

FREE

TO

REST

Lesson 8 for August 21, 2021





What should we free ourselves from?

What causes physical, mental, and spiritual sickness?

Can we get sick if we are thoroughly following the principles of a healthy life?

Can Christians get discouraged, depressed, or anxious?

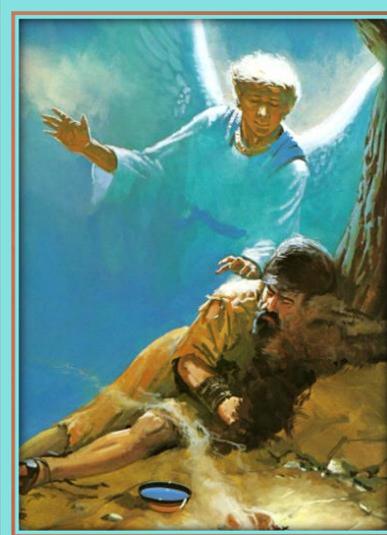
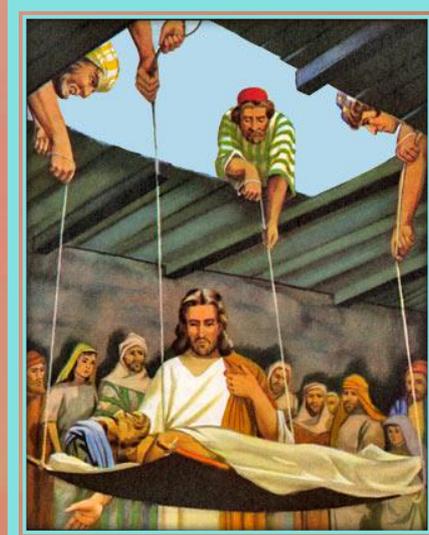
Let us study two biblical examples to find the right answers.

Free from sin: the paralytic and his friends.

- The causes of sickness.**
- Liberation from guilt.**

Free from discouragement: Elijah the Tishbite.

- The causes of discouragement.**
- Desperation.**
- Get up and keep going.**



THE CAUSES OF SICKNESS

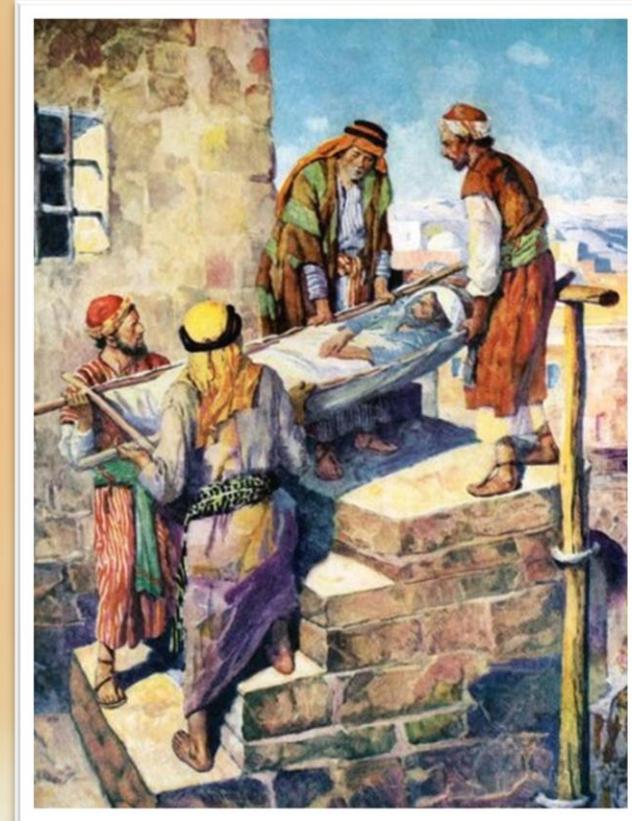
*"Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men."
(Mark 2:3)*

This man lived a sinful life that led him to an incurable paralysis. The cause of many illnesses is the transgression of God's laws, especially those related to health.

However, we should not be limited to this statement in relation to sickness. Sin has been causing sickness since the beginning. For example, people who have never smoked may also suffer from lung cancer. Why? Because evil is ruling our world.



The paralytic man was suffering because of his own sin, but he found two helpers. His friends cared for him, and his Savior was always willing to give rest to those who need it.



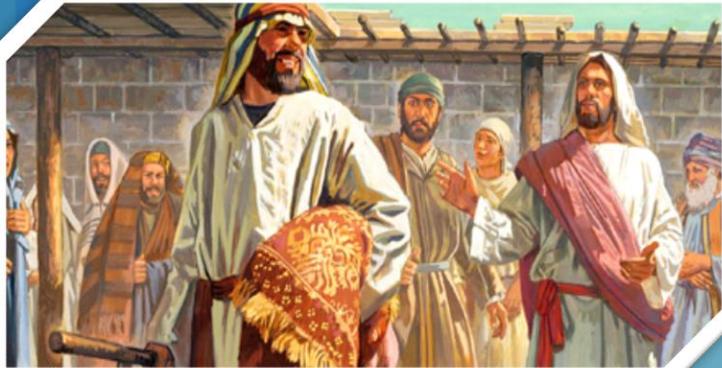
LIBERATION FROM GUILT

*"When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven you.'"
(Mark 2:5)*



Jesus attacked the root cause of the issue. Paralysis was just a symptom. The true cause was within. The paralytic needed to be forgiven and liberated from guilt.

He found forgiveness and the spiritual rest that he longed for. Then, his illness would be just a bearable annoyance. However, Jesus went further and liberated him from his illness.



Our Savior is always willing to give us rest in the shelter of His love, grace, and forgiveness. Even amidst our suffering.



“In praying for the sick [...] our prayers should include this thought: ‘Lord, Thou knowest every secret of the soul. Thou art acquainted with these persons. Jesus, their Advocate, gave His life for them. His love for them is greater than ours can possibly be. If, therefore, it is for Thy glory and the good of the afflicted ones, we ask, in the name of Jesus, that they may be restored to health. If it be not Thy will that they may be restored, we ask that Thy grace may comfort and Thy presence sustain them in their sufferings.’”

THE CAUSES OF DISCOURAGEMENT

"And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there." (1 Kings 19:3)



Elijah was not afraid of hundreds of false prophets. However, he panicked when Jezebel threatened him. He fled away aimlessly in fear. He went beyond the land of Israel and Judah but still did not feel safe.



Lack of faith? No, his faith was still strong (1K. 19:10). He had been subject to strong pressure, and the death decree broke him.

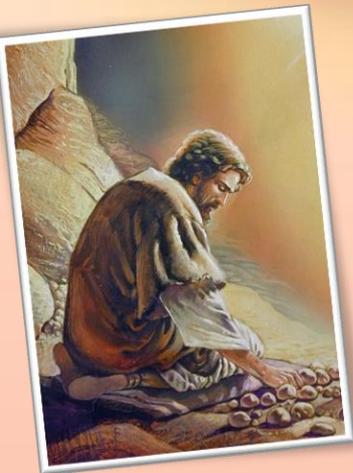


He could not think clearly in that situation. He needed rest but did not know where or how to find it. He just fled.

There is an important lesson here. We must not judge those who get discouraged or depressed. We should encourage them and listen to them.

DESPERATION

"But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, 'It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!'" (1 Kings 19:4)

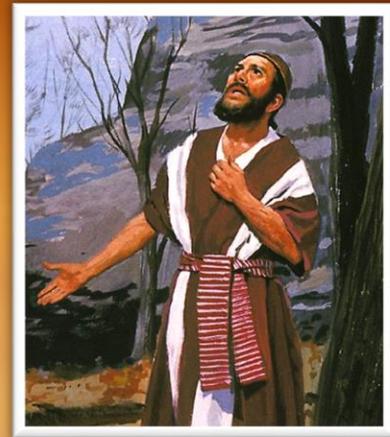


Elijah surrendered to negative thoughts. He reflected on the consequences of his escape and began to worry things about: "Maybe I've thrown my reformation overboard, maybe I've disappointed God, maybe... maybe I'd be better off dead..

However, he had finally stopped fleeing and began to think more clearly. His prayer was short (1K. 19:4), but that was the chance for God to intervene.

Sometimes we may not feel God, or we may think we are unworthy. Nevertheless, God is always by our side, looking at us with love and tenderness.

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." (Psalm 34:18 NIV)



GET UP AND KEEP GOING

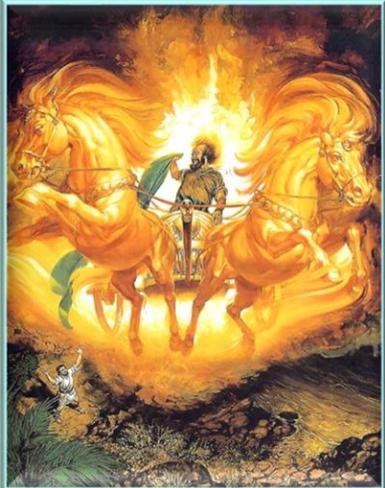
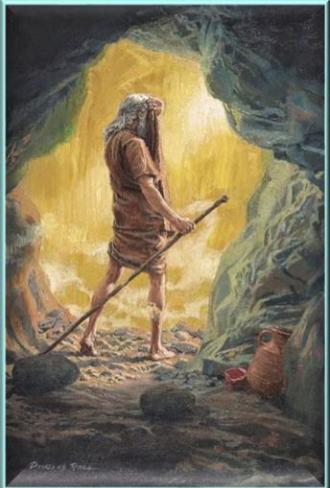
"Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, 'Arise and eat.'" (1 Kings 19:5)

Elijah needed physical rest (to eat and to sleep) before having spiritual rest. Then he was ready to meet God.

God made him reflect and led him. He assigned him new tasks in the serenity of a peaceful still small voice (1K. 19:11-18).

His life did not end under a broom tree. He would make fire rain from heaven, look for the 7,000 that were longing for a spiritual reformation at Israel, and even make new friends. His story ended with a ride straight to Heaven on a fire chariot!

The darker our lives seem, the more we need to come to God to find rest.



“Into the experience of all there come times of keen disappointment and utter discouragement—days when sorrow is the portion, and it is hard to believe that God is still the kind benefactor of His earthborn children; days when troubles harass the soul, till death seems preferable to life. It is then that many lose their hold on God and are brought into the slavery of doubt, the bondage of unbelief. Could we at such times discern with spiritual insight the meaning of God’s providences we should see angels seeking to save us from ourselves, striving to plant our feet upon a foundation more firm than the everlasting hills, and new faith, new life, would spring into being.”

E. G. W. (Prophets and Kings, cp. 12, p. 162)