who have been there when I was crashing in tears AND fears. These days have truly built a strong foundation not only for our ministry, but also for those who will come into our "tent" in the days to come.

I want to close this note with a word that God gave me in the midst of this time of intense sifting. I pray that if you are finding yourself, or a dear friend, in the midst of a season of sifting that you will find these words to be an encouragement...

***"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And WHEN YOU HAVE TURNED BACK, STRENGTHEN your brothers."***

Luke 22: 31-32

My prayer is that this issue will be just that...my return from the sifting. AND that you, my dear friends WILL BE STRENGTHENED! Got your cup? It is now TIME FOR TEA! Love, Cindy

# *Fill Your Cup Back Up!*

## *By Cindy Rushton*

Do you sometimes feel as though your life situation is captured in the pages of the Bible?? Do you feel as though a certain character is just KINDRED???? Well, Elijah is MY kindred spirit! If you were to look at my life and my reactions to things that happen along the way, you would REALLY think that the book of Kings was ALL about me! Let's look at his life and I will explain why.

### **Going Back In Time**

In 1 Kings 17, we meet Elijah as he is beginning his ministry. We are not given his background as we are with many of our favorite friends from Scripture, but we are introduced to him as we see his "crash dunk" into ministry.

Imagine for a moment being on the scene... Elijah did not have an easy beginning! God called him as a prophet during the reign of the most wicked king ever to rule Israel. In fact, King Ahab *"did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him...did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him."*

What on earth did he do?? The Bible says that he walked in the same sins as Jeroboam. Now, this is not a pretty site. Just a few of the sins are listed in 1 Kings: forsaking the counsel of older men in favor of the young men, made two calves of gold to worship (and for his people to worship), made houses on the high places, made priests of the *"lowest of the people"* instead of the Levites as instructed by God, appointed a feast to burn incense in defiance to God, slayed the prophet of the Lord and consecrated whoever WOULD become a priest, cast God behind his back, set up high places on all of the high hills, and broke God's heart with all of the heinous sins (sodomy, stole the treasures from the house of God and the king's house, kept the people at war) that he and his kingdom committed in rebellion toward him.

As we come to King Ahab, we find that King Jeroboam was NOTHING. He began his reign finding his own wife, in defiance to God's will for him. Yes, you are probably familiar with her. Jezebel has become synonymous for the **ultimate** evil woman. Whereas so many of us desire to encourage our men toward godliness, Jezebel encouraged her husband in the exact opposite direction. They served and worshiped Baal. In fact, King Ahab did not merely worship Baal privately, he also built a worship altar dedicated to Baal in the

HOUSE he built just for Baal. That is not all! Ahab built groves in which to worship the goddess Asherah. The sins that he committed were such that God recorded in Scripture that He was "provoked to anger." This is where Elijah comes on the scene with a very challenging call as a prophet.

The very first thing we hear about Elijah is the prophecy he was sent to speak forth to King Ahab. (1 Kings 17: 1-5) I don't know if you have ever had an exact word to speak forth for the Lord, but there is nothing more terrifying than speaking forth a word of rebuke. Much less, imagine the position that Elijah was placed in...speaking a word of rebuke to THE KING and QUEEN. The MOST defiant and evil king ever.

His words were simple: ***"As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before Whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."*** Hummm... not an easy word, huh?

After the prophecy was spoken, God hid Elijah in the wilderness and you probably know the rest. Even in the solitude that so many great ministers find themselves living in at some time or another in their ministry, Elijah was guarded and cared for by God. His every need was provided for him from protection from this wicked and vengeful king to food provided by ravens each and every morning and evening to water from an abundant brook (remember this was a time of drought). Even as the brook dried up, God did not forsake His prophet. He moved Elijah on to a home in which He would use Elijah for prayer and provision in ministry to the family therein, while providing once again for his every need. Not only did God completely care for Elijah, He also used Elijah all along the way in his life, even during these silent years.

This background is necessary to understand the emptiness Elijah faced as his cup became empty. You are probably familiar with the height of his calling. You know, the showdown... (1 Kings 18) After three years (Wouldn't you say that King Ahab HAS to go down in history as the SLOWEST to catch on to his sin???), God then came to Elijah to say it was time to appear to King Ahab.

Now keep in mind that in the meantime Queen Jezebel had slaughtered the prophets of God, leaving only a hundred that were hiding in caves for their lives. The sins of Ahab and Jezebel continued. The king and queen were unmoved by even the most uncomfortable of lives.

NOW...Elijah is brought back on the scene. Elijah rebukes King Ahab...all of the Israelites and prophets of Baal are gathered at Mount Carmel for one BIG showdown! The showdown is not the point of this article. The point is what happens after the success on Mount Carmel. In 1 Kings 19, we find our hero with an empty cup!

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Been there? Done that? Been on the mountain being used by God mightily, only to find yourself, in the blink of the eye, sniffing in the wilderness in the depths of depression and despair? Oh beloved, if there is one place I have to say I find to be NO FUN, it is in the valleys that are certain after the mountain-tops.

In fact, this article has been birthed from a period of time that was ACTUALLY before one of my mountain-tops. It was a word that God wanted for me to cling to as I climbed that treacherous mountain only to find that the mountain dropped off to a valley of tears and much loss and devastation.

I remember sitting at the local coffee shop sharing with my husband about my frustrations that were only beginning an intense season of sifting by Satan. As I sat there mumbling and grumbling and weeping bitter tears of hurt and disappointment, I said something that the Lord used to bring me into the life of my kindred spirit, Elijah. I told my husband through the tears, that I felt just like Elijah...that I needed MY CUP FILLED BACK UP. There it was. My spiritual state was obvious. I was empty, running scared, hurt. The answer was also obvious, letting the Lord fill my cup back up.

Been there? Maybe you have no idea why your cup is empty. In fact, you feel much like I also felt at the time,

"IS something wrong with ME???"  
"Am I in sin?"  
"Am I doing something wrong here?"  
"Whyyyyy me?"

I am sure that you have felt the same way from time-to-time. Even Elijah felt this same feeling. The comfort of Scripture comes as we continue looking at Elijah's life. Our vision clears and we can see from a much better perspective than through the tears and frustrations we look through as we view our own situations.

It is easy to see that Elijah was empty, yet not because he was a man out of the will of God. In fact, Elijah was smack-dab-in-the-middle of the will of God. Of all the characters in Scripture, he did not argue with God about his call. He did not dawdle about getting busy with his call. Every time God told him to do or say anything, the next phrase in Scripture records Elijah doing EXACTLY what he was told to do.

Elijah was not a weakling. His cup was definitely not empty because he wasn't hearing God or because he was not a man of prayer. We see in chapter 17 that this mighty man was not just obedient, but he was content to be in solitude when God ordained times apart from others and he was content to be busy ministering at any opportunity God brought

his way. In fact, this man could live in the house with a family AND that family reach the conclusion through his lifestyle, that ***"thou ART a man of God, and the Word of the LORD in thy mouth IS truth."*** No spiritual weakling can be strong in all circumstances that come their way.

Oh, and Elijah was not empty from some "secret" or public sin. Elijah was...

- ...Walking in the spirit
- ...Obedient regardless of the costs
- ...Had power in prayer (talk about prayer!)
- ...Mighty (in action and prayer)
- ...Anointed
- ...A sold-out servant!

Yet, I Kings 19: 3-4, we see a different side of this mighty man. All of the sudden he was afraid. He was running for his life (TO the desert!). This mighty man of God was despairing for his own life. He was feeling self-pity to the "Nth" degree. He was ready to DIE! Elijah had an empty cup! Our dear friend, like us (far too often), needed for his cup to be filled BACK UP!

Sooo, as you read this where are you? How are you doing today? How is YOUR CUP? Does it need to be filled back UP? What is causing the drain??

### **Why Are Our Cups Empty???**

As I return to the passage surrounding the showdown, I see several possible reasons that Elijah's cup was empty. Perhaps as we go back to this passage, you can find help in your time of need...

#### **1. WEARY FROM THE BATTLE???**

One of the primary reasons that most warriors for Christ are empty is from sheer exhaustion from the continual battles! Think about our hero in this story. Elijah went head-to-head with the King and Queen...AND they were not happy! (1 Kings 19: 1-3) It was NOT Elijah's imagination fooling him when he heard the threat of Jezebel that she would see to it that he did not live another day.

Elijah had done what he was commanded by God Almighty to do. He was at great risk because his foe was determined that he would be the one to pay.

Been there? Done what is right and had to pay?? Had an empty cup because you were weary from the battle?? One of my favorite passages of Scripture that has filled me

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back up when I was empty due to the strain from battle comes from the story of King Jehoshaphat. In Chronicles 20, we find that God sends word to him that a great multitude was gathering against him (another ACTUAL battle...definitely not his imagination!). I love his response. It challenges me toward a higher walk when I face those battles of my life.

King Jehoshaphat was afraid (vs. 3), but instead of stressing out, grumbling, taking things in his own hands, giving up or any other response that is so common; he ***"set himself to seek the Lord."*** He proclaimed a fast in the whole land. He led the people in prayer and fasting before God.

What did God do? You are going to love this...He told him how to battle! His methods did not include ANY of the preparation that we would envision for an army that would totally annihilate their enemies the next day.

What were their military secrets for preparing for the battle? They sought God in prayer and fasting. ALL of Judah stood before the Lord ***"WITH their little ones, their wives, and their children..."*** They were told NOT to be afraid or dismayed by the size of their enemy...but to just SHOW up and wait on God!

The next day as they arrived for battle, their strategy was one that we would do well to imitate. They began by worshipping God. Every one of them stood to praise God ***"with voices loud and high."*** As they began to sing, praise, and worship, GOD set ambushments for their enemies. Each of the enemies turned on one another. ***"So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies fallen on the earth. No one had escaped."*** The victory was such that it took THREE days to gather all of the spoil because there was so much. Talk about victory!

In a battle? Want quick help in the midst of your battle? Seek God's face. Be still! Wait on the Lord! Don't fear! The Battle IS HIS! Step up to your battle, not in the ways so common to our culture (saying your mind, presenting your LOGICAL position, "fighting" for your beliefs...). Step up to battle with praise and adoration of God. Let Him go before you, dealing with your enemies. Then, YOU show up and see what God has done. Reap the "bounty" that He leaves for you. Talk about a full cup...Your cup will be OVERFLOWING!

## 2. DOWNCAST???

Go back to the passage in I Kings 19. In verse 4, we find Elijah much like we find many of us after those high points in our ministries. Elijah is despairing to the point of almost giving up his life! Do what? What has happened to our mighty man of God? It is here

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that we find Elijah downcast. Like downcast sheep.

I love how we can see ANYTHING in creation and draw principles about spirituality. In Psalm 23, we see that David sees God as our Shepherd. This Psalm is for all of us, downcast sheep!

OK...seen the words "downcast sheep" and wonder what that really means? This is soooo good! There is something within us that attributes being "down" with weakness or frailty. We look at Bible characters like Elijah or Naomi, thinking that they must have had sin in their lives...or they must have been missing God somewhere...or maybe they are just weak believers. Yet, they are perfect examples of a downcast person... they had appeared to have lost it all (or so they had thought). They had hope in their past; but felt that they had LOST all hope in their current situation.

Been there? Felt that deep loss? Felt that disappointment? Felt that hopelessness? Felt that despair? Been downcast?

I love Psalm 23. Our Gentle Shepherd KNOWS us. He seeks for those of us who are downcast in the flock. Just as in nature, the BIG sheep are the ones who are most prone to be downcast...on their back, feet flailing straight up in the air, unable to "right" themselves. The bigger they are, the less likely to be able to get back up on their feet again! The longer they are on their back, the more the situation they are in begins to choke them down, almost without any breath left at all.

It sure is a good thing that our Shepherd is constantly on the lookout for those who fall down with no possible way to get ourselves back up. His deep love for us never kicks us while we are down...it gently lifts us up and allows us to lean upon Him--His legs until we get the strength to take the first steps again. Even when we are ready to take those first wobbly steps, He never leaves us to "make it on our own." He, just like the shepherd out in the pasture with needy sheep, stays patiently by our side until He is sure we are "eating" (His Word), "drinking" (His Spirit), and frolicking around (walking in the Spirit!) again.

I love how gentle God is with His sheep like me. The fellow sheep in the world, and sadly much of the church (because they are so much like the world) today, would kick the downcast sheep while they are down. They would glare at them with condemnation. They would isolate them until they die a cruel death. Their instant judgment would be that the downcast sheep MUST be in sin...or in a pity-party...or out of the will of God. These sheep become the instant subject line of ALL the "godly gossip" (prayer requests...teaching lessons...sermons...articles...) that yes, I hate to say it, DOES go around the "pasture." Little do most know that these sheep are very, very precious to the Loving Shepherd.

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I don't know about you, but I have found myself here in this position SO often. It seems that the bigger my role in the body of Christ gets, the more apt I am to tumble over into the depths of despair, with my situations feeling more overwhelming and despairing than ever before. Those feelings of being overwhelmed...without anything to do to get myself back upright... choking under the pressures of my situation, are very tough to deal with. Something in me thinks that I "should" be able to handle things a little better. Relate??

I have gathered much encouragement from the "pasture" of my Shepherd. Just knowing that He is constantly on the look out for the downcast, helps me to KNOW that when I get down and out, it never catches Him by surprise. What a comfort! Knowing that He doesn't give time limits on how fast I am to heal...that He will take all of the time necessary to make sure that I am able to stand, feed upon His Word, drink from His Spirit, and soar again...gives me peace and satisfaction. I know that I can draw upon Him and that my total reliance upon Him brings Him ultimate satisfaction!

What happened with Elijah? God was NOT finished with Elijah yet! God's plan was to minister to Elijah so his cup was able to not only be filled back up...but also so it could overflow to all around him. More on that later!

### 3. FEAR?

Yep! Another reason our cups get empty is from the strain of FEAR on our spirits! Ever had a battle with Fear? It can be an intense foe. Very real. Very relentless. Just ask Elijah.

Elijah was faced with a very real fear. Queen Jezebel would not rest until he was destroyed. She was after his very life. We have a foe who is even more determined to bring us "down." On every angle of our lives we face a variety of very real fears.

This past year I was reading over an old beloved passage when it hit me with a new truth. The passage comes from 1 Peter 3, where we are instructed how to be a godly woman as we develop that Hidden Woman of the Heart. Verse 6 jumped out at me this time as a KEY to contentment, peace, and of course, submission...

1 Peter 3: 6 Amplified...

***"It was thus that Sarah obeyed Abraham [following his guidance and acknowledging his headship over her by] calling him lord (master, leader, authority). And you are now her true daughters if you do right and let nothing terrify you [not giving way to hysterical fears or letting anxieties unnerve you]."***

In 1 Peter 3, Sarah is noted as a woman with a gentle and quiet spirit. Now note, Sarah

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was not without problems. In fact, the Bible records her life as she is SMACK-DAB-IN-THE-MIDDLE of very tough situations. Her area of testing??? Submission to her husband!!! Talk about an area where fear can certainly attack: What if he doesn't pay the bills? What if he thinks I am weak and mistreats me? Will I lose my personality and identity? If I submit, will I have to sin if he asks me to? What if I do what is right and he leaves me for another woman? On and on and on... What is our struggle? It may not be submission, but our cups get just as empty under the strain of continued attacks of fear.

### **What do we fear?**

- ♥ Losing something or someone
- ♥ Rejection
- ♥ Disaster (weather, business, money)
- ♥ Evil (by satan or others)
- ♥ Death (Isaiah 38:10-14)
- ♥ Afraid God can't forgive you
- ♥ Unknown
- ♥ Persecution/battles/trials
- ♥ Someone talking about you
- ♥ Failing
- ♥ Storms of life (Matthew 8: 23-27; Mark 4: 35-41)
- ♥ Being Holy (Mark 5: 17 and Luke 8:37...healed of demons...they asked Jesus to leave!)
- ♥ Someone failing you

Maybe you are Homeschooling. Homeschooling and afraid...YES! Those myths of education area all FEARS! What about College? Will I choose the right curriculum? What about my Mother-in-law? Will there be a problem with Socialization (not turning out right)? What about High School? How will I ever teach Reading... Multiplication... Division... Grammar...Algebra? Will they get the best education possible if I teach them? Can they get into college...or get a job if we homeschool them? Oh, fears! They just go on and on!

OH...we also FEAR GOOD THINGS! This is where you will most often find me! How about you? Fear prosperity? Fear blessings? Fear what life will be like if God enlarges our borders (1 Chronicles 4: 9-10)? Fear can whip any of us, totally draining out our cups!

But TRUTH conquers fear! God only wants ONE kind of fear in our lives...fear of Him! All other fear can be replaced with TRUTH from God's Word! Here are a few...

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Phil. 4: 6-9  
Phil. 4: 19...  
Phil. 1: 28  
Psalm 94 (especially 12-23)  
Luke 12: 22-32  
Is. 54:4  
1 Peter 1: 6-8  
Col. 1: 4  
Ps. 91: 1,2  
Ps. 91  
Ps. 27: 4-6  
Prov. 3: 5-6  
Mt. 6: 25-33  
Plus...much, much more!

God is our comfort...Our Provider...Our Shelter...Our Shield... Our Everpresent Help!  
Don't fear! WAIT on the Lord!

Fear keeps a big hole in the bottom of our cups. It zaps us of the abundant life that Jesus came to give us. It binds us. It blurs our focus. It steals our joy. It zaps our strength.

For every fear, find God's truth. Meditate on His Words. Seek His promises. When the fears hit the hardest, refuse to follow your feelings. Stick to truth. Focus on God. Hear His voice. As you draw near to our Heavenly Father, He will fill your cup back up!

#### 4. DISTRACTED???

If there is one verse in this story about Elijah that reminds me of myself, it would have to be 1 Kings 19: 10. Take a look at verse 9-10...

*There he came to a cave and lodged in it; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, What are you doing here, Elijah? He replied, I have been very jealous (Any pride here??) for the Lord God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken Your covenant, thrown down Your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. And I, I only (Sense a need for some violin music to play in the background while we have a poor, poor, pitiful baby look for sweet Elijah???), am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."*

Oh, I believe I have had just a few of these pity-parties myself. "Oh, Lord...am I the ONLY godly person in this world??" (Hear snickers raining down from heaven?) "I am ALL

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by myself." "I am the ONLY one who knows this truth!!!" (hummm...)

Yep...once again Elijah was a kindred spirit. His despair went from bad to worse. By this point, Elijah was ONLY looking at the obstacles (Jezebel, Ahab, the worship of other gods, the threat to his life...). He could not see from God's perspective. He had an empty cup because he was distracted.

Distracted? Yes. Even the best of us can be distracted. Scripture affirms that this is a tendency for God's people. From 1 Timothy 2, where we see that even good soldiers CAN be distracted...to Hebrews 12: 1-4 where we are exhorted to keep our eyes on Jesus...to Jesus, Himself Who exhorted us through His life to keep our eyes on the joy set before us. Yet, we, like Martha in Luke 10: 38-42, tend to fall prey to distraction, thus causing a continual drain on our cups.

Oh, I believe that most godly women are less likely to be distracted by immorality or sinful choices; but that doesn't exempt us from distraction. Instead, our tendency is to be distracted by all that CAN be done! Like Martha, we have a heart for ministry, but we want to do it ALL ourselves. We get in a frenzy because we don't delegate the "stuff" to others, so we can attend to the VITAL areas that only we can do. We are just like Martha, we have servants, but often we are simply too picky to accept their help! We have to do it ALL ourselves! In the meantime, we are just too busy to seize EVERY minute with Jesus! Like Martha, we assume tomorrow will be another day...yet, just as Jesus was only there for a little while with Martha, likewise, our loved ones are only here with us A LITTLE WHILE!

Want to have Joy? Peace? To enjoy the journey? Stay focused on the call...NOT the distractions! A wise person once said that if satan cannot distract you with sin, that he will be more than happy to distract you from the best with doing those GOOD things. Those GOOD things keep you from the very BEST that God has in store for you. Those GOOD things are our real distractions. They zap us so that we are simply unavailable for the best or at minimum, just too tired to give the best our all!

What is the result? I believe that there is a nagging void that occurs when we do not get around to the very thing that God calls us to do. I believe that void leads us down the path to dissatisfaction, which only empties our cup more. The only REAL satisfaction in life comes as we step up to the awesome call that God has for our lives. Sometimes that call is very, very difficult to differentiate from all of the other "GOOD" opportunities. In fact, this is where I have found myself weary time and time again. The only way out of this pit has been re-evaluating each and every commitment based upon how it furthers my life calling. There are many great things to do. There is such a void of light in the darkness. However, for me to burn my brightest, I must HEAR God for what He has

called me and only me to do. Those are always the things that cannot be done by anyone else--developing my relationship with God, ministering to the heart of my husband and children, teaching good things to my spiritual daughters, "keeping" my home.

All else can pass away. If I leave a void in these areas, the void will remain eternally. Those works that God has pre-destined for me to do from the foundation of the world will simply remain undone. As I think upon at this very sobering thought, my vision clears..."no" becomes easier to say...and once again my cup is ready for a filling. And once again, my cup is filled back up with purpose, vision, peace, and contentment.

## 5. BONDAGE???

Back to I Kings 19... In this passage, Elijah's cup was being emptied as fast as God could fill it up. Been there? Elijah had things that were keeping him bound up JUST as we do!

In chains? Bound? What is YOUR plague??

- **Pleasing others...** (John 12: 42, 43...Jer. 17:5...1 Corinthians 16:9... Phil. 1:28)
- **Unbelief...** (John 10: 22-40; John 12: 37-50; Romans 5: 13)
- **Your Past...** (Romans 8:1)
- **Fears...** (Romans 8!)
- **Discontent...** (Paul in Phil 4:11!)
- **Self...** (Hebrews 12: 1-4; Phil 3:14, Matthew 26:27; 39; 42)

In bondage?? God wants to rescue us from bondage just as He rescued the Israelites! It brings Him great grief to see us in the chains of bondage. All we must do to be set free is cry out to Him, He will deliver us from any and all bondage.

Just as He led the Israelites through the wilderness, He will take us through our wilderness (time of confusion, tumult, disorder, purification from serving other gods) into the Land of Promise. We will enter into His promised land of FREEDOM in homeschooling, womanhood, ministry, etc...whatever area you are seeking Him in! Then, your cup will not only be filled back up, it will be OVERFLOWING!

## 6. SIN???

Now, although I don't think that Elijah's cup was empty because of sin, this may very well be a reason that our cups are empty from time to time. In fact, you may be sitting there PRAYING that this is not one of the points because you KNOW you are empty because you have been in the clutches of sin. If this is your case today, God has a special word for you. I want to share a passage that REALLY convicted me! Jeremiah 6: 29-30...

***"The bellows blow fiercely, the lead is consumed by the fire; in vain do they continue refining, for the wicked [the dross] are not removed. Men will call them reprobate and rejected silver [only dross, without good metal], because the Lord has rejected them."***

WHY is precious silver rejected? This is GOOD! Silver is only rejected when it is not separating from the impurities. Nothing is MORE empty than not fulfilling our life purpose. When we have sin in our lives, we cannot fulfill the call because we are as reprobate silver...

- ♥ Not separating—releasing sin and impurities
- ♥ Not allowing God to remove what is impure
- ♥ Not allowing God to refine us to be like Him.
- ♥ Holding on to gods—money, comparison, pleasing others,
- ♥ doing "good things" in our own strength...
- ♥ Unrenewed minds (Romans 12: 1-2)--leading to bondage, getting sidetracked, bad attitudes, false expectations that only lead astray
- ♥ Walking in the flesh not the Spirit
- ♥ Wanting to turn back at any persecution
- ♥ Not letting go of the past
- ♥ Running ahead of God instead of going slow and steady, bit-by-bit
- ♥ Doing "good" but with the wrong motive OR purpose!

Want to know what COULD be yours?? Take a look at Hebrews 8: 12...

***"For I will be merciful and gracious toward their sins and I will remember their deeds of unrighteousness no more."***

Trust your Silversmith! He is not out to ZAP you. I believe that we all can sense our own insufficiency. We all know that we do not match up to the holiness of God. Because of that, many people miss the mercy and grace of God because all they can see is their sins in the light of a holy God. His perfect will for you is that you will have the abundant life that He died to give you. Sin gets in the way of that abundant life and must go. But that is not where God's plan ends.

So many of us have forgotten that at salvation God promises that He will not only be merciful and gracious toward the sin, but He will go one step further by never remembering the sins we committed again. Glory hallelujah! BUT, this is not all! Do you

think that this is all that salvation is about? There is great news! No...salvation is much, much more! Turn to John 6: 35-40...

***"Jesus replied, I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to ME will never be hungry, and he who believes in and cleaves to and trust in and relies on Me will never thirst any more (at any time). But [as] I told you, although you have seen Me, still you do not believe and trust and have faith. ALL whom My Father gives (entrusts) to Me will come to Me; and the one who comes to Me, I will most certainly not cast out [I will never, no never reject one of them who comes to Me]. For I have come down from heaven NOT to do My own will and purpose but to do the will and purpose of Him Who sent Me. And this is the will of Him Who sent me, that I should not lose any of all that He has given Me, but THAT I SHOULD GIVE NEW LIFE and raise [them all] up at the last day. For this is My Father's will and His purpose, that everyone Who sees the Son and believes in and cleaves to and trusts in and relies on Him should have ETERNAL LIFE, and I will raise him up [from the dead] at the last day."***

The whole will of God is that we come to Him, as we are. Sure the fire may seem a little hot as the dross of sin is lifted out of our life, but in the midst of the heat, when your cup is empty, KNOW that you can trust your Silversmith. His purpose is never to burn you...to kick you while you are down and out...to cast you away; but to lift you up, clean you off, and place you back into service so you may bear good fruit. He wants for you to have a new life! A little empty? Take all to the cross. There you will find true ful-FILL-ment!

## 7. NOT TAKING TIME TO BE RE-FILLED???

Let's go again to Elijah, once again...

As I said above, I do not believe we find him here in 1 Kings 19 because he was wrong. In fact, he was doing EXACTLY what God told him to do. I do not believe that we find Elijah in the depths of despair because he was a weakling. In fact, he was very, very far from weak. God had anointed him with a special dose of power in prayer and ministry. I believe that we find Elijah empty for the same reason that many of you are all poured out right now. Why? Sometimes we pour out all we have, don't take the time to be refilled, and find ourselves with an empty cup. What about you? Pouring out all you have?

Yes, beloved...women usually DO pour into everyone and everything around them...

- ♥ Husband
- ♥ Children
- ♥ Homeschool

- ♥ Home
- ♥ Ministry
- ♥ Church
- ♥ Support group
- ♥ Community (those at WALMART!)

Ever empty?? What about right now? Need a refill?? Hungry? YOU should be! God made you this way! We can not sustain our own lives. God made us with a deep need for daily sustenance from HIS hand. However, often WE take care of ourselves only when there is nothing else to do. Usually, that is only under the duress of illness that totally wipes us out of the picture! Well, I will go one step further, sometimes we press on even during much illness...because, well, uh, we are the WIFE and MOM and KEEPER OF THE HOME...annnnndd.... Wonder why our cups are empty? I believe that many of us simply are TOO BUSY doing for everyone around us to take the time to be re-filled!

Got ya?? Oh, this is one of the primary culprits behind my weariness. I believe that this was also one of the primary culprits behind Elijah's weariness. He simply was needing to be re-filled. And re-filling that could only be done by God. Go back to the passage to see what God did... Begin with I Kings 19: 3...

*"Then he was afraid and arose and went for his life and came to Beersheba of Judah [over eighty miles and out of Jezebel's realm] and left his servant there. But he went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a lone broom or juniper tree and asked that he might die. He said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am no better than my fathers. As he lay asleep under the broom or juniper tree, behold, an angel TOUCHED HIM and said to him, arise and EAT. He looked, and behold, there was a cake baked on coals, and a bottle of water at his head. And he ate and drank and lay down again. The angel of the Lord came the second time and TOUCHED him and said, Arise and EAT, FOR THE JOURNEY IS TOO GREAT FOR YOU. So he arose and ate and drank and went in the strength of that food for forty days and nights to Horeb, the mount of God."*

Elijah was in the midst of a journey that required more of him than he would be able to withstand on his own. I love how God sent exact provision for Elijah. God knew his needs. God provided exactly what he needed: rest...just a touch...something to drink...and a little food. Well, just enough to get him through the next forty days ☺ until Elijah would be on the mount, experiencing the very presence of God.

Been there? Tired? Weary? In the midst of a journey that is simply too great for you?

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That is right where we can find a re-filling. IF we will only stop for the re-filling!

BUT...what is our tendency? I don't know if I am speaking for you, but my personal tendency is to pour out for the whole world...then, my family...and whatever is left, I keep for myself. I believe that this is the tendency that we all are prone to slip into. In fact, I love how God set up for the Israelites specific rules for daily manna that eliminated this tendency...just because it did not work.

Going back to Exodus, we find that each and every day the children of Israel had to trust GOD for daily provision. THIS REQUIRED FAITH! They had to wait upon God's provision each morning.

God's instructions required that manna was to be 1<sup>st</sup> gathered for self THEN the number of persons in YOUR tent. I love this principle. First, take care of YOUR daily feeding... then, the priority was the HOME, not a program at church or in the community! Truly, I have very little to offer those around me. But, as God pours into my soul, the very next thing that happens is that I can't help to pour forth to those right around me. If my priorities are correct, Scripturally, those right around me are the most beloved in my life, my family. Oh, and then what happens is like the feeding of the multitudes! God does a miracle to allow enough overflow to affect all around us! In this way, HE is magnified and lifted up as Lord of Lords!

Another principle from Exodus is that Manna was to be gathered and used EACH day. The Israelites were not able to live off of it for more than the day it was provided for them to feed upon it. They were not able to save it for another day; it would mold and rot before the following day. Isn't this just like us? We find a Word from God and want for it to be our "food" for days and days. Many Christians simply live off of last year's revival or ladies retreat and wonder why they are zapped, lifeless, and empty. They are simply HUNGRY! All that is needed is a daily intake of Manna!

One other interesting thing about Manna is that it melted in the heat. When it was HOT, they had to gather more for daily sustenance! Ever been in the HEAT of life? Felt that the minute you finished your Bible Study, you snapped under the load of marriage... parenting... homeschooling...ministry? I pray that you are encouraged to know that God knows that this will happen and already has an answer! MORE MANNA! On those days of intense struggle, it may be that all that is accomplished is gathering manna. That is OK! God has made provision so you have all you need. PLUS, He has instructed that we gather more on those HOT days. No excuses for being empty...He wants us filled to overflowing!

Soooo, what happens? We don't take time to be filled back up! We, become "mommy-martyrs" giving all we have to others, while not taking good care of ourselves. We go

through our days doing too much on an empty tank. We do anything except get enough rest! We frenzy around doing all of the "stuff" that we think needs to be done, all except sitting at the feet of Jesus and allowing Him to nurture us!

Have an empty cup? Keep your eyes on the main thing! Sit at the feet of the Master! Be touched by God! Get to really KNOW God! Then, you will be ready to pour forth!

### **Empty Cup???**

Have an empty cup? Beloved, right now at this very moment, lift your cup up before your loving Heavenly Father. If it is dirty, let Him cleanse it. If it is empty, let Him pour into you. Let Him FEED you and restore your spirit. Let Him STRENGTHEN you. Let Him pull you aside into your CAVE for the night. Let Him show you His glory (correct estimation or opinion of God).

It does not matter where you are on your journey. It does not matter what you have ever done. He doesn't ask for you to be perfect. He does not want you to CLEAN up before you come to Him. He DOES ask you to come EVEN if you have sin (self-pity, bad attitude, depression...). He wants to restore you and strengthen you by His presence and with His spiritual food. Bask in His presence! Let Him put you to work! Take you where you need to be!

So, what ever happened to Elijah?? This is, to me, the best part of the whole story. It has been my hope when my cup was empty.

### **A FULL CUP!**

Peek on into 2 Kings 1... Here is where the story has its happy ending! Elijah got that power in prayer back...He simply prayed and FIRE fell from heaven! In fact, we see in 2 Kings 2: 1-15, God used Elijah to mentor Elisha by his life!

The same man who was running for his life, despairing OF his life, and ready to throw in the towel now has a FULL CUP in our story. Full cup may be an understatement. He was SO full that Elisha, who walked with him day in and day out, wanted a DOUBLE PORTION of his spirit! In fact, he was so full that he was KNOWN for his spirit. (See in 2 Kings 2: 1-15, the prophets watching him SAW the spirit of Elijah resting on Elisha! They had to KNOW his spirit to see it on his friend!)

What did Elijah do to KEEP this full cup? To pass this cup on to those coming behind him? He experienced God. He let Elisha experience his life. As Elisha picked up the torch, Elijah found that it was worth it all! Elijah had made it through the tough times.

Now, he had a powerful ministry and stayed faithful to God until the end!

**Sooo, what about you?**

Where are you in this story?? Are you still back at the beginning of the story? Broken, empty, spent, all poured out? WHY? Are you weary from the battle??? Downcast??? Afraid??? Distracted??? In Bondage??? Still clinging to your favorite sin??? Not taking time to be re-filled???

Do you find yourself running? Getting weary...worn...fainting? Are you sitting in a cave not peeking out to even see God? Are you looking for the presence of God everywhere, but not hearing Him? Not feeling His presence? Feeling alone? Think you are the only one standing for God? In Solitude? Don't know where to go next? Wondering where you'll ever get to use this—all the wisdom you are gaining? Want to be great? Mentoring? Wanting to minister? Let God **fill your cup back up!**

*Lord, You know where we are. You know our struggles. You see our cup. Lord, fix it! Fill it! Slow us down! Touch us! Feed us Your manna! Let us hear you! Please dear Father, fill our cups back up!*

## *The Zombie You Live With...* *By Harold Rushton*

*"My Dearest Darling, I am writing this as I do everyday just to say how much I love you. You fulfill my every need, desire and want. I appreciate how you think of me in everything that you do. I love the way you dress just for me. Thank you again for styling your hair just as I requested. I also appreciate the time that you spend with me everyday. I especially enjoyed our boating trip last week and our hike the week before and skydiving with you just made my experience so special! As usual, I'm truly yours....  
Your Loving Husband."*

After reading the preceding letter I am sure that all of you have some questions... Are you thinking that this is just the kind of letter you get from your sweetheart on a weekly or daily basis? Or, are you thinking that this is the work of someone from an insane asylum? Probably the latter if you are the average American spouse.

Marital relationships can be wonderful, but at times they can also be less than what we expect. This is to expound upon the marital relationship from a MALE point of view and hopefully give some insight into the black hole that some of you refer to as the male brain.

I must prepare you at this time for a journey that may not be what you expect, but I hope this will enlighten some of you in an area that now lacks a shimmer of light. The author will attempt to express this information in a form and fashion that will translate into the female language. However, it is not guaranteed! You must also know that this author has never been known for being "Mr. Personality," so you'll have to put on your bullet proof vest and take a few shots from time to time. After all, you get what you pay for... This article is devoted to my loving wife and all that she has done for me over the past seventeen years. Besides, I owe her more than she does me, so here I am inside writing an article when I could be out motorcycle riding!

Have you ever wondered why your spouse doesn't write you eloquent love letters on a daily or weekly basis? Have you ever wondered why your spouse doesn't come home and devote his every passing minute to romancing you? Have you ever wondered why your spouse seems distant?

Well, how much time have you devoted to him lately? Oh, that shot hit hard, didn't it? Yes, the relationship street does have two lanes and they travel both ways. I am sure

that you could all identify a million and one things that you think your loving husband should be doing to reassure you. However, I'll bet most of you would be hard-pressed to find two or three things that you would be WILLING to do to reassure him. I'll be the first to admit that we as husbands neglect our most precious prize, our wife. I have neglected, put aside, and ignored my wife many times during our marriage. I have to now take credit for these shortfalls, but not without trying to show you how to be a better spouse.

Most men do not tend to be wired the same as women. I think that is a very good thing, but it does sometimes cause a short in the relationship circuit. Most relationships start with a bang and partners become glued to each other day and night. If you will think back to the beginning of your marriage or relationship with your spouse, you were probably inseparable. I think my father in law referred to Cindy and I as Siamese twins. We took the same classes in college, we commuted together, we played together and we talked to each other practically every waking minute. One thing I must point out is that we did everything together, even if it was something that we did not enjoy doing. The relationship was young, fresh and exciting, so skydiving didn't really bother Cindy as much, just as long as she was with me! And I didn't mind the sewing classes back then either. Yes, that is an exaggeration, but the point is still the same. We were in love and interested in each other. At this point, you are probably recalling times such as those I am speaking of... but you are wondering what happened.

Well, I was too. For a period of time, I found that our relationship was not where I felt it should be. We became progressively more irritable with each other and were far from loving at times. I found myself working more and more and being home less and less. This was the easiest way I found to deal with a relationship that was missing some major elements. I felt that by avoiding the problem, it would work itself out. Well, nothing could be farther from the truth. This thought would relate somewhat to a train left to drive itself down the track without an engineer. At some point the train would be bound for a catastrophe. The relationship if left unguided is also bound for catastrophe. Fortunately, the conductor rang the engineer's bell and woke me up before our marriage crashed.

We spent countless hours discussing where our relationship had gone and where we wanted it to go. This was probably the most important part of getting the marriage back on track. We related to each other what we expected from each other and we related what we desired of each other. I think expectations and desires can be broken into separate categories. Expectations are those things that you must, absolutely must, have from your spouse. Such as, trust fidelity, love, and honor. Desires are those things that you need to keep your focus where it should be with your spouse. Such as, eloquent love letters, evenings alone together by the fireplace, and so on. We found that the

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expectations were primarily fulfilled, but we were lacking in the area of desires.

I feel that Cindy has always loved and adored me and in that, I am very fortunate. However, at some point in time she felt a need to dress and style herself without regard to my preferences. Don't get me wrong, she would consult me about those things, but when it came right down to it, she did what she thought was best. This even went to the point of dressing in an ultra modest manner...You know, dresses that resemble a flower sack. After talking about it some years later, I feel that she was influenced by other women that she felt were good role models. And in many ways they were. However, she was not truly meeting my desires by following those models. It took many years for her to realize what I desired and she is wonderfully pleasing to me in this area now. This is not to mislead anyone into thinking that I wanted my wife to be scantily dressed or to go anywhere in inappropriate apparel. However, I also had no desire to hide the natural beauty that my wife possessed. After all, God made her for me and I wanted to enjoy her beauty daily.

I also desired for my wife to spend time with me, doing some of the things that I enjoyed doing. No, I do not skydive, but it did get your attention. So, while we're on the topic I will let you in on some of the things that we NOW enjoy together. About fifteen years ago, before my son was borne, I started riding a motorcycle. I did so by myself. I would come home and tell Cindy how relaxing I found motorcycling, but she became pregnant within a few weeks of my first motorcycle purchase and never had a chance to ride. Many years later, we had the opportunity to purchase another motorcycle. After some prodding, Cindy took a ride with me. From that point on, she was hooked.

We have since rode many, many miles on our 1995 Harley Davidson motorcycle and enjoyed many hours of blessed marriage together. I cannot tell you how fulfilling it is to have Cindy ask when she can go with me for another motorcycle ride. Many times we will go together with no destination and no time limit. We always find time to stop for a "break" at a roadside park, creek, river or other interesting attraction. I am not relating this to you to make you feel like you just have to go out and buy your spouse a motorcycle, its just an example of what we have enjoyed together. Your husband's desire could be found in many other forms.

We also take time to go for breakfast on as many mornings as possible. During breakfast we discuss many different topics. It really doesn't matter what we discuss. It just makes a better day for Cindy and I to start together. My point is to take time to do things together like you did at the onset of your relationship. Those were the things that brought you closer together back then and those are the things that will keep you together today!

Marriage is a give and take relationship. Sometimes you have to give when you want to

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take. I would encourage you to read this article with your spouse and discuss what you expect of each other and what you desire of each other. I feel that you must both be willing to fulfill the other's desires and expectations. Don't forget to take it easy on your spouse. If he doesn't want to sit down and read this with you, its OK! Just keep these little ideas handy and implement them whenever you can. I'll bet he will notice that something is different and he will be more than willing to respond in a favorable manner. The zombie you live with may not be the first to charge into fulfilling your desires, but you will certainly get him a lot closer if you have already made an asserted effort to fulfill his...

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Harold and Cindy were High School Sweethearts. Sweeping her off her feet for the last 15 years of marriage, he makes his debut here in *Time for Tea*. Harold has worked for the past 14 years in Law Enforcement. He currently serves the State of Alabama as a State Trooper Corporal for the Dept. of Public Safety. They have two children, Matthew (14) and Elisabeth (\*almost\* 11). His passion for motorcycles (go HARLEY!), model airplanes, rebuilding old cars (now a Corvette and two Triumph Spitfires), and other fun projects with his family keep him busy spending time with his best friends—his family. Keep your eyes posted for MORE articles by him in the pages of *Time for Tea* (Cindy has already begged for MORE!).

## *The Students Write...A Notebooking Acrostic!*

Hi Cindy,

You shared with me about Notebooking in York, PA and I shared with my 3 children the ideas that I learned there from you. They had 3 different reactions. My son, who is highly structured, would like to just do a nature notebook [that's right up his alley]...my youngest daughter [8 1/2] goes with the flow and we're incorporating the ideas into the notebook we were already doing for Science and History...and my eldest daughter [12 1/2] took off with the idea and judging by her front page illustrations I think she's got it! I wanted to share her poem with you...

                  No limits  
nothing  **O**ut on bounds  
                  **T**rips  
                  **E**ducation  
                  **B**ooks  
                  **O**utrageous  
                  **O**utstanding  
written by **K**ids  
                  **I**nteresting  
                  **N**ever Boring  
                  **G**enius

Hope you enjoy it. Sue Jones

*Sue! This is sooooo precious! I LOVED your group! We have the session on tape AND now in a book! I pray that you enjoy the new book and get MANY new ideas as well. See the ad in this issue for more details. Any of those children up for adoption...I will take them all! Hehe! Love, Cindy*