

# soul talk

## Overwhelmed—a story

### Day 1: season of gray

Read | Kings 19:1-9a

Can you relate to Elijah? Has there been a season in your life when you “had enough”? Have you ever just wanted to run away? Where did you go during that journey? How did you find the strength to make the journey? Are you in this season now? This passage is talking about the physical journey that Elijah needed to take, but maybe you find yourself losing strength to make an important life changing decision or you are struggling to find peace and rest in a situation that seems impossible. Make a list of the struggles, stresses, and challenges that have led you to a season of gray. Do you give yourself permission to be in a season of gray?

### Day 2: perspective from the gray

Read | Kings 19:9a-10

How do you react in times of stress and anxiety?

Can you relate to any of the following reactions?

- ◆ Fuzzy thinking - Confusion or trouble concentrating
- ◆ Bad decisions or unable to make decisions
- ◆ Exaggerate the negative
- ◆ Focus on my contribution or sacrifice
- ◆ Blow little things out of proportion
- ◆ Dealing and speaking in absolutes
- ◆ Inflexibility in thinking – Set on one idea or perspective
- ◆ Attack or degrade new ideas
- ◆ All or nothing, black and white thinking
- ◆ Overly simplistic or linear thinking
- ◆ Reactive response:
  - Anger or cynicism
  - Giving up
  - Obsessing on one issue or person
  - Blaming
  - Attacking
  - Paranoia or Hypervigilance
  - Denial
- ◆ Putting our struggle in the category of “special”  
ie: “I am the only one”
- ◆ Preoccupation with death

*What would you add to this list?*

Recognizing these behaviors can be helpful in the journey through the gray. Share your observations with a friend or another person.

### Day 3: the God of the gray

Read | Kings 19:11-13a

How do you react when you see someone else who is struggling with stress and anxiety? Do you notice when others are feeling overwhelmed? Sometimes it can be difficult to know how to help someone. It can be frustrating and you can feel impatient and helpless. How did God help Elijah?

*Here are some keys to coming along side an overwhelmed person?*

- ◆ Look for symptoms like the ones listed from the day 2 devotion
- ◆ Listen
- ◆ Not trying to fix the problem or problems
- ◆ Not projecting your situation on them
- ◆ Encouraging healthy practices
  - Physical well being
  - Small group involvement
  - Professional help for them
- ◆ Support them, but do not own the situation
- ◆ Pray with them and for them.

Reflect on how someone has come along side you during a season of gray. What did that look like? What was an encouragement to you?

### Day 4: going back the way you came

Read | Kings 19:11-13a

Are you surprised by what God says and does in this passage? What surprises you? Has God ever surprised you?

### Day 5: The Glory of the Grey

Read | Kings 19:1-13

After reading the story again, what jumps out at you?

*Pray this prayer*

“Sun behind all suns, Soul behind all souls...  
Show to us in everything we touch  
And in everyone we meet  
The continued assurance of Thy Presence around us  
Lest ever we should think Thee absent.

In all created things Thou art there.  
In every friend we have  
The sunshine of Thy Presence is shown forth.  
In every enemy that seems to cross our path,  
Thou art there within the cloud to challenge us to love.

Show to us the glory in the grey.

Awake for us Thy Presence in the very storm till  
All our joys are seen as Thee and  
All our trivial tasks emerge as priestly sacraments in  
The temple of Thy love.”

George MacLeod

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