

Little Things Big Differences

Introduction: That Time of the year ... Back to School comments ... related jokes

Statistical information: Studies show we forget 50% of what we hear in one hour. We can increase that number by 30% if we review
Further we forget 80% of what we hear in 3 days but can retain much more if review is done within 5 days

Reference: [1 Kings 16 - 19](#)

Opening illustration ... (Gettysburg)

1. What famous Civil War Battle occurred in 1863 it lasted for three days and is considered the turning point of the war? Jennifer and I recently spent part of three days in Gettysburg Pa., staying in the town of East Berlin at a Bed and Breakfast given to us by our 3 daughters and their families for our last anniversary.
2. Most Americans know who made the Gettysburg Address but nothing about it.
3. The Gettysburg Battle lasted three days 75,000 confederate troops converged on 97,000 Union troops over 25,000 square miles, causing a casualty rate somewhere in the 70 – 80 percent mark resulting in the sudden death of 60,000 soldiers mostly volunteers.
4. It marks the greatest loss of American lives on the North American continent.

Jennifer and I walked those fields and learned about some of those men who fought so gallantly both sides, viewed amazing amount of artifacts and were struck by the fact that fact that if things had gone just a little differently Lee's troops could have won that battle and perhaps the war.

Little things can make big differences ... Example The Battle of Hanover

Because he was blocked by 9,000 retreating union troops from the Pa. Battle of Hanover, General J.E.B. Stuart could not move his confederate cavalry unit directly to Gettysburg. Instead the time lost in going around them cost him almost two days of the battle arriving late on the second day.

The time lost prevented Lee from gaining a better knowledge of the enemy's position and prevented necessary reinforcements from arriving on time, a little piece of history that may have cost the Confederacy the war.

Life of Old Testament Prophet Elijah

An incredible character ... grew up in the mountain ravines separated from society, long black hair flowing down his back, he was appointed, called by God to be a prophet, his ministry was to drive Baal Worship out of Israel.

His 25-year ministry was congruent with that of the most notorious of all of Israel's kings and Queens, Ahab and Jezebel.

1Kings 16:33 tells us that Ahab did the most to provoke God's anger
Six chapters of I & II Kings are devoted to his reign, when most of the Kings have part of one chapter.

It turns out that the story of Ahab is also the story of Elijah ... Elijah was God's answer to Ahab, God sent Elijah to eradicate the cruel religion of Baalism.

Isaiah 59:19 When he enemy comes in like a flood the spirit of the Lord ...

Baal worship inspired by Jezebel was the worship of the storm god responsible for rain
Often pictured as a bull for its strength and fertility reflecting a lust for power and sexual fertility. Sound familiar? America's preoccupation with sex and power ... with what is the symbol of the bull linked today? **Wall street** and the bull market power and virility!

Cross section of Elijah's ministry and moments

- I. Back drop Ahab's evil ... **1 Kings 16: 29-33**
- II. Elijah prophecies no rain for years till I give the word ... **I Kings 17:1**
- III. The widow of Zarephath ... **I Kings 17: 13 – 17**
- IV. Show down at Mt. Carmel ... **I Kings 18: 1,20-40, 42**
- V. Jezebel threatens Elijah's life ... **I Kings 19: 1 – 2**
- VI. The still small voice of God ... **I Kings 19: 9 – 13**

How interesting even amazing is it that at the high point of Elijah's life, his moment of greatest accomplishment ... he finds himself running for his life.

Think about it, what had God appointed this prophet to do? Bring the nation back to God, to reveal Baal worship for what it was, a false illusion, to bring the people back into a relationship with the living God of their ancestors.

He had done it!

If there had been a local newspaper here is what its headlines might have read about the Mt. Carmel incident ...

The Israeli Tablet Fire on Mt. Carmel *story by Moshi Plotnick*

Elijah calls down fire from heaven, thousands fall to their knees,
850 prophets of Baal and Asheroth destroyed,
Elijah prays for and receives rain from the Lord
for full story see scroll IV

Remember the old expression "The bigger they are the _____" "My mother would often say "Your getting too big for your britches"

Elijah at the greatest moment of his life, having, seemingly accomplishing everything God had asked for in the most dramatic fashion possible gets a little note from the queen before the sun goes down that day. It went something like this...

Dear Elíjah,

This is not over I am going to kill you just like you killed my prophets before sun down tomorrow.

Love,
Jezebel

⇒ Elijah high tails it out of there in sheer panic traveling what becomes a 40 day journey **back** into the wilderness, **back** into isolation back where he started from. He is afraid, confused, angry, depressed, and despondent, to the point of asking God to just end it all. “clinical depression”

Have you ever been there? You are baffled, confused, sometimes angry, even furious at God, you want nothing more to do with him, you may have even run away from his presence just like Elijah.

Illustration God's Little Devotional Book page 116

Isaiah 55:8,9 *“For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

Elijah finds himself back where he started back to square one. Alone in the middle of nowhere, emotionally defeated, despondent. We have all been there, haven't we?

Question ... Was it part of God's plan for Elijah to run back to the wilderness?

God will try to reassure us when we are experiencing the emotional roller coaster ride of life that takes us from euphoria to despair.

In moments like these God's still small voice makes the difference.

God's relationship with us is more important than all the work or accomplishments we have or are going to do for him or others.

The *still small voice* of God is a picture of the gentle care, relationship that he desires to have with us.

The fire, earthquake, and storm was the power of God that Elijah wanted but not what he needed.

Only when all of his confidence and bravado were gone did Elijah experience the healing presence intimacy of God's Spirit.

Elijah's fears were built on ignorance that would be removed once God's voice was his point of focus. There were still 7,000 who were faithful to God, he was not alone!

Elijah's greatest moment wasn't the victory on Mount Carmel it was the still small voice of God a picture of Jesus life and relationship with us.

Little things make Big differences

If God has been speaking to you today ... that still small voice ... about where you are where you have been going and perhaps where he wants you to be it is time to listen and more importantly obey.