

Standing Alone for God

"22 Then Elijah said to them, 'I am the only prophet of the Lord who is left, but Baal has 450 prophets.'" 1 Kings 18:22 NLT

- When was there a time you had to stand alone for something right?



Anyone who wants to live right in a broken world will eventually have to stand alone. It may be the teenager at school who refuses to cheat on a test, do drugs, vandalize, bully, or participate in other wrong behavior when there is peer pressure to do wrong. It may be the businessman or woman when company officials tell them to cheat, be dishonest, and take advantage of their customers. There may be many other life situations where society has redefined right and wrong, pressuring others to conform.

In 1 Kings 18, Elijah, the prophet, had to stand alone for God. Israel was ruled by King Ahab, who, along with the nation of Israel, had turned from God, was living in immorality, and worshipping the false Canaanite god, Baal. Elijah challenged King Ahab and Israel to a test—two altars, two sacrifices, the priests of Baal versus Elijah. Both would call on their God; the one who answered by fire and consumed the sacrifice would be the true God (see 18:19-24).

Central Lesson

One person and God is always a majority.

1. Standing alone for God will result in **CRITICISM** from the ungodly (18:17-18).

"17 When Ahab saw him, he exclaimed, 'So, is it really you, you troublemaker of Israel?' 18 'I have made no trouble for Israel,' Elijah replied. 'You and your family are the troublemakers, for you have refused to obey the commands of the Lord and have worshiped the images of Baal instead.'"

King Ahab criticized Elijah because he would confront him and Israel about their sin and encourage them to return to God. Elijah answered Ahab's criticism by pointing out that Ahab was the true troublemaker for refusing to obey God and for worshipping Baal. In the same way, if you stand alone for what is right—you will be criticized. Count on it. Be prepared for it. Do not waver!

2. Standing alone for God requires **DECISIVENESS** (18:21).

"21...said, 'How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!...' (18:21)

Israel was indecisive about living right. Elijah challenged them to stop straddling the fence spiritually. Standing for God requires decisiveness.

The Life Application Study Bible explains, "Elijah challenged the people to take a stand—to follow whoever was the true God. Why did so many people waiver between the two choices? Perhaps some were not sure. Many knew the Lord was God, but they enjoyed the sinful pleasures and other benefits of following Ahab in his idolatrous worship. It is important to take a stand for the Lord. If we just drift along with whatever is pleasant and easy, we will someday discover that we have been worshiping a false god—our ourselves." (18:21)

3. Standing alone for God can be **LONELY**. Remember, one person and God is always a majority (18:21-22).

"21...But the people were completely silent. 22 Then Elijah said to them, 'I am the only prophet of the Lord who is left, but Baal has 450 prophets.'"

God's people were silent when they should have joined their voices with Elijah's voice. Elijah was the only prophet of God left. The odds were 850 to one.

4. Standing alone for God may require **DEFENDING** your position—be prepared (18:23-24).

"23 Now bring two bulls. The prophets of Baal may choose whichever one they wish and cut it into pieces and lay it on the wood of their altar, but without setting fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood on the altar, but not set fire to it. 24 Then call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by setting fire to the wood is the true God! And all the people agreed."

Elijah declared that God was the true God and Baal was a false god. Elijah was prepared to prove his point by testing the two sacrifices. We, too, must be prepared to defend our position when we stand alone for what is right.

5. Standing alone for God should be done **POLITELY** and lovingly, but there may be some exceptions (18:27).

"Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church." Ephesians 4:15 NLT

"27 About noontime Elijah began mocking them. 'You'll have to shout louder,' he scoffed, 'for surely he is a god! Perhaps he is daydreaming, or is relieving himself [Literally—using the bathroom]. Or maybe he is away on a trip, or is asleep and needs to be wakened!'"

Elijah was taking drastic measures to make a drastic point before Israel. He intentionally mocked the prophets of Baal to drive home to Israel that Baal was not a real deity but a false god. Usually, we should be polite when confronting error unless the circumstances dictate otherwise.

6. Standing alone for God should always be done **PRAYERFULLY** (18:36-37).

"36 At the usual time for offering the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet walked up to the altar and prayed, 'O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant. Prove that I have done all this at your command. 37 O Lord, answer me!..."

7. Standing alone for God always places you on the **WINNING** side (18:38-39).

"38 Immediately the fire of the Lord flashed down from heaven and burned up the young bull, the wood, the stones, and the dust. It even licked up all the water in the trench! 39 And when all the people saw it, they fell face down on the ground and cried out, 'The Lord—he is God! Yes, the Lord is God!'"

The Life Application Study Bible explains, "God flashed fire from heaven for Elijah, and he will help us accomplish what he commands to do. The proof may not be as dramatic in our lives as in Elijah's, but God will make resources available to us in creative ways to accomplish his purposes..." (18:36-38).

Central Lesson—One person and God is always a majority.

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ▶ Attend a small group. ▶ Read the Bible & journal meaningful verses. ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.