

Stuck

Week of January 24

There's nothing that will get us stuck quicker than worshiping at the wrong altar. We may not see the effects of our choice immediately, but sooner or later, devotion to a self-made idol will suck the life out of us. Following the lead of King Ahab and Jezebel, the people in Elijah's day torn down the altar to the Lord. Instead of trusting the Lord and worshiping the one true God, the people of Israel had "refused to obey the commands of the LORD" and worshiped "the images of Baal instead" (1 Kings 18:18b).

God wanted Israel back. Through a mighty display of His power, God gave His people another chance to turn from their idolatry—their sick worship of a god who had no power and might – and follow their true Shepherd who had the power to send rain, end the famine, and keep them in His care. Have you erected an altar to a false god? Are you sick of worshiping at a place where there's no life, no power? Perhaps today is the day to stop wavering, to stop "hobbling between two opinions."

Read 1 Kings 18:22-39

1. The people of Israel were stuck in a season of idolatry. Their pursuit of Baal was killing them, literally draining the life out of them (v28), and yet they could not give it up. Why is it that like Israel, we keep pursuing the very things that take life from us?

How did God use Elijah to get the people "unstuck?"

Elijah steered an entire nation back to God. And while it is true that poor leadership can lead a nation down the wrong path, individuals still have free choice. We should always choose the right thing – God's way, truth revealed in His Word – even if the current of the world is flowing swiftly in the opposite direction. It may be difficult. It will take courage and faith. But one person taking a stand for Christ can produce a ripple that becomes a wave, and reconfigures the landscape of a generation.

2. When have you seen someone take a stand for Christ—someone with a sincere desire to help people get "unstuck"—then witness a movement for God? In what ways did the landscape of that city, or generation, or entire nation begin to change?

The Plain Truth encourages us to stop worshiping at the wrong altar and start worshiping at the altar of the living God. Who (what) is the object of your worship, your devotion, your heart's desire? We are created to worship and our worship is focused on something or someone. We are also triune beings, and it is important to be well spiritually, emotionally, and physically. The Lord knows when we are struggling, and He cares about every detail of our life. "God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble" (Psalm 46:1). Whether we are stuck emotionally, spiritually, or physically, turning to the Lord is the only way out.

3. How has the Lord helped you get unstuck—what helps you get moving in God's direction again when you begin to worship at the wrong altar?

Because Elijah was alone during this great victory at Mount Carmel, he really felt alone afterward when he fled Jezebel's wrath. And yet, the LORD God came to him and promised to "preserve 7,000 others in Israel who have never bowed down to Baal or kissed him!" (1 Kings 19:18). There's no doubt God called Elijah to get the people "unstuck." But sometimes after helping others, we may also get stuck.

Being faithful is not about being perfect, but about coming back to God. Thankfully, He wrote the book on mercy and forgiveness, and always comes looking for us when we hide. Understand that two things usually happen when we decide to get unstuck: (1) our decision to start living what we say we believe will expose the posers and they may turn away from us; but also (2) our determination to start moving again will encourage those who are true followers of God to step out in faith and continue the journey in God's direction.

Celebrate Recovery shares seven reasons why you and I get stuck—

- 1) You have not developed an effective support team.
 - 2) You are not willing to "own" your responsibility.
 - 3) You are afraid of the risk in making necessary change.
 - 4) You have not forgiven others who have harmed you.
 - 5) You have not accepted Jesus' work on the cross for your forgiveness.
 - 6) You have not completely surrendered your will and your life to the Lord.
 - 7) You have not completely worked the previous principle.
4. Are you stuck emotionally or spiritually? Which of these 7 reasons stands out to you? Perhaps it has been intentionally or maybe even mindlessly, we have begun to worship at the wrong altar. But you know in your heart if it's time to tear down the false altar you have erected and start worshiping at the altar of the Lord. In the space below, write out your confession to the Lord, ask Him to help you, and include one action step you will take today to move in God's direction, toward life!

STUCK

Text: I Kings 18:22-39

The Plain Truth:

Stop worshipping at the _____ altar and
worship the _____ God.

7 Reasons We Get Stuck

1. You have not developed an effective _____ Team.
2. You are not willing to _____ your _____.
3. You are afraid of the _____ in making the necessary _____.
4. You have not _____ others who have harmed you.
5. You have not _____ Jesus' work on the Cross for your forgiveness.
6. You have not completely _____ your _____ and your _____ to the Lord.
7. You have not completely worked the _____ principle.

One Year Bible Reading

January 24: Genesis 48:1-49:33, Matthew 15:29-16:12, Psalm 20:1-9, Proverbs 4:20-27
January 25: Genesis 50:1 - Exodus 2:10, Matthew 16:13-17:9, Psalm 21:1-13, Proverbs 5:1-6
January 26: Exodus 2:11-3:22, Matthew 17:10-27, Psalm 22:1-18, Proverbs 5:7-14
January 27: Exodus 4:1-5:21, Matthew 18:1-20, Psalm 22:19-31, Proverbs 5:15-21
January 28: Exodus 5:22-7:25, Matthew 18:21-19:12, Psalm 23:1-6, Proverbs 5:22-23
January 29: Exodus 8:1-9:35, Matthew 19:13-30, Psalm 24:1-10, Proverbs 6:1-5
January 30: Exodus 10:1-12:13, Matthew 20:1-28, Psalm 25:1-15, Proverbs 6:6-11

January 23 & 24, 2016