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**FINDING A “SELAH” RETREAT TO PAUSE AND REFLECT SO
WE CAN HEAR GOD’S VOICE**

I Kings 17: 1-16, 19: 1-21 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

After one of his great spiritual battles, which was a showdown in the Old Testament, God’s prophet Elijah ran for cover, following the voice of the Lord. He retreated for a “Selah retreat,” to pause and reflect. Some folks criticize Elijah heavily for running away from one woman, Jezebel, after not backing down from 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah. In that encounter on Mt. Carmel, documented in I Kings 19: 1-21, Elijah was literally exhausted physically and spiritually. He appears to have suffered intensely from being alone with depression and with his faith being sorely tested. Though his faith was strong on top of Mt. Carmel, he now was in need of being replenished by God’s Spirit, having his faith tank refueled. His emotional strength was not up for two huge tests in a row. So again, he got away. In this particular Selah retreat, God met the prophet and met his needs, speaking to him and ministering to his weary soul and spirit. Have you ever been there when you were exhausted both physically and spiritually, and were desperately in need of a “Selah Retreat?”

Earlier in his role as a prophet of God, God met Elijah in a retreat setting, a Selah retreat in I Kings 17: 1-16. You may remember Elijah delivering the message to King Ahab, “No more rain.” Elijah delivered the message personally. It was not a printed out note from his lap top computer. It wasn’t addressed to AhabtheKing@A&JtheRebellersAgainstGod.net from God’sManElijah@God’sCommand.com. Do you remember the setting? After delivering the message to Ahab, God directed Elijah His servant to the Brook Cherith to a “Selah Retreat” we might well call, “Cherith Brook Bird and Breakfast” to strengthen him. When the Brook Cherith dried up, God’s next “Selah Retreat” for Elijah was to send him to new accommodations at the “Widow of Zarephath’s Inn.”

At that earlier retreat, God met His servant’s needs and spoke to his weary heart. In both of those retreats, God sent Elijah to places of retreat where he could hear more clearly the Father’s voice and where his needs could be met more completely so he could continue to be God’s spokesman. We might easily conclude that it is in the tough times of battle that we most need to get away and listen to the Lord, and seek His presence and His voice. That isn’t

necessarily so. Daily ministry and burnout happen even when there is no immediate spiritual battle on our hands. Daily grind and daily struggles often demand that we get away to a “Selah Retreat.” We need just as much in those times to listen for God’s voice, to meditate before Him so we can retain His anointing on our ministry and not watch as our passion wanes before our eyes. Even when relationships are strained in life, it’s time to stop, to get away with God, to confess our need for Him and to be open for what He wants to tell us and to hear what it is that He wants us to do. God will meet us there. He is ever waiting to minister to our souls and spirits.

About four years ago, I read the words of Thomas Drury, a devotional book writer. His devotional on February 23, 2007, in the Upper Room devotion was entitled, “Old Issues.” Thomas Drury wrote, “Thirty-six years of marriage have brought my wife and me closer than I had thought possible; but recently, we had a serious argument, the first in many years. I asked what I thought was an innocent question. Her reaction—accusing me of being condescending and insulting—caught me off guard. I bristled. I hadn’t said anything to warrant such a response. I became increasingly indignant. The tension mounted as she recounted past events that still angered her. Her words cut deeply as my insecurities from previous years resurfaced. Later, I struggled with what she had said. Did raising issues a decade old mean that she had considered me an awful person for years? What was behind her response? Her words had hurt me deeply. I was in no mood to forgive... To withhold forgiveness would mean that I wanted to hurt her as she had hurt me. As long as I focused on my hurt feelings, whatever had precipitated her anger would remain unsolved. “How many times has God forgiven me? I thought.” I should do no less for my wife.” Thomas Drury’s transparency is awesome, but it magnifies the war that wages in our souls, and the need we all have for a “Selah Retreat” with God. There, alone with Him, He is able to help us abstain from fleshly lusts. He is able to stop our desire to give in to pride, bitterness and withholding forgiveness. Do you need a “Selah Retreat” with God, beloved?

Here are a few thought questions for us to consider:

1. Share you most recent “Selah Retreat” with God. What was its effect on you?
2. What calls you the quickest to time alone with the Lord Jesus?
3. One person said, “What, me retreat? Who do you think You are, God?” Yes, it is God Himself who calls us to get alone with Him. Why do you and why do I need these times, these “Selahs” with God?